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The Construction of National Identity in post-1918 Poland

by

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Abstract

This thesis analyses the construction of the modern national identity in Poland following the state's creation in 1918. Its central aim is to argue that although much of Poland's national identity was, in fact, the product of the revolutionary eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the twentieth century, ethnocultural foundations proved essential in the process of nation building. In order to offer a novel approach to this issue this thesis will evaluate the programmes of the émigré organizations and political parties to demonstrate the role of the two national currents: ethnic/organic and civic/territorial, which developed during the nineteenth century and shaped competing definitions of Polish nation. Furthermore, this study will analyse the role of the pre-modern and early modern symbols in shaping the political currents in modern Poland. Locating and examining elements central to the definition of the nation will allow demonstration of how the distinctive national programmes were defined under successive administrations. This research argues that the rise of competing national identities in East-Central Europe, at the turn of the century, accelerated the dissolution of the common trait or national identity, shared by the elites across the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Deprived of legitimacy the authorities were unable to maintain the democratic system, gradually introducing authoritarianism, and by the late 1930s replacing the inclusive state model with the organic definition of the nation. This exclusive programme resurfaced following the Second World War and became a justification for the construction of an ethnically homogenous Poland. The Communist regime aimed to eradicate the pillars of national identity and to diminish the role of society in the state's functioning; however, the nucleus of civil society which survived the period of persecution continued to grow in strength outside of the official channels. Effectively, this created a popular definition of the Polish nation in opposition to that of the regime. The competition between the

ethnocultural and political definition of the nation remained a central issue over more than two decades following the collapse of the Communist regime.

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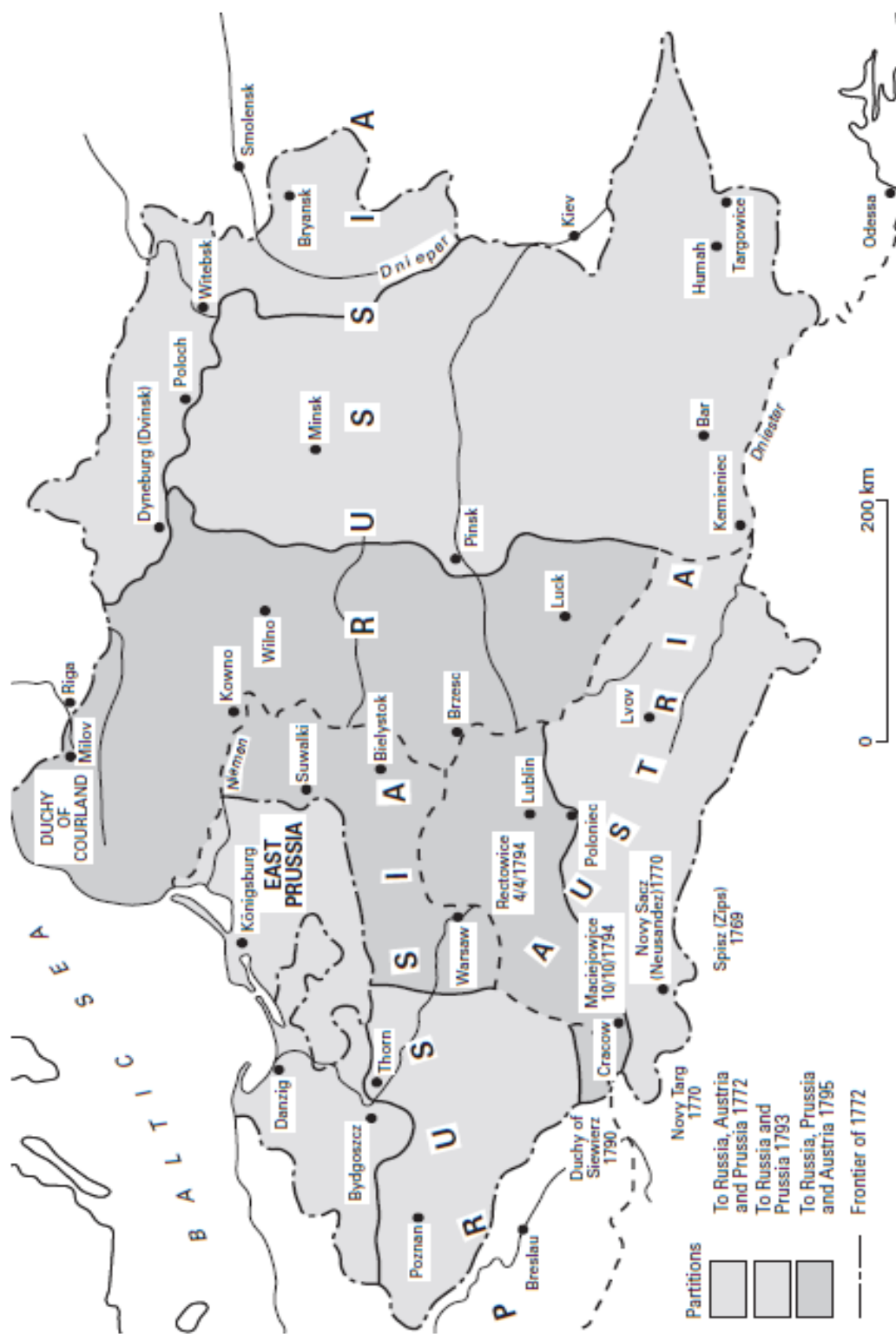
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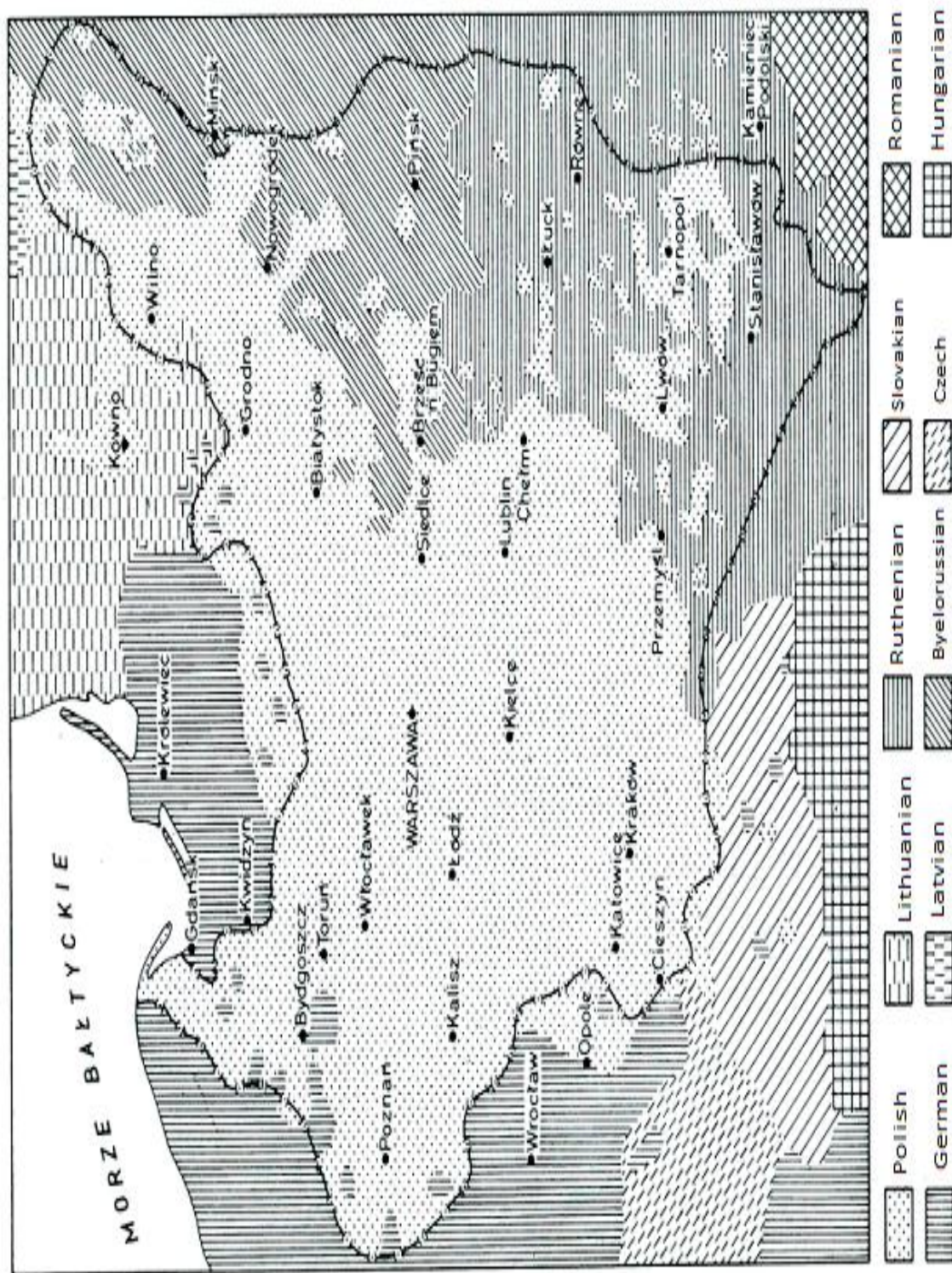
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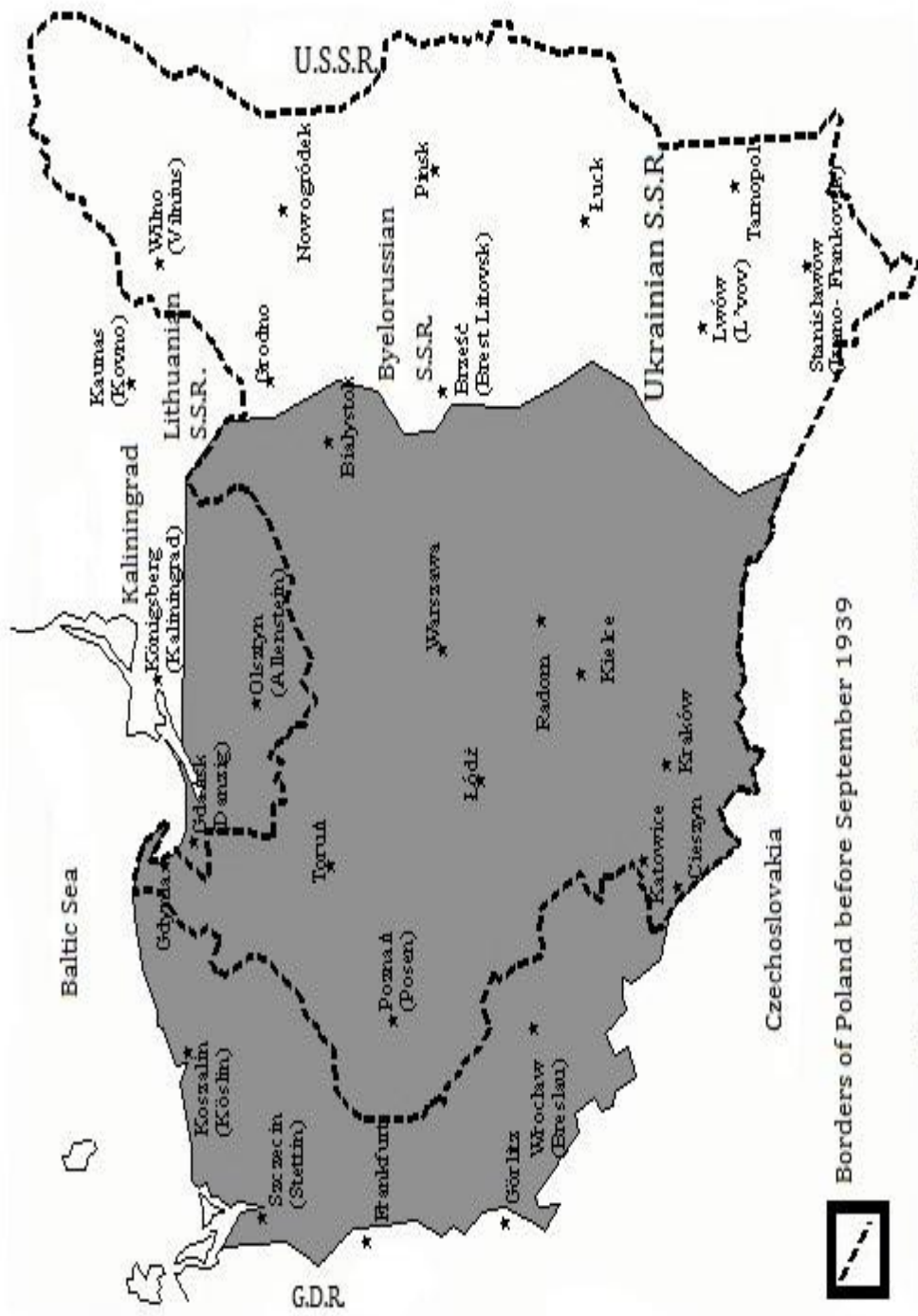
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Borders of Poland before September 1939

Map III: Poland after the Second World War

List of Abbreviations

- AK - Armia Krajowa (National Army)
- AWS - Akcja Wyborcza "Solidarność" ("Solidarność" Electoral Action)
- BBWR - Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z Rządem (Block of Cooperation with the Government)
- CRZZ - Centralna Rada Związków Zawodowych (Central Council of Trade Unions)
- DVL - German Peoples List (Deutsche Volksliste)
- EU - European Union
- FRG - Federal Republic of Germany
- IPN - Instytut Pamięci Narodowej (Institute of National Remembrance)
- IZ - Instytut Zachodni (Western Institute)
- KC - Komitet Centralny (Central Committee)
- MNE - Komisja Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych (Commission for National and Ethnic Minorities)
- KOR - Komitet Obrony Robotników (Worker's Defence Committee)
- KPN - Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej (Confederation of Independent Poland)
- KRN - Krajowa Rada Narodowa (State National Council)
- LPR - Liga Polskich Rodzin (League of Polish Families)

- MW - Młodzież Wszechpolska (All-Poland Youth)
- NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
- ND - Narodowa Demokracja (National Democracy, *endecja*)
- KNP - Kongress Nowej Prawicy (Congress of the New Right)
- NOP - Narodowe Odrodzenie Polski (National Rebirth of Poland)
- NSZZ - Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy (Independent Self-Governing Trade Union)
- ONR - Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny (National Radical Camp)
- OZN - Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego (Camp of National Unity)
- PC - Porozumienie Centrum (Centre Agreement Party)
- PiS - Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (Law and Justice Party)
- PKWN - Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego (Polish National Liberation Committee)
- PO - Platforma Obywatelska (Civic Platform)
- PPN - Polska Partia Narodowa (Polish Independence Alliance)
- PPR - Polska Partia Robotnicza (Polish Worker's Party)
- PPS - Polska Partia Socialistyczna (Polish Socialist Party)
- PRL - Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa (Polish Peoples Republic)
- PSL - Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (Polish Peasant Party/ Polish People's Party)

- PUR - Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny (State Repatriation Office)
- PZPR - Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza (United Polish Workers Party)
- PZZ - Polski Związek Zachodni (Polish Western Committee)
- ROP - Ruch Odbudowy Polski (Movement for Reconstruction of Poland)
- RP - Rzeczpospolita Polska (Republic of Poland)
- SdRP - Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Social Democratic Party of the Republic of Poland)
- SLD - Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (Democratic Left Alliance)
- SP - Solidarna Polska (United Poland)
- SRP - Samoobrona Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (Self-Defence of the Polish Republic)
- TDP - Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie (Polish Democratic Society)
- TR/RP - Twój Ruch (Your Movement)
- TRJN - Tymczasowa Rada Jedności Narodowej (Temporary Council of National Unity)
- UD - Unia Demokratyczna (Democratic Union)
- UW - Unia Wolności (Freedom Union)
- ZChN - Zjednoczenie Chrześcijańsko-Narodowe (The Christian National Union)
- ZLN - Związek Ludowo-Narodowy (Popular-National Union)
- ZMN - Związek Młodych Narodowców (Organisation of Young Nationalists)

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Author's Declaration

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

Relevant scientific seminars and conferences were regularly undertaken at which work was often presented; external institutions were visited for consultation purposes and several papers prepared for publication.

Presentations and conferences attended: Research Methods Conference with Sage Publications (Plymouth University, 2011), Postgraduate Conference (Plymouth University 2011, 2012, 2014), War and Displacement Conference (Plymouth and Munich 2011, 2013), *II Ogólnopolski Kongres Politologii: Polska i Europa wobec wyzwań współczesnego świata* (Poznań, 2012), *Przyszłość Unii Europejskiej. Wyzwania i strategie* (Wrocław University, 2012), *Polityka państw Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej wobec Romów* (Wrocław University, 2012), III Annual Conference of the Polish Society of International Relations (*III Konwencja PTSM XI 2013, Bielsko-Biala*, 2013), Congress of the Regions (*Kongres Regionów, Świdnica*, 2014)

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Chapter 1: Introduction

The discussion surrounding the process of nation building in East-Central Europe predates the construction of the majority of the contemporary states in the region. National identity in Poland, which is the centre of this study, is a subject which has puzzled historians and political scientists. The post-Communist state, which was inarguably shaped by distressing experiences, attracted wide attention in the late twentieth century. Contemporary Poland is a member of various supranational organisations such as the European Union (EU) leading to an assumption that the state departed from the organic and exclusive definition of the national community and moved towards the civic national model which became possible with the adoption of inclusive legislature such as the 1997 constitution or the acts regulating the laws and responsibilities of the ethnic and national minorities. This assumption would initiate the process of redefining the role of the “traditional institutions” such as the Roman Catholic Church on the Polish citizens.

The idea of the Commonwealth is to this day recognised in Poland as the foundation of post-1918 and post-1989 Poland. The idea of continuity remained not only essential to the post-Communist authorities but played an important role in bolstering the relationship between the authorities and the population within the fluctuating borders of Poland. This research has analysed the role various ethnocultural elements which preserved the distinctive character of “the Old Poland”. Roman Catholicism and the cultural heritage (literary tradition and distinctive political culture) which carried these elements of ethnic consciousness through the early-modern period effectively became the pillars of national identity following the state’s partitioning in 1795. Moreover, these and other elements identified and

analysed in this research as crucial for Polish national identity led to the shaping of the divergent interpretations of Polishness. Although the dismantling of the major European empires became a reality in 1918, effectively allowing the reconstruction of the Polish state, the national “identity” of modern Poland was unlike that shared by the nobility in the early-modern Commonwealth. The inability to find a consensus on the direction of the future Poland and the arrangement of inter-group relations in a society comprising of numerous ethnic and national groups effectively led to the de facto implosion of the polyethnic national model proposed by the Socialists mid-1930s.

This study sets out to analyse the process in which the two competing strands of national identity, namely the political/territorial and the ethnic/organic models, were constructed, and which of the particular aspects of these currents provided them with the durability and the appeal among the Polish population. Moreover, this study will analyse the definitions of the Polish nation and its citizenry as proposed by the nineteenth-century émigré societies, political parties, and programmes, proposed following Poland’s independence in 1918. This research further discussed the transformation of definitions and ethnocultural elements in the programmes of the interwar political parties in Poland.

In order to assess whether the nation in Poland was reconstructed on the foundation of an early-modern realm or rather constructed upon the traditions forged by the nationalists this study analyses key approaches to the study of nationalism namely *primordialism*, *perennialism*, *modernism*, and *ethnosymbolism*. Furthermore, this study identified *ethnosymbolism* as the ideal theoretical framework for the examination of the construction of national identity in Poland. Thorough

investigation into the literature discussing the process of nation building in Poland revealed lack of resources discussing continuity of the distinctive ethnocultural strands existing in different periods of Polish statehood and during the lengthy period of partitions (1795-1918). These particular elements, such as religion and linguistic affiliation, discussed further by the proponents of *ethnosymbolism*, played a crucial role in the preservation of this unique “national” heritage and dissemination of myths, symbols, and traditions. This theoretical framework, drafted by Anthony D. Smith, requires analysis of a wide body of literature discussing nation-building and nationalism.

Examination of the construction of national identity in Poland through the prism of the key theories of nationalism and research of the Polish history led to shaping of the core research questions. In the first instance, this study provided analysis of the leading theories of nationalism in order to demonstrate whether Poland was a purely modern state, or whether modern national identity contained elements derived from the early-modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (destroyed in 1795). Secondly, this thesis assessed the extent to which the national authorities and the political parties perceived the foundations of post-1918 Poland as an ethnic-organic or a civic-territorial¹ state. Lastly, this thesis identified and studied the impact of the role of the *ethnic cores*² on shaping the nation in different periods. This set of core questions provided the analytical basis for the discussion of the construction of national identity in modern Poland by driving the focus towards the role of the ethnocultural elements and their influence on the way in which the political parties and the society addressed the issue of national identity.

¹ State constructed through bureaucratic incorporation and founded on the basis of shared territory of the inhabitants

² Bearers of the distinctive ethnic culture

Following the identification of the theoretical underpinning and outlining of the central research questions, this study applied the qualitative methodological framing. This particular method of inquiry involved analysis of a wide range of sources, which offered an understanding of the process of shaping of national identity in Poland. Through the framework proposed by ethnosymbolism, this thesis examined 'why' and 'how' the distinctive national character was crystallised and preserved in the nineteenth and the twentieth century. Addressing the core questions required, aside from the official documents, newspapers, and interviews, application of evaluation of empirical evidence such as population censuses.

Maps I, II, and III

As the maps (*Map I, II, and III*) have shown, borders of Poland have changed dramatically following the destruction of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 1795. Significant border shifts in interwar Poland (*Map II*) and following the Second World War (*Map III*) had a great impact on shaping of the ethnic and national identity in East-Central Europe. These maps allow visualising the extent of the frontier shifts in different periods of Polish history. *Maps I, II, and III* are necessary to demonstrate the extent of territorial changes and population shifts which followed as a consequence of these alterations. The substantive chapters of this research will further address each of these periods.

Furthermore, prior to the construction of the nation state in 1918 the frontiers of Poland did not resemble the boundaries of a single ethnic community. The ancestral predecessors to the modern Polish state included populations of divergent religious and linguistic provenance. The Polish nation in the Communist period (1945-1989; *Map III*) which became congruent with the state borders, was a unique

phenomenon in Polish history, and although it had been long envisioned by some nationalist agitators appeared unattainable prior to the end of war in 1945.

The wider area of East-Central Europe is a patchwork of communities which were formed through centuries of cultural borrowing and exchange of ideas. Similarly the Polish nation and the non-ethnic Poles inhabiting the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth which ceased to exist in 1795 (*Map I*) and the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939; *Map II*) were shaped in the process which was initiated prior to the outburst of the ideas which surrounded the French Revolution (1789-1799). Although in the dynastic realms preceding the construction of modern Poland, national identity remained narrowly defined and confined to a small percentage of the elites. The binding symbols such as shared political tradition on the one hand and the myths of common descent and shared destiny of the peoples on the other were assumed by the peasantry and the bourgeoisie. As was argued by the proponents of *modernism*, the nation succeeded the great empires ruled by a fraction of the population.

1.1 Structure of Research

The Literature Review examines the collection of works which became central to the research. This section includes a review of theoretical works underpinning this research as well as literature offering a wider understanding of the last two centuries of Poland's history. This part of the study also explains three main aspects of the study. Firstly, it demonstrates the role of *ethnosymbolism*, the main theoretical framework, in this thesis and compares it with other leading theories of nationalism.

The framework applied in the research is discussed in detail and compared with other theories in order to demonstrate its advantages.

Furthermore, the review analyses the data and sources employed in order to support the central argument of this study. Study of the key sources allows the progression in the field to be traced thus demonstrating how the debate on national identity was transformed. The final section of this chapter discusses the utilisation of *ethnosymbolism* in each of the contextual chapters of this study.

The Methods and Strategies chapter discusses the role of the analysis of the theories of nationalism within this research. This section outlines the application of *ethnosymbolism* to this study allowing a thorough examination of the elements central to the process of shaping modern national identity in Poland within the context of East-Central Europe. This chapter provides detail of primary resources, archives and interviewees identified as essential to this study. Finally, this section offers the research a wider array of questions which are both chapter specific and address the wider issue of national identity in Poland. Through a systematic application of detailed questions, this study is able to discuss the evolution of national identity in Poland.

The Shaping of National Identity locates the (ideological) centres of ethnic identity in partitioned Poland. This section of the study demonstrates which of the regional ethnocultural elements were employed by nationalists in order create a wider association and notion of belonging among the Polish speaking and Catholic populations of East-Central Europe. This section of the study traces the process of crystallisation of two distinct political cultures at the turn of the twentieth century.

Furthermore, through demonstration of the divergent interpretations of which of the social and ethnic groups were hypothetically incorporated into the Polish nation.

Nation and Nationality in Post-1918 Poland sets out to clarify the role of the two leading political camps in the moulding of modern national identity in Poland. This segment of the study analyses the two visions presented by the opposing political camps. Through analysis of the indicators of national identity, this study offers distinct definitions of Polish nation and nationality, together with scrutiny of the specific elements of ethnic identity, utilised in the process of nation building.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses the shift towards the ethnic model of the nation in the late 1930s and the adoption of a comparable model by the Soviet sponsored regime in the mid-1940s. The section of this chapter, discussing the post-war Poland, demonstrates the inability of the ruling Communist party to address the needs of the diverse population of Poland. The alienation of the citizenry from the political elites resulted in a shift from the widely accepted ethno-cultural definition of the nation and recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity in Poland. This lengthy chapter highlights of the role of authoritarian regimes in shaping a rigid and exclusive definition of the Polish nation. The latter part of this chapter discusses the evolution of an underground society and shaping of the nation in opposition to the regime.

National Identity in Post-Communist Poland exhibits the competition for national identity which had continued into the liberal-democratic state. This chapter traces elements of continuity discussed in previous chapters demonstrating their role in the shaping of the nation in post-Communist Poland. This chapter further discusses attempts made by the political parties to create a definition of nation which would appeal to all Polish citizens. This section of the study demonstrates how the

expanding definition of Polishness was approached by the post-1989 political parties. Moreover, it also analyses the extent to which the ethnic/organic and civic/territorial were assumed by the competing strands in Poland following the post-Communist transition.

The Conclusion offers a broader outlook on the entire thesis. It reiterates the central arguments suggesting answers to the research questions posed in the introduction. Furthermore, it discusses the role of each segment of this research in conjunction with the main findings from the entire study, outlining its pivotal points. Lastly, it discusses national identity in contemporary Poland. Based on the data analysed in this research, the final segment of the study proposes the future course of development of the national community in Poland. It examines whether in the twenty-first century it is by either ethnocultural or territorial nationalism. The Conclusion also offers analysis of the contemporary political and social issues in Poland through the application of *ethnosymbolism*. This study argues that in modern Poland national identity is a combination of elements which are simultaneously new and old. Moreover, although on the surface, elements of national identity derived from different periods, appear ancient, they were in fact granted a new meaning under each consecutive leadership. The application of *ethnosymbolism* to this study offers a method of understanding the functioning of these pre-modern ethnocultural elements and their particular role in shaping the modern nation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter will discuss the role of nationalism in the construction of modern national states in East-Central Europe, with particular emphasis on the Polish case. It will also outline and compare the leading theories of nationalism discussing some of the most influential works and ideas. Furthermore, comparison of these theories will not only offer contrasting definitions of the Polish nationals in different periods of history.

The contextual chapters of this research outlining the central texts dedicated to understanding the modern Polish nation and national identity will also be discussed as will some of the themes regarding the construction of national identity and the reframing of the symbols identified in different generations. This section is divided into chronological and thematic segments focusing on some of the topics analysed in the contextual chapters of this research.

2.1 What is a Nation?

On 11 March 1882 Ernest Renan presented his famous paper '*Que'est-ce qu'une nation?*' in an attempt to assemble and formulate the ideas that described the concept of a nation. He outlined concepts surrounding this unprecedented principle, presenting it as a collective effort of peoples sharing a mass sentiment towards past and present of their community and giving it a distinctive meaning. He argued that only those belonging to a particular group are able to comprehend its true spirit, finding unity in the moments of joy and an even greater bond in collective defeat and mass suffering. Renan wrote: "a great aggregation of men, with a healthy spirit and

warmth of heart, creates a moral conscience which is called a nation (...)” (Renan, [1882]1992). His theory posed a number of questions that demanded resolution. The shared past, the people or the language were among some of the binding characteristics of ethnic groups which were stateless at the turn of the century. He acknowledged that there was an ongoing process which was leading to further fragmentation of existing states along lines which had not been a factor of great significance prior to the French Revolution (1789-1799) or The Springtime of Nations (1848).

Renan acknowledged that the masses which were previously excluded from the body of the citizenry were becoming aware of their rights and national identity. He observed that “nations arise from the solidarity of the people sharing a given territory and bonded by a past suffering and sacrifice which influenced successive generations” (Renan, [1882], 1992:10). Renan’s work gained prominence as it offered the first such critical and elaborate evaluation of the trend later known as *primordialism*, popularised by the seventeenth and eighteenth century German speaking philosophers. Figures such as Johann Gottfried Herder, Immanuel Kant and Johann Gottlieb Fichte in their philosophical treatises argued for fragmentation of the polyethnic realms and the construction of national states based on clearly defined ethnocultural characteristics of the nationals. Renan’s paper confronted the approach of Herder who claimed that nations as defined by him and his acolytes formed a part of the natural order:

It [nature] has wonderfully separated nations, not only by woods and mountains, seas and deserts, rivers and climates, but more particularly by languages, inclinations and characters (Herder, [1784-1791] 1968:78)

Renan saw the construction of nations upon the principle of ethnicity as illusionary and conflicting with the history of the European migrations. According to the author of *'Que'est-ce qu'une nation?'*, the greatest mistake committed is confusion of "the idea of the race with that of the nation and attributes to ethnographic, or rather linguistic (...)" (Renan, [1882] 1992:1). The ideas put forward by Ernest Renan continued to influence researchers attempting to understand the ambiguity of the nation and national identity for over a century.

According to more recent definitions as expounded by the proponents of *ethnosymbolism* 'nation' "is a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (Smith, 1991:14). Furthermore, national identity requires a set of features which are necessary in order for an ethnic community to form a nation. These traits include: an historic territory, or homeland, common myths and historical memories, a common, mass public culture, common legal rights and duties for all members a common economy with territorial mobility for members (Smith:1991:14). These features outlined by Smith undermine some of the ethnic groups which point to their origins in antiquity or even before the recorded history. Such types of nationalism are known as *primordialism* and *perennialism* and will be discussed in the next section of the thesis.

2.1.1 Primordialism and Perennialism

Research into the process of nation building in East-Central Europe indicates that kinship³ was the central element in the construction of modern nations. This particular vision of national roots conforms to the category of *primordialism* and is associated with Johann Gottfried Herder (Kedourie, 1961:54, Conversi: 2006:15). According to one of the most prominent scholars of nationalism, Anthony D. Smith, *primordialism* rests upon myths of common descent and ancestry that are buttressed by an enormous family tree that supports the unity and loyalty of people to a series of “natural laws” (Smith, 1991:13; 2008:35). Although proponents of *modernism* deny the role of *primordialism* in construction of nations (Connor, 1994, 2000), Smith argues that these ‘super families’ were founded upon “mythical ties of filiation and ancestry”, granting ethnicity the central role in the construction of modern nations (Horowitz, 1985; Smith, 1991:22). These elements which allow connection between antiquity and the modern are described as *primordial ties* and are considered necessary in forging a bond between nationals: according to this approach ethnicity is predetermined (Smith, 1999:3). Furthermore, according to Smith, *primordialism* appeals to the emotions bridging modernity and the remote, frequently inaccessible, periods in history. Moreover, it assumes that nations, rather than construction of the post-revolutionary Europe, are in fact integral to the natural order. According to Herder, nations which disappeared of the map, may remain in a state of hibernation until they are reconstructed, as nations always existed while states were constructed (Herder, [1774] 2004:24).

Furthermore, Johan Gottfried Herder in *Reflections on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* (1791), argued:

³ The familial ties

For every nation is one people, having its own natural form, as well as its own language (...) and originality of [national] characters extends to families (Herder, [1791]1968:7)

It was clear to Herder that existence of different nations was natural and introduced by God himself rather than any other force. Humanity developed from simpler forms of organization and effectively created nations. This was progress was, according to the philosopher, part of evolution. Herder, through his research of ancient civilisations, came to the conclusion that it was through “tradition” which each human being is born into that the seeds of nations are preserved in each successive generation (Kohn, 1965:31).

Magicians, shamans, priests, they were born and brought up amid the imaginations of their own tribes, (...) tribes older than themselves (...) (Herder, [1791] 1968:47-48)

Herder made an equation between natural order and history. According to his writings, God influenced the development of civilisations. Herder understood belonging to a nationality as a concept involving spirituality and morality. *Primordialism* perceived nations and their identity as shaped by the achievements of the previous generations requiring continuing nurturing (Herder, [1774] 2004:20).

Perennialism, unlike *primordialism*, claims that nations stem from the times immemorial. Proponents of *perennialism* base the contemporary life of the nation on the myths of foundation recorded in oral histories passed from generation to generation (Hastings, 1997, 1999). Unlike *primordialism*, the theory of *perennialism* theory argues that the nations “do not belong to the natural order,” rather “they emerge and dissolve, only to reappear continually in different periods” (Smith, 1999:5). According to Adrian Hastings (1997), nations are formed from oral traditions and the dissemination of the written vernacular. *Perennialism* stands in

contrast to the claims of the purely modern nature of nations. Both *perennialism* and *primordialism* focus on a people's past and the bonds that have crystallized through centuries of collective development. There are two currents of *perennialism* outlined by Anthony D. Smith (Smith, 1999: 34-40): *continuous perennialism* and *recurrent perennialism*. The former assumes that certain nations have existed over the course of centuries if not longer; according to the latter, nations may disappear from the political map only to reappear in different periods. Adrian Hastings (1997, 1999) argues that nations existed prior to the French Revolution (1789-1799) and some traces of national identity stem from periods far earlier than the eighteenth century (Smith, 1999: 36).

2.1.2 Modernism

Proponents of *modernism* perceive nations as purely modern phenomena dating back only as far as the French Revolution (1789-1799). According to *modernists* all features demonstrated by the nineteenth-century nationalists as elements allegedly "traditional" to the ethnic culture, are in fact, modern concepts. *Modernist* philosophers argue that there are other factors at play, whether it was the industrial revolution or weakening of the dynastic realms which effectively led to construction of modern nations. *Modernists* agree that all nations date from the late eighteenth century while other scholars claim that nations may have only appeared in the late nineteenth or even early twentieth centuries. Walker Connor (Connor, 1993; 2000), in his historical inquiry into the construction of modern nations, denies antiquity any role in the process. Other *modernists* outline distinct elements (such as vernacular mobilization) which, although may seem ancient on the surface, were in fact

constructed in the eighteenth and the nineteenth century (Gellner, [1964] 1994; Hobsbawm, 1992; Kedourie, [1960] 1993).

Every nationality is destined through its peculiar organisation and its place in the world to represent a certain side of the divine image (...), for it is God who directly assigns to each nationality its definite task on Earth (Kedourie, 1993:51)

According to Elie Kedourie (1960) German philosophy with its impact on the unification of the German state fractured the contemporary political systems leading to the final destruction of the polyethnic realms in East-Central Europe. In effect the novel state model based upon ethnicity and not religious-dynastic realms became dominant (Anderson, 2006:21-22). According to the Kantian school, discussed in Kedourie's *Nationalism*, self-determination was a virtue, demanding from the populace stubbornness and sacrifice, as "a good man is an autonomous man and for him to realize his autonomy, he must be free" (Kedourie, 1993:20). Kedourie concludes his interpretation of German philosophy by demonstrating its powerful links with religion and nationalism in the philosophy of Friedrich Schleiermacher. Kedourie's analysis of German philosophy defines *nationalism* as a doctrine of the collective will and a quest for unattainable perfection (Kedourie, 1961:87). Kedourie, claims that nationalism was a nineteenth century invention and "it pretends to supply a criterion for the determination of the unit of population proper to enjoy a government exclusively its own" (Kedourie, 1961:9). Moreover, according to Kedourie, the nationalists created a new frame of perceiving the world, in the categories of competing nations. In the ethnonationalist sense, once an ethnic group was able to distinguish its specific characteristics from those traits of the "others" it was able to create a more organised unit (Kohn, 1965). In order to make this cohesion, the nationalists required a common language. According to Benedict

Anderson (1983) “the new intelligentsia of nationalism had to invite masses into history (...), the invitation card had to be written in the language they all understood (Anderson, 1983:80)

Although it was claimed that philosophy had an impact on the construction and shaping of national identity, it was argued that without means of mass communication and social preconditions nationalism could not reach a wider audience and spread rapidly across the continent (Anderson, 1983, Connor, 1993, Hroch, 1985). The rise of newspapers with their articles on international affairs, collections of pamphlets, songs, romantic poetry, etc. facilitated vernacular mobilization and the new ideas for national homogeneity through identity, based on a common language. Growing literacy and the standardisation of the written vernacular allowed a wider communication between the cultural centres and the remote areas which only had a limited access to information. Communication with regions operating in the same language allowed broadening of the appeal put forward by nationalist agitators (Anderson, 1983, Hroch, 1985). These developments became in effect responsible for merging small communities into a population with shared myths, memories and goals.

Benedict Anderson (1983) argues that any connection with ancient realms is merely a forgery which came into being with the introduction of national vernaculars. Anderson deconstructs the programmes of alleged “national revival” stressing the role of the decline of the dynastic realms in founding a new state model rather than the persisting existence of national identity. Furthermore, the author of *Imagined Communities* claims that “(...) nationalism has to be understood by aligning it, not

with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that produced it” (Anderson, 1999:12).

Ernest Gellner (1964, 1983), on the other hand, argues that the ideas put forward by Kedourie (1960) did not fully explain the depth of nationalism and its appeal to modern societies. According to Gellner, the main strength of nationalism came from the evolution of agrarian societies and dawn of the industrial era. The transition from feudalism and the migration of the population in larger urban areas led to the expansion of the educated middle class, which in return became more passionate about nationalism. Gellner (1983) claims that nationalism is “indeed an effect of industrial social organisation, it is not the only effect of the imposition of this new social form, and hence it is necessary to disentangle it from those other developments” (Gellner, 1983:40)

Furthermore, industrialisation led to the construction of modern nations through the demand for development of relations within these novel communities. An extension of the sphere of economic interests was followed by the spreading of high culture, previously available only to the elites, shared identity, and national languages. These interactions between populations from the remote areas required from the nationalists construction of an ideology which would allow widening the diverse population’s allegiance to a particular state (Conversi, 2006:19; Brubaker, 1994:4).

Modernism offered a critique of myths and traditions constituting the foundations of the contemporary national states in East-Central Europe (Kedourie, 1961:16). Furthermore, it posed important questions regarding the age of nations, analysing elements which led to the construction of modern national identity.

Proponents of *modernism* allowed researchers to deconstruct some of the key aspects constituting the backbone of modern states. According to Smith, *modernism* and its proponents redefined the outlook on history and nationalism itself. However they did not however fully explain the wide appeal of nationalism to the disparate ethnic groups across the globe. Moreover, Kedourie or Gellner, according to the proponents of *ethnosymbolism* did not demonstrate the depth of the sentiments embedded within ethnic identity (Smith, 1991:20; 1999).

(...) Nations must have a measure of common culture and civic ideology, a set of common understandings and aspirations, sentiments and ideas, that bind the population together in their homeland. (...) Historic-territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology: these are the components of the standard, Western model of the nation (Smith, 1991:11)

2.1.3 Ethnosymbolism

An inability of the proponents of *modernism* to fully explain the role of sentimentalism and ethnocultural traits in shaping the modern nations influenced some scholars to question whether nations were entirely the products of industrialization and the vernacular mobilization of the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries (Kohn, 1961:46). In fact, the leading proponents of *ethnosymbolism* Anthony D. Smith (1986, 1991) and John Hutchinson (1994) argue that although nations appear as may appear as constructs of modernity, without ethnic foundations such as ethnocultural past and shared myths of descent they would not survive. Where *modernists* denied any influence of the past on modern communities, scholars of *ethnosymbolism* found traits of modern nationalism in the pre-revolutionary eighteenth century. Here, the focus is not exclusively on language

and culture but there is an emphasis the significance of *ethnic cores*⁴ or cores of communities which role was to ensure that the traditions⁵ of the community were preserved in the oral histories, songs of the people, or in script. *Ethnosymbolism* displays ties between the glorified past of the suppressed communities and their striving for independence. It focuses on a number of aspects influencing either the revival of communities or their vanishing in the wake of other powerful outside influences such as politicization of ethnicity (Smith, 1981; 1991, 2008; Hutchinson, 1987, 1994). Ethnocultural elements such as shared memory of the antiquity of the ethnic group allowed also creating a programme for the purification and rejuvenation of the shared identity.

In his research, Anthony D. Smith, argues that pre-modern properties exist in many modern nations across the globe. These attributes frequently predate the conquest of the great dynastic realms by the more powerful realms. Smith underlines the role of a particular social class which is not exclusive to the upper strata but rather to the “group of individuals exposed to some form of superior education” (Conversi, 2006:22) in the preservation of the distinctive communal identity or the *ethnie*.⁶ He argues that these *ethnic cores* became the guardians of the traditions and myths effectively influencing the construction of the modern national identity. Equally the ethnicists recognised the role of ethnic symbols in state building and the influence it had on shaping of the modern national identities (Smith, 1991:38, Conversi, 2006:22).

⁴ Fairly cohesive and self-consciously distinctive *ethnies* which form the kernel and basis of states and kingdoms (Smith, 1991:38-39)

⁵ “traditions” in this sense were understood as ethnic traits carried from generation to generation

⁶ Anthony D. Smith and other *ethnosymbolists* refer to pre-national communities as *ethnies* rather than nations as to avoid the terminological confusion.

(...) It is through such unifying and embracing mechanisms that what we may term 'ethnic cores' are gradually built up. These are fairly cohesive and self-consciously distinctive *ethnies* which form the kernel and the basis of states and kingdoms such as the barbarian *regna* of the early medieval era (Smith, 1991: 38)

Similarly, John Hutchinson (1987, 1994) continues to question the purely modern character of the nation. Hutchinson who analysed divergent social identities claims that the modern nation is a cultural project with roots in pre-modern and early modern periods (Hutchinson, 1994:40). Both Smith and Hutchinson argue that "deep ethnic foundation is a prerequisite to the survival of modern nations" (Conversi, 2006:22-23). Hutchinson, in his work, puts particular emphasis on the role of the distinctive culture which influenced preservation of distinctive ethnies which effectively laid the foundations for national identity in different states. This approach, although accepting elements of *modernism*, argues that "formation of modern nations needs to be examined in *la longue durée*⁷" (Hutchinson, 1994:7).

Analysis of the national histories through the prism of *la longue durée* can usefully be applied to the case of Poland. Although the patterns proposed by the *modernists* could be applied to explain the developments leading to the construction of modern Poland in 1918, some such as the industrialisation, which took place more slowly in Poland than in Western Europe. However the increase in the number and the role of the middle classes in urban centres such as Lwow, Warsaw, or Krakow continued to gradually erode the influence of the nobility in the state. This process of nation-building was interrupted with the third and final partition of the Commonwealth in 1795. Continuing industrialisation influenced the rapid growth of

⁷ An approach to the study of history granting supreme role to the evolution of historical structures rather than particular historical events

awareness connected to linguistic, religious, and territorial affiliation of the peasantry and the urban populations divided between three realms.

With regards to the case of Poland there are more issues which require addressing, and which are better explained by the theoretical framework proposed by Smith and Hutchinson. Analysis of Polish history and especially the period following the French Revolution (1789-1799) demonstrates the role of the ethnocultural past, the traditions preserved by Catholicism in the Commonwealth, and the shared myths of descent. These elements effectively allowed the freezing of the distinctive traditions coded in different periods by the *ethnic cores* and when modern Poland was constructed in 1918 it was in fact reconstructed upon these ethnocultural elements which remained dormant until the socio-political climate demanded their return.

2.2 National Identity in East-Central Europe

Another important aspect in the study of nation building is related to the problematic relationship between the newly constructed states and the identity of its citizens. Nationalism, according to the proponents of *ethnosymbolism*, is a dogma that trumps all other longings. Modern nationalism is an attempt to create a single dominant culture in order to combat regional identities with their separate cultures, dialects, and/or religious minorities. Unlike in the civic/territorial definition of nation, which assumes different religious and linguistic affiliations, creating an environment in which the population accepts the overriding political form of nationalism, ethnic nationalism perceives nation as a holy communion based on shared ethnic, linguistic, and/or religious features (Kohn, 1965:45). According Hans Kohn (1965), there are

two distinct types of nationalism: Western and Eastern. Western type of nationalism is characterised by the bureaucratic incorporation which influenced the construction of political communities'. Nationalism of the eastern type is described by Kohn as organic and ethnic. Kohn claims that "blood" played a central role in shaping of the national communities in Eastern Europe as it was perceived as holy and connected with the sacrifice of the peoples' who originally inhabited East-Central Europe. Furthermore, according to the organic model of nationalism continuity of blood was crucial as it preserved the traditions of the nation for the generations to come.

In East-Central Europe where borders continued to fluctuate over the course of the centuries, determining the ethnicity of population on any other basis than religion or linguistic affiliation posed an obstacle to territorial consolidation and construction of a single nation. An ethnic patchwork existed across the polyethnic territories of the Habsburg Empire and by the late nineteenth century the ties with the early-modern Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth's traditions loosened. Nation building, which followed the collapse of the empires, resulted in the rise of organic nationalism and the growth of antagonism between different ethnic groups sharing territory. Moreover, the attempts to create nation-states across East-Central Europe faced various obstacles. Paradoxically, the main hurdles for the nationalists attempting to build nation-states were the elements which allowed ethnies (such as the Poles) to prevail rather than become consumed by a more potent nationalist movement. Cultural borrowing which the nationalist elites perceived as a factor weakening the 'nation' was, in fact, an essential element which led to the rejuvenation of the *ethnie*. According to Smith (1991) "external cultural stimuli and contacts have renewed the sense of ethnic identity through selective cultural appropriation" (Smith,

1991:36), without such impulse the ethnies would become lethargic and unable to reinvent the distinctive character in the successive generations.

Furthermore, *religious identities* are, according to Smith (1991), often closely related to their ethnic counterparts. This particular aspect of identity discussed by *modernists* and *ethnoscymbolists* alike became essential in the construction of the nations of the organic type (Anderson, 1983; Smith, 1999). Nationalism and religion combined fill any human void for belonging as they “provide peoples with necessary protection and superiority to those who refuse to assimilate to the dominant ethnic group” (Smith 1991:24). In the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, ethnic provenance became considered to be a given, demanding protection from external influences and interference. The construction of identity of the “revived” nations allowed justification of oppressions and expulsions of ethnic and religious minorities. Prior to the Second World War, minorities became widely perceived as a threat to the integrity of the modern states.

2.3 (Re-) Construction of Poland

Following the defeat of the *Détente* powers in 1918 the independence of Poland became a fact. Nationalism and the desire for self-determination as encapsulated in Woodrow Wilson’s *Fourteen Points* became an issue particularly in regions where a variety of cultures shared the same territory. This desire for the construction of states according to ethnography and historical affiliations created a stir among the populations of different provenance sharing the same territories. Two of the *Fourteen Points* (1918) presented by the American President gave a boost to a number of agitators attempting to “revive” Poland after more than a century of constituting an

integral element of three divergent realms. Wilson's points indeed strengthened claims for the construction of national states:

X. The peoples of Austria-Hungary, whose place among the nations we wish to see safeguarded and assured, should be accorded the freest opportunity of autonomous development.

XIII. An independent Polish state should be erected which should include the territories inhabited by indisputably Polish populations, which should be assured a free and secure access to the sea, and whose political and economic independence and territorial integrity should be guaranteed by international covenant (Levin, 1968:18)

These points assumed the existence of a Polish nation with claim to a specific territory. They also concluded that a substantial majority of the inhabitants of the drafted state shared the will to take an active part in the life of this state. Following the line of inquiry proposed by the *ethnosymbolists* it is necessary to find an answer to the question when the Polish nation comes into existence. Analysis of the post 1795 Polish history will allow us to establish at what point modern Polish national consciousness began to permeate the whole of the targeted society. The analysis of nation building process will facilitate an insight into the construction of the modern Polish state and the "re-construction" or rather redefinition of the nation from the nineteenth century onwards. It will also make clear the role of the aspects which had an impact on the shaping of national identity in the twentieth century. There are elements of Polish national identity such as language, religion and culture which became influential in preservation of the distinctive character of the population. The destruction of the Kingdom of Poland in 1795 halted the progress aiming at widening the Polish nation to social groups other than the nobility. The attempt to enfranchise a wider spectrum of the Kingdom's inhabitants was brought to a halt leaving the

upper strata (6-8 per cent of population) disconnected from the majority of the inhabitants of the Commonwealth (Brykczynski, 2010:650).

The French Revolution altered the *status quo* and influenced widening of the definition of nation. This novel idea resonated across Europe leading to reassessing what it meant to belong to a particular nation. The population of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth although holding the largest body of citizens (nobility) in comparison with other European states retained a high level of social inequality and serfdom (Brykczynski, 2010:651). The population inhabiting the Commonwealth (before and post partitions) was largely unable to comprehend the proposed elevation to the status of Polish nationals as this category seemed exclusive. The revolutionary ideas stemming from France influenced discussions on the widening definition of the nation. Expansion of citizenship beyond the body of the nobility became a goal for the Polish parliament (*Sejm*) while passing the modern constitution of 1791. These late measures proved insufficient and not progressive enough to lead to a socio-political revolution in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth capable of widening the support for the Polish forces against the advancing Russian troops (Bendyk, 2014).

In a deteriorating international situation, Tadeusz Kościuszko signed *the Proclamation of Połaniec (Uniwersał Połaniecki, 1794)* which granted the equal role to preserve *Rzeczpospolita*⁸ the previously disenfranchised peasantry and other social strata omitted from the life of the state⁹. Although this act did not gain wide support from the peasantry it became the first such document creating the foundations of the modern Polish nation. The idea of the nation evolved over the course of the

⁸ Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów (from Polish): Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, from 1792 known as Rzeczpospolita Polska (Republic of Poland)

⁹Kościuszko. T. *Uniwersał Połaniecki* Rada Najwyższa Narodowa (1794)

nineteenth century following the destruction of the Kingdom. Neal Pease (2009) argues that inability to shape national identity through the bureaucratic incorporation rather than vernacular mobilisation, similarly to the states in Western Europe, in absence of the official state institutions granted the nation-defining role to the nobility (*szlachta*) and the Church. These institutions, which continued to exist through different periods of statehood and following the destruction of the Kingdom of Poland, operated as *ethnic cores* preserving symbols and traditions which would serve to bind populations in the twentieth century. Andrzej Walicki (1982), Janusz Tazbir (1986), and Paul Brykczynski (2010), outline some of the main ethnocultural elements which were formed prior to the eighteenth century and played a central role in shaping modern Poland. According to Neal Pease (2009) and Norman Davies (2005) these traditional traits allowed ethnic Poles to associate with each other, while at the same time they detached other ethnicities and religious groups from voluntary participation in nation-building strategies in post-1918 Poland. This study argues that a distinctive Polish identity existed before “independence” in 1918 and even before the French Revolution. The question posed in this section is to what extent was this identity “national”. This study argues that the ethnocultural traits preserved in pre-modern and early modern traditions of the *ethnies* were not “national” according to the *modernist* definition of the term “nation”. *Ethnosymbolism* argues that there is a relationship between the ancient *ethnies* and the modern nations.

Furthermore, John Hutchinson (2005) argues that ethnic formation is a recurring phenomenon in history, “ethnic communities have been enduring cultural and political actors in the pre-modern period, assuming forms often comparable to the modern nation (...) and, though nations have novel features, they are products of

factors cutting across the pre-modern–modern divide, and earlier ethnic identities may have a directive effect on nation-formation” (Hutchinson, 2005:10). Through the *ethnosymbolist* lens, the traditions developed in the early-modern realm should be considered as “national” traditions rather than as a set of values appropriated in the nineteenth century. It was the definition of the Polish nation which was altered to include a wider population.

Preservation of the high culture shaped by consecutive generations of the nobility remained a central element in the preservation of the distinctive traditions and shaping a distinctive Polish identity in the nineteenth century. The idea of the nation-state or another Commonwealth developed in different directions. The writings of Prince Adam Czartoryski (1847) and Hugo Kollataj (1844) evidenced the evolving definition of the Polish nation. The crushed uprising of 1830, led by the *szlachta*, proved that without the support of the peasantry Poland could not regain its independence. The masses not only did not participate in the campaigns led by the nobility but also violently opposed them. A further example of this opposition was the uprising of 1846 in which the Galician peasantry launched attacks on the Polish landlords. Patrice Dabrowski (2001) and Timothy Snyder (2003) argue that the process of construction of modern national identity was not initiated until the last two decades of the nineteenth century. The expansion of ideas motivated by the growing economic links between the remote areas alongside the development of modern communication allowed the National League (established in 1893) to promote organic work¹⁰ among ethnic Poles which would ultimately lead to Polish

¹⁰ A movement which lasted from the mid-nineteenth until the early twentieth century; it perceived the nation as a living organism. According to the positivists only through grass-root work and cooperation of all the elements of this organic nation would society become aware of its potential and gain independence.

independence (Friszke, 1989). Roman Dmowski (1893, 1903, 1908), Zygmunt Balicki (1903) and Jan Ludwik Poplawski (1910) shaped the national movement and some of the organisations which became influential in crystallising the direction of modern nationalism in Poland. Their works propagated the creation of a Poland where the nation would become congruent with the state borders. In this philosophy, all minor ethnic groups would become incorporated and assimilated to the more potent Polish nationalism. Without their works many educated young people inhabiting cities and the rural areas alike would not have been able to gain a wider understanding of their national affiliation. Dmowski's *Thoughts of a Modern Pole* (1903) became essential in establishing the frontiers of the "Polish civilisation". Brian Porter (1992, 2000) and Janusz Terej (1983) who analysed the programme proposed by the National Democrats argue that *endecja* (National Democracy, *narodowcy*) not only created links with the mythologised state but also outlined the future direction of the nation and the programme for assimilation of the non-ethnic Poles, some of whom (Jews or Germans) were perceived as a threat to Polish national identity. Analysis of the works produced by the National Democrats (and their critics) through the prism of *ethnosymbolism* allows us to approach their arguments from an as yet unexplored perspective. *Endecja* offered a novel vision of Poland which was uncharted until the late nineteenth century. This form of cultural rejuvenation was, in fact, necessary in order to attract the wider population to the national project. The peasantry remaining disconnected from the urban areas and frequently illiterate became involved in this novel project which (in theory) involved every Polish speaker and every Catholic. National identity "can be combined with other types of identity- class, religious or ethnic — but also for the chameleon-like permutations of nationalism, the ideology, with other ideologies like liberalism, fascism and communism" (Smith,

1991:14) is multi-dimensional. This versatility became the focal point of the programme of National Democracy at the turn of the twentieth century.

The Socialists created an alternative programme for gaining national independence. Unlike the National movement, they argued that ethnic Poles should not become dominant in determining the future of Poland. Henryk Zieliński (1983) and Paweł Zaremba (1981) discuss the state model proposed by the Socialists. Their analysis draws a comparison between the envisioned nation-state and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth constructed by the Jagiellon royal family. The Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socjalistyczna*, PPS) led by Józef Piłsudski recognised the role of divergent communities in creating the strength of the Polish nation. The PPS recognised that the construction of a single national identity was a delicate and complicated process. W. Paruch (1997) and Aneta Michilic (2006) argue that Poland could not form a nation state after its independence in 1918 as ethnic Poles constituted only about three-quarters of the total population of Poland.

2.4 From Independence to the Second World War

National identity remained an issue for the authorities following the proclamation of independence. The state, the borders of which continued to fluctuate until 1921, remained divided along ethnic and regional boundaries. Neal Pease (2009) and Brian Porter-Szucs (2011) examine the complicated role of religion in independent Poland. While according to Pease and Porter-Szucs, Nationalists identified religion as a necessary element of tradition, they also argued that it is only one of the tools necessary to build a strong Poland. This research argues that Dmowski and Balicki were skilful in understanding how to connect the rural and the urban population with

one another and construct an organized meaning from previously detached ethnocultural elements. This study argues that *endecja* found new meaning in the late-nineteenth-century organic work, in striving to improve the livelihood of the Polish speakers. Polish speakers were identified as the bearers of traditions passed from generation to generation and were not fully aware of their national identity. In order to widen the appeal of the Polish ethnocultural tradition, previously shared by the elites, to the remote villages and the pockets of the Polish speakers across East-Central Europe, National Democracy applied a wide range of conflicting “traditional” elements which would facilitate a wide-ranging appeal of the national programme. However, this expansion of the Polish nation to include the lower strata had a catch because, although it included more people into this imagined community, it excluded others who did not match the criteria.

The Socialists, on the other hand, acknowledged its role during the era of partitions while at the same time they were reluctant in granting Roman Catholicism with any special place in shaping national identity in a polyethnic Poland. While *endecja* was prepared to utilise the Church in bolstering the role of ethnic Poles in Poland, the PPS saw the possible downsides of collaboration between the “Polish religion” and the country in which ethnic-Poles would constitute only one of many ethnic groups. Rafal Pankowski (2010) argues that Piłsudski “rejected the exclusionary idea of unity of Church and nation (...), and [Piłsudski] remained a pre-modern politician, with some anachronistic ideas (Pankowski, 2010:17)

Nevertheless, the ideas of the PPS were considered to be out-dated and did not offer reinvigoration to the national model in the era of ethnonationalism. Ideas of nationalism constructed upon civic-territorial traditions were lost to a vigorous

programme proposed by the National Democrats. Rafal Pankowski (2010) argues that the ideologies stemming from Italy and Germany had an influence on contemporary politicians in Poland. With the signing of the Treaty of Riga in 1921 the federal model of state championed by Józef Piłsudski took a blow. This defeat led to the resurfacing of ethnic nationalisms in Poland, Ukraine and Lithuania which would continue to undermine the polyethnic state model.

Analysis of the official data undertaken by various academics allowed this study to trace the changes of regimes in post-1918 Poland. Various domestic and international factors, such as the rise of fascism in Italy and the global economic crisis, created a climate of disillusion with the independent state and the democratic system. An inability to find the consensus between ethnic-Poles and ethnic minorities led to animosities, assassinations, and persecution. This study also argues that from the early stages of independence, the Second Polish Republic faced the distrust of the population towards the authorities perceived by the mass population as the dominant upper strata. The problem of legitimacy of the democratic authorities combined with the previous experiences with authoritarianism granted Piłsudski the prerogative to overthrow the democratically elected authorities in 1926, effectively ending the brief democratic experiment.

Furthermore, Waldemar Paruch (1997) and Władysław Kulesza (1985) in their works, discuss the growing aimlessness of the parliamentary system in Poland following the 1926 coup. The lack of experience with the democratic process pushed the political elites into the hands of the undemocratic means to achieve their goals. Both the Socialists and the National Democrats became involved in violent agitation, and even undemocratic persecutions of their political opponents further

undermining the democratic state. Moreover, with the waning influence of the political elites in Warsaw, the disconnected minorities plunged into the hands of the competing nationalist movements. The desperate national authorities unable to halt the decline of their influence resorted to force to stem the outbursts of dissatisfaction. “Pacifications”, persecutions of the civilian populations, and persecution of Unitarian Church, accused of supporting the Ukrainian separatists, led to distrust and collapse of the democracy in the Second Republic. The political nation envisioned by the Socialists never materialised. In 1939, the attack on Poland from both Germany and Soviet Russia not only destroyed Polish statehood but also further divided the populations inhabiting East-Central Europe. The domestic animosities between different ethnic groups within Poland, which remained clandestine until the German invasion, were unleashed and led to a bloody civil war which tore apart the communities of the defunct Second Polish Republic.

2.5 Authoritarian Continuity

Analysis of the period leading to the Second World War demonstrates the destruction of the territorial model of the nation proposed by the Socialists. With the approval of Piłsudski, disenchanted with the sluggish democratic progress, the political elites granted the dominant role to the executive branch which made the parliament obsolete (Davies, 2005). Nation construction in Poland entered the ethnic path with the Polish language, the Church and Polish culture gaining primacy (Pease, 2009). The political programme of the leading National Unity Camp (OZN) formed in the late 1930s claimed that Poland could only be preserved by the ethnic Poles

The German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939 was rapid and denied any possibility of significant response from the Polish forces. Ultimately the destruction of The Second Republic came on September 17, 1939 when the Soviet Union invaded Poland from the East. Poland became divided between the two powers which further supported the process of fragmentation of ethnic communities (Sullivan, 2000:24).

The programme of *Aryanization*, implemented in the German General Gubernia, led to national verification and classification according to usefulness to the new regime. The German National List (*Deutsche Volksliste*, DVL) fractured the relationship among communities inhabiting the polyethnic areas of interwar Poland changing the ethnographic map of Poland. Following the segregation expulsions and exterminations commenced. Tens of thousands of people were transferred to concentration camps from which they never returned. Karl Cordell (2000; 2005), Joanna Michilic (2006), and Timothy Snyder (2003; 2010) argue that the Second World War and its immediate aftermath changed East- Central Europe entirely. While most of the Jewish population was either exterminated or fled many other inhabitants were displaced or sent to concentration camps across the occupied territories.

Michael Fleming (2010), John J. Kulczycki (2001), Piotr Madajczyk (1998) and Philipp Ther (1996) in their works demonstrate how the Polish nation and the national identity were redefined by the authorities after 1945. The Soviet-sponsored regime adopted a core of the programme outlined National Democracy (updated and radicalized by the nationalist organizations in the late 1930s), in order to legitimise the westward shift of the Polish borders and expulsion of the non-ethnic Poles from

Poland's territory. Their central goal was to create a homogenous Poland, free of national minorities, who were identified as being an obstacle in shaping the nation-state. The segregation of the population in East-Central Europe, as applied by the Nazis and their DVL, was later utilised by the Communist authorities. The new regime aimed to construct a nation which would be congruent with the state borders created in the wake of the Second World War. Those who did not conform to the norms set out by the authorities was expelled, sent to camps in Soviet Russia, or imprisoned in Poland. Utilising the *ethnosymbolist* framework in this study, along with the research of Phillip Ther (1994) and Piotr Madajczyk (1998), we can see that the expulsion of ethnic minorities and the *de facto* construction of the Polish nation-state by 1950 required addressing and modification of a programme outlined by the nationalist parties in the inter-war era. Furthermore, during Stalinism the Polish nation lost the ability to rejuvenate. Instead, the authorities had to resort to the pursuit of external enemies of the Polish nation in order to preserve the ethnic model Poland they had in fact created.

Completion of the expulsions programme in 1950 required formulating a new Nationality Law which was ultimately passed in 1951. People who wished to remain in Poland were forced to conform to legal requirements which were designed to lead to the ultimate consolidation of the state authorities and the population. Although in the post-war state the authorities declared their support for the surviving Jewish population in re-establishing their livelihoods in Poland, the reluctance by ethnic Poles to accept the Holocaust survivors in post-war Poland resulted in animosities fuelled further by the the growing competition within the Communist leadership (Madajczyk, 1998; Pankowski, 2010). Utilising analysis of the official documents,

census data, and research led by different researchers, this research demonstrates the impact of the expulsions on shaping national identity in post-1945 Poland.

From 1950, the United Polish Workers Party (*Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza*, PZPR) continued to strengthen its authority over the Church. Michael Fleming (2010) and Marian Mazgaj (2010) discuss the power struggle between the Holy See and the Communist government. The turn towards structural rather than subjective violence resulted in either barring or creating obstacles for non-governmental organisations. The Church which was forced to accept the curbing of its influence on Polish citizens following the Agreement of 1950 remained an important counterbalance to the control imposed by the authorities (Mazgaj, 2010:35-38). Furthermore, through the Communist period the Church, which in the interwar period was one of the tools of the nationalist right, became an institution seeking and promoting a dialogue beyond ethnic divisions. This position of the Church allowed it to become an ambassador of the Polish nation in the struggle against the oppressive system. The employment of *ethnosymbolism* has allowed us to demonstrate the role of Roman Catholicism in preserving the traditional elements of national identity. Following the communist takeover, the preservation of ethnocultural traits transmitted from generation to generation was assumed by the Church. Abroad, this role was assumed by the émigré societies which Poland were able to construct the foundations of the envisioned democratic Poland. A genuine debate on the future of Poland in *Kultura Paryska* created a counterbalance to the exclusive ethnonationalism of the Communist Poland.

2.6 The Alternative Vision of Poland and the Democratic State

The research of Anna Wolff-Poweska (1990), Iwona Hofman (2007), Mikolaj Tyrchan (2011) discuss the role of the diaspora organisations, such as *Kultura*, in the strenuous process of shaping a draft of Poland founded upon the polyethnic traditions and democratic model.

Through the atomization of Polish society, the authorities were able to weaken any form of protest. This study argues that the émigré organizations and the Catholic Church aided the process of consolidation between detached sections of the Polish society. Moreover, Tadeusz Lepkowski (1983), David Ost (1990) and Jerzy Eisler (1991) argue that although the Communist regime was able to temporarily fracture the ties between the various groups within Polish society over time the working classes and the intellectuals recognised the role of cooperation beyond class divisions. Through the establishment of state affiliated organisations, the authorities were aiming to undermine the influence of the Church and the trade unions. The Communist regime was determined to dismantle any alternative programme of development.

The establishment of *Solidarność*, a mass movement representing a wide Polish population, offered an alternative definition of the nation to that proposed by the authoritarian regime. Memoirs of Tadeusz Mazowiecki (1982, 2012) and Lech Wałęsa (1990), leading actors in the *Solidarność* movement, demonstrate the role of the trade unions in becoming the common denominator for the Polish workers and intelligentsia following the decades of the state-sponsored atomization of the national values. The idea of pluralism remained strong in Poland despite the long tradition of authoritarianism. The Church was able to redefine its role in the

preservation of the national character during the Communist era. Following the election of Karol Wojtyła for the Papacy it gained a central role in bonding the divided nation. The overthrowing of the alien regime allowed the construction of a democratic state. Polish citizens were granted the right to determine their future. This privilege had been thwarted by authoritarianism which had taken different forms since the military coup of 1926 preventing Polish citizens from deciding on the future direction of their state.

The fractures within the *Solidarność* programme, which became clear following the first semi-democratic elections of 1989, led to the collapse of the mass movement and the resurfacing of competing definitions of Polishness. Tadeusz Mazowiecki (2012) discussed the complex process of national consolidation in the first years of the Third Polish Republic. Fragmentation of the political scene led to the creation of opposing blocs. Andrzej Antoszewski (2000), Peter D. Stachura (1999), and George Sanford (2002) are some of the authors who discuss the process of the shaping of national identity in the post-1989 era of transition. The debate surrounding the character of the Polish nation became prominent in the 1990s and demonstrated deep divisions between the “western” territorial nationalism and organic definitions of the Polish nation. In order to become a member of international institutions the authorities became dedicated to the expansion of equal rights to all inhabitants of Poland.

Jack Bielasia (2010), Genavive Zubrzycki (2006) and Elzbieta Stadtmüller (2000) observe that the competition between the organic and territorial nationalism in Poland remained influential through the 1990s and in the twenty-first century. Competition between these two models led to a number of high profile

demonstrations contesting “westernisation” and secularisation of Poland. The debate surrounding the 1997 constitution revealed the competition for the elements considered as central to the Polish national identity.

The costly transition process became influential in further polarisation of the Polish population. The traditional Left-Right cleavage was replaced by the competition between the forces supporting either globalisation or traditionalism. According to Gavin Rae (2007), Alex Szczerbiak (2013), and Jacek Kochanowicz (2007) strengthening ties with the European Union (EU) polarised the Polish population. The programmes of the leading political parties became a reflection of the lingering division between the two models of Poland.

For their part, Peter Vermeersh (2012), Tomasz Kamusella (2009), and Rafal Pankowski (2010) argue that despite the continuing pro-Western course of Poland including expansion of civil rights to national and ethnic minorities, identity shaped upon foundations recognised as traditional remains an important aspect of the national character. Ethnocultural elements such as language and Roman Catholicism became essential in tracing the roots of modern national identity in Poland. *Ethnosymbolists* claim that the *ethnic cores* and political traditions from interwar Poland or pre-partition Poland were preserved by the émigré cultural centres and the. Moreover, this research demonstrates that the conflicting definitions of Poland and Polish national consciousness remained an element of the political scene in the post-Communist state.

Chapter 3: Methods and Strategies

This research traces the construction of modern Polish national identity through an analysis of a large body of literature discussing nation-building and nationalism in Europe. This study has identified *ethnosymbolism* as opposed to *primordialism* and *modernism* as the most appropriate method of discussing the dissemination of a distinctive national identity in modern Poland. Moreover, this study discusses the role of the peculiar ethnocultural elements and the role of the *ethnic cores* in bolstering the process described as “national revival” in East-Central Europe. The examination of archival materials, governmental documents, and a body historical research in conjunction with the application of *ethnosymbolism* allows an insight into the process of shaping of national and regional identities in modern Poland. Unlike *modernism* which disputes any role of pre-modern identities in shaping modern nations, *ethnosymbolism* accepts the role of pre-modern identities or *ethnies* in laying the foundations for nations in East-Central Europe.

This thesis, above all, seeks to identify when the modern Polish nation came into existence, what foundations was it formed on, and which elements of the modern nation predate its “revival”. Moreover, it demonstrates the process of expansion of Polish national identity following the final partition of Poland in 1795. Locating of the myths and ethnocultural elements responsible for the shaping of modern national identity allows this study to explain which of these distinctive aspects of identity endured as essential to defining the national character.

Furthermore, this research has analysed the national revival and nation building in Poland through the prism of different elements perceived as ethnic cores or as the ethnocultural foundations of the national identity in Poland. It has

predominantly concentrated on two distinct currents perceiving Polish nation as either an ethnic or a civic-territorial community. Analysis of the wide range of tools applied by nationalists such as the juxtaposition of religion and national symbolism allowed this research to present the process of shaping the national movement and widening the appeal of myths previously shared by the upper strata across the nineteenth century East-Central Europe. Revisiting and acknowledging the nationalist *modus operandi* facilitates an understanding of the complex path towards self-determination in the region (Taras, 1998; Snyder, 2003).

3.1 Modern Nationalism in East-Central Europe

Ethnosymbolism study provides a structured framework within which some of the central questions in the study of the modern ethnic groups and nations (outlined in chapter 1) may be critically evaluated.

According to Stephen Van Evera (1997), "(...) a good theory explains important phenomena: it answers questions that matter to the wider world, or it helps answer such questions" (Van Evera, 1997:19). Furthermore, Van Evera claims that a solid theoretical framework contains a large explanatory power allowing wider understanding of the subject matter (1997:19-20). Therefore, evaluation and application of the writings of some of the most influential scholars engaged in the study of nations and nationalism became the underpinning of this study. The considerations of *ethnosymbolist* and, to a smaller extent, *modernist* interpretations as expounded by Anthony D. Smith (1976, 1981, 2008), John Hutchinson (1994, 2005), Benedict Anderson (1983), Elie Kedourie (1960), Miroslav Hroch (1985,

2007), Walker Connor (1984) and Ernest Gellner (1983, 1987, 1994) shaped the foundations of this thesis.

The application of appropriate methods and strategies is essential as they determine the categorization of information and effectively outcome of the entire research. Accurate organisation of information facilitated the structuring of this study into segments, based on periods and themes, allowing categorisation of distinctive policies in shaping the modern Polish nation as an ethnic/organic or political/territorial community. In order to demonstrate how national identity was defined in post-1918 Poland, this research applied the paradigms proposed by *ethnologists*.

Furthermore, this study analysed data from the different regions of Poland in different periods. It is necessary to keep in mind that post-1918 Poland was comprised of regions constituting integral parts of different realms for over a century. Moreover, many of the pre-partition territories were not connected to Poland following the military campaign of 1918-1921. Also, a substantial part of the population within the borders the reconstructed Poland had developed distinctive identities, separate from the cultural traditions and political programme proposed by the Polish Socialists and the National Democrats.

Furthermore, through the development of chapter-specific research questions (discussed in the following sections) it became possible to form hypotheses. Systematic categorisation of particular sets of information underpins the theoretical foundations of this study. According to Peter Burnham, Karin Gilland, Wyn Grant and Zig Layton-Henry (2004), research in politics requires definition of the key concepts in order to develop a clear and logical framework (2004:33-35).

3.2 Nationalism and Modern Nations

This study examines the process of nation building and the construction of national identity in Poland predominantly through the prism of *ethnosymbolism*. It also acknowledges the role of *primordialism* and *perennialism* in shaping of nation-states at the turn of the twentieth century. According to Hans Kohn (1965) until the late eighteenth century the idea of the nation did not have any substantial influence on the lives of the mass population. The French Revolution which influenced the “awakening” of the peoples and formation of national sentiment had an impact on the expansion of the idea of citizenship and the role of divergent elements such as religion and language on the construction of modern national identity (Kohn, 1965:17-18).

Modernism and ethno-symbolism allow an inspection of specific ethnic elements explaining their appeal in the process of “national revival” across East-Central Europe (Hroch, 1985). Although the proponents of *modernism* claim that elements described as “traditional” and “ancient” in modern national setting are merely a forgery these elements were central in shaping of the modern states providing the populace with a sense of continuity and the state with legitimacy (Hutchinson, 2005:11; Misztal; 2003:104-105).

The main difference between the proponents of *primordialism*, *modernism* and *ethnosymbolism* lies in what would be most accurately described as “periodization” of national elements. Ethnosymbolism seeks to comprehend and categorise formation of the modern East-Central European states in early-modern and pre-modern periods. Analysis of the ethnocultural elements distinguishing ethnic groups and nations across East-Central Europe allows to tracing the ethnic origins of modern

nations. Unlike the *modernists*, claiming the distinctive ethnocultural elements and traditions as nothing more than fraudulent interpretations of pre-modern history, *ethnosymbolists* without myths and memories of the nations the “revival” could not take place.

Moreover, with regards to the Polish case the destruction of the early-modern realm occurred whilst the elites proposed a new model of the Commonwealth, taking the first steps towards expansion of the definition of nationality and citizenship. This evidence suggests that there are enduring ethnocultural elements of the Polish past which existed prior to the final partition of the state in 1795 and acted as significant components in the preservation of a distinct territorial identity. This research argues that particular ethnocultural aspects responsible for preservation of a distinctive *ethnie* such as shared myths of origin, cultural exchange, religious reform, and a distinct political tradition were the bedrock of modern Poland and its national identity. . Anthony D. Smith (1991, 1999) argues that the ethnic ties and pre-existing cultures are a solid explanation of the “popular roots and widespread appeal of nationalism” (Smith, 1999:9). Furthermore, according to the proponents of *ethnosymbolism*, national identity is constantly reconstructed, as frequently as each generation in order to ensure the longevity and vitality of the national identity.

Nationalism, according to the proponents of *ethnosymbolism*, consists and relies on modern and ancient elements. The construction of nation-states in the region required initiators of nationalism who would propagate the idea among their social group. These *ethnic cores* acted as the guardians of the distinctive culture and traditions. In the nineteenth century, these cores held a dual role, firstly as they legitimised the national (re-) construction of particular states and secondly they

served a powerful link between dispersed groups sharing similar traits. These “conveyors of ideas” were able to disseminate the cluster of ethnocultural content in the period when the peasantry and workers were becoming more aware of their role in the society.

Priests, scribes and bards, often organized into guilds and castes, who recount, re-enact, and codify the traditions. Often as the only literate strata, and being necessary for intercession with divine forces, priests, scribes and bards achieve considerable influence and prestige in many communities (...) (Smith, 1991:38)

Establishment of legal institutions, guilds, and other organisations shaped the foundations for the future revival of nations. *Ethnosymbolists* and *modernists* offered explanations as to the process of the shaping of multiple identities. The aforementioned ‘ethnic cores’ preserved a sense of common historic identity within nations states, “this leads [ethnicists] to contextualize the emergence of nations within the larger phenomenon of ethnicity which shaped them.” (Hutchinson, 1994:7; Conversi, 2006:22).

National identity created “a sense of common history and way of life, and particular ideas of space, that endows its members with identity and purpose” (Hutchinson,1994:7). This study argues that although the idea of the nation existed in early modern Poland this definition remained narrow until the late nineteenth century. Despite this argument, the construction of a modern Poland should be perceived through the prism of *la longue durée* (Smith, 1999:10), rather than as a fraudulent interpretation and appropriation of history of an unrelated realm in the modern era.

This particular idea presents the *ethnies* embedded into national history not as individuals but rather as a group sharing a common purpose. Collective identities are formed and gain greater depth as myths and religious and cultural heritage form the

bonds within the ethnic group. The mass appeal of ethnonationalism is only possible with “the longevity of nations,” which is expressed according to Smith as “the continuing power of myths, symbols and memories of ethnic chosenness (...)” (Smith, 1999:19).

3.3 The Application of Ethno-Symbolism to this Study

As mentioned in the Introduction, use of appropriate theory is significant to the outcome of the project. With regard to the construction of national identity in modern Poland, the case is complex and requires an analytical approach discussing elements stemming from the pre-modern and early modern periods which shaped the modern character of the Polish nation. There is a need for a thorough examination of the foundations of the multiple identities crystallizing throughout the turbulent eras from the destruction of the Kingdom of Poland in 1795 until the accession of the European and global institutions.

Historical analysis utilised by the *ethnosymbolists* as one of the central approaches to studying nations and nationalisms can be used to show how particular characteristics were preserved by institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church (Pease, 2009) or political tradition from the early-modern era (Tazbir, 1986). Analysis of the process of the creation and the reframing of the role of such institutions explains their impact on the divergent elements of the revival of nationalism in East-Central Europe. Identifying these variables through the prism of *ethnosymbolist* theories allows this research to explain how “nationalism became a vehicle for rapid social change, for mobilizing people, for claiming a ‘homeland’ by redrawing the map and for destroying local and regional ties (...)” (Smith, 1999: 61).

Strategies proposed by the proponents of *ethnosymbolism* allow explanation of the role of the myths in the foundation of national identity. Moreover, this particular theoretical framework allows wider understanding of socio-political transitions. Application of ethno-symbolism as the theoretical framework of this study provides a platform from which to expound and contextualise the shaping of the modern Polish society. Furthermore, it investigates matters such as the evolving definition of the Polish nation through the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Through the analysis of historical accounts, this study demonstrates the contrast between the official national agenda and the minorities incorporated into modern Poland in 1918.

Theories of nationalism proposed by the *ethnosymbolists* shape the methodology and strategies of this research. The ability to recognise the main agents behind the process of *polonization* or *re-polonization* of ethnic minorities allows this research to assess other such developments in nation states across East-Central Europe. It also attempts to explain to a wider audience the contemporary revival of identities previously invisible to the successive national governments. This research attempts to explain how the contemporary Polish nation was shaped and the role of national minorities in the construction of the modern national identity in Poland.

3.4 Strategies and Methodology

In order to analyse the process of the shaping of the contemporary national and ethnic identities in modern 1918 Poland, this research selected a qualitative form of inquiry necessary for a thorough analysis of distinctive national programmes, parliamentary acts, newspaper articles, interviews and journals. Furthermore, analysis of the national programmes proposed by competing strands in interwar

Poland (1918-1939) discussed in depth the future of Poland and its inhabitants allowing an insight into the contemporary definitions of the Polish nation. This study analysed the developing interpretation of Poland through the prism of shared territory, as proposed by the Socialists and Poland as a primordial nation bound by blood ties.

The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was destroyed in 1795 (*Map I*) and the Second Polish Republic ceased to exist in 1939 (*Map II*), subsequently reappearing on the map of East-Central Europe within different borders (*Map III*) and with different population. This fluid state of Poland and its inhabitants constitutes a challenge to those aiming to categorise the Polish nation at the turn of the twentieth century. These difficulties in capturing and defining the dominant identity in Poland were shared by National Democracy and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS). Conflicting programmes and state models founded the competition which would outlive the interwar Poland and shape national consciousness after 1945. Comprehension of these changes required analysis of predominantly qualitative resources such as party programmes and interviews discussing the envisioned ideal model of Poland and the Polish nation. However, in order to demonstrate the actual identification of the population of Poland (within the borders presented in Map I, II, and III) this research applied empirical evidence collected by the Polish Central Statistical Office (GUS) from 1921 and 1931 in order to evaluate the claims of the politicians, political parties, and governments. However, without the qualitative research and the theoretical framework (*ethnosymbolism*) this empirical data could only provide numbers and raw categories such as language, religion, and location rather than national identity of the population. Analysis of the theories outlined by Anthony D.

Smith and John Hutchinson offered a set of tools allowing categorisation of these detached figures provided in censuses.

Moreover, the analysis of different national programmes, through the theoretical framework outlined in the previous sections, allows this research to discuss the cooperation and conflict among ethnic and national groups inhabiting modern Poland. Ascertaining the current situation of ethnic minorities and national minorities in Poland requires an exhaustive analysis of primary and secondary sources such as the censuses of the population, official parliamentary documents, and interviews with specialists, discussing the process of shaping of a modern national identity in Poland.

The aim of this research is to provide conclusions which demonstrate a pattern of political and social behaviour in contemporary Poland. Its role is also to demonstrate the means through which the definition of the Polish nation was reframed in different periods. Through the use of *ethnosymbolism* this study discusses the role of ethnocultural elements, such as republican tradition shared by the early-modern *szlachta*, and their role in the preservation of the distinctive character

The more cases or examples that are studied, the more likely that common causes can be found and generalizations made. Political events are often clarified and illuminated by comparison with similar events and processes in other contexts (Burnham, Gilland, Grant, Leyton-Henry, 2004:55)

Inquiry into the construction or rather expansion of modern national identity in Poland through the prism of *ethnosymbolism* requires analysis of Poland through the prism of *la longue duree*, periodisation, and analysis of the modern history through

the analysis of the identified *ethnic cores*. This research will analyse the role of the politically active upper strata *szlachta*, following partitioning of the First *Rzeczpospolita*. Another ethnocultural element identified as central to securing of the distinctive identity is the Church. Following the hypothesis put forward by Anthony D. Smith this study argues that religious reform and redefinition of the role of the Church in partitioned Poland allowed the institution to survive and to preserve the ethnocultural traits of the Commonwealth's identity into the modern era. The religious customs which existed in the pre-partition Poland, and the role which the Roman Catholicism played in the life of the peasantry (and to a limited extent in the lives of the elites) gave it a pivotal role in expansion of Polish nationalism to the lower strata (Tazbir, 1986, Pease, 2009). Through application of the process tracing technique this research was able to:

(...) Explore the chain of events or the decision-making processes by which initial case conditions are translated into case outcomes. The cause-effect link that connects independent variable and outcome is unwrapped and divided into smaller steps; then the investigator looks for observable evidence of each step. Process predictions are often unique- no other theories predict the same pattern of events or the same actor testimony on their motives- it offers strong tests of a theory (Van Evera, 1997:64)

Moreover, comparison of the aforementioned nationalist theories allows this research to prove the influence of the antiquity on shaping of the contemporary state. In the case of the Church and the nationalist right, there are figures and events from the nineteenth and the twentieth century of national politics which allow comparisons with other periods. Process tracing demonstrates how the role of religion changed in Poland from the early modern era where "Catholicism served as a salient indicator of Polish identity, but not as an element of great political significance or priority in statecraft" (Pease, 2009:5). Analysis of the role of both religion and cultural traditions allows this research to discuss the role of nationalism in post-1918

Poland, when the national authorities were competing for symbols capable of unifying the nation (Pease, 2009:2; Pankowski, 2010).

3.5 Field Trips and Primary Sources

This study gathered sources from institutes located in different areas of Poland. Analysis of journals, census data, and other documents gathered during extensive field trips created solid foundations for subsequent interviews with academics and politicians. This wide research allowed gathering information discussing the role of ethnic cores in expansion of the modern national identity. Extensive field trips allowed gathering information regarding the partitioned Commonwealth, the interwar Poland and the post-1945 state.

The main institutions have archives, national and local libraries, museums and galleries. Resources and data gathered from the *Biblioteka Narodowa* in Warsaw (National Library), Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolinskich in Wrocław (public and private national archival collections), the University of Wrocław (UWr), and the Central Archives of the Polish Parliament in Warsaw among others shaped the foundation of the project and offered a primary perspective on the issues raised by the theories nationalism.

Other organisations with useful resources include: the Institute of National Remembrance (*Instytut Pamięci Narodowej*, IPN), The Institute for Remembrance and Future (*Osrodek Pamięć i Przyszłość*, Wrocław) the Jewish Cultural Centre and the Jewish Museum "Galicia" (Krakow). These institutions provide an insight into the past and attempt to create a pattern of future cooperation between different

minorities living in Poland and the Polish state. This research also discusses the evolving definition of Polish nation and nationality through the prism of the official documents and parliamentary acts which were accessible in the archives of the Polish parliament (*Sejm*).

Furthermore, this study researches the complex minority issues and regional disputes in post-1918 Poland. It assesses territorial disputes between Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Germany after the First World War and the Second World War. In order to acquire the information about the contested regions after the “national revival” in East-Central Europe and the collection of documents transferred to Wrocław from Lwow (Ukraine) after 1945 provided this study with useful data.

These steps were complemented by interviews with academics, politicians, and the representatives of minority groups, who offered their interpretation of distinctive events and particular acts implemented by the consecutive administrations. Professionals from various institutions discussing the situation of ethnic minorities in Poland became crucial to this study. Academics such as Professor Andrzej Winnicki from the University of Wrocław (UWr) and Professor Maria Szmeja from Akademia Gorniczo Hutnicza (AGH) in Krakow, researching the role of national and ethnic identities in the construction of modern Poland supported this research in its discussion of the process of the shaping of the contemporary Polish nation. Dr Larysa Leszczenko provided this research with information on the evolution of Ukrainian nationalism and the changing relationship between ethnic-Poles and ethnic-Ukrainians in the interwar period (1918-1939) and after 1945.

With regard to the relationship between Poles and the German minority, interviews with the leader of the German Minority Electoral Committee (Mniejszość

Niemiecka Komitet Wyborczy) and parliamentarian Ryszard Galla from Opole and German Minority Electoral Committee candidates for the regional authorities, Damian Hutsch provided this research with valuable information on the changing situation of the German minority in Poland since 1945. Interviews with the film director Paweł Sieger regarding the situation of ethnic and national minorities following the Second World War forwarded the discussion on the expanding role of revisionism of the most recent Polish history.

Discussions with academics and politicians are fundamental to the understanding of the character of the contemporary Polish nation and the evolving political sphere in Poland following the collapse of the authoritarianism in 1989. Dr Tomasz Szyszlak (UWr) provided this research with information on contemporary self-definitions of ethnic-Poles and minorities inhabiting Poland. Professor Andrzej Wiszniowski was a key source of information regarding the changing political space in Poland post 1989 and the polarisation of the political sphere in the modern state. Interviews with politicians from different political parties demonstrate the role of the traditional cleavage in the shaping of political competition in contemporary Poland. An interview with Professor Robert Wiszniowski (University of Wrocław, UWr) researching the contemporary political system in Poland, provided the final section of this research with ideas regarding the evolution of the Polish society and political parties.

Interviews with members of non-governmental organisations influencing the contemporary Polish population provided this research with information on the present conflict between territorial and organic visions of Poland. Moreover, this research also analysed newspapers and magazines in order to provide a

contemporary outlook on the Polish society. Critical analysis of articles from *Polityka*, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, *Wprost*, *Rzeczpospolita*, *Newsweek Polska*, *Do Rzeczy*, and others reveal the present state of Polish society and the issues which continue to shape the contemporary national identity.

3.6 Research Questions

The Methods and Strategies presented in the previous paragraphs of this study were applied in order to answer some key research questions:

- 1) What was the role of religion in preserving the Polish cultural identity under the partitions and how was the Roman Catholic Church responsible for the national “mobilisations against hegemonic states, elites and minorities” (Cordell, 1999:21)? What was the role of religion in the “resurrected” 1918 Polish state? Why did Marshal Piłsudski avoid the alliance with the Catholic Church in Poland after the state’s inception in 1918? What were the links between the Polish Right and Roman Catholic Church in Poland between 1918 and 1939? How influential was the Church following the Second World War? What is the role of the Church in the era of West European civic nationalism? (Snyder, 2003; Pease, 2009; Pankowski, 2010)

Establishing the role of the Church in the preservation of national consciousness on the part of the Polish ethnies and in the process of nation building will allow determining the influence of the early-modern ethnocultural elements on post-1918 Poland. Multi-level analysis of the period and form in which modern Poland was constructed allows this study to demonstrate the Polish “national revival” in the wider East-Central European context. These

questions discussing the role of the Church in Polish history allow further reconstruction of social attitudes as well as the role of official policies in the construction of modern national identity in Poland. These research questions also demonstrate the patterns and generalisations about the national politics and attitudes which survived the partitions (nineteenth century), occupation (1939-1945), and the era of Socialism. Another set of questions helps this study to establish the approach of successive governments towards ethnic and religious minorities inhabiting the territory of Poland after 1918. The key questions here are:

2) What were the methods of successive Polish governments used to suppress regional separatism in across post-1918 Poland? What was the situation of non-ethnic Poles before 1939 and after the Second World War? How did the German minority inhabiting post-1918 and post-1945 Polish state become the victim of its heritage? (Cordell, 2000; Smith, 2008; Snyder, 2005).

The penultimate set of questions discusses the contemporary society and politics in post-1989 Poland. This part of the study discusses how the ethnocultural elements and the *ethnic cores* discussed in previous chapters of this study were defined by the competing political strands in Poland. Analysis of distinctive party programmes from the 1990s and 2000s demonstrates the changing attitude towards the construction of Poland upon cultural and not ethnic nationalism, mirroring Western nationalism shaped in the process of bureaucratic incorporation. . Through analysis of the central aims of Polish governments since 1989 this research demonstrates whether accession to supranational institutions and organizations such as NATO (1999) and to the European Union (2004) led to

strengthening of either the territorial or the organic model of Poland. Furthermore, the analysis of documents such as the 1997 constitution and the Act on National Minorities (2005) offered evidence of the preferred direction in shaping of modern national identity by the successive Polish administrations.

3) The final set of questions concerns themes such as: What was the impact of the authoritarian regime on shaping national identity in the post-Communist Poland? How Polish national identity become more inclusive? How did the programmes of political parties in post-Communist Poland approach the question of national identity? How successful was the transformation and what impact did it have on shaping the modern Polish society? What was the role of international institutions in opening the debate on national identity in Poland? Why do elements of ethnonationalism feature in political campaigns? What was the role of the Church in post-Communist Poland?

An analytical presentation of these policies allows this study to demonstrate the construction and shaping of national identity in East-Central Europe. With the use of *ethnosymbolism* this research demonstrates not only the continuity between the early-modern realm and the post-1918 Poland but also to assess the role of distinctive ethnocultural in shaping the contemporary national consciousness. This study tests the application of *ethnosymbolism* to the study of nationalism in modern Poland. This is achieved through the analysis of history with a particular focus on the competing Polish nationalist movements which swept through the region following the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the final partition of Poland in 1795. Analysis of the nationalist rhetoric and programmes proposed in the nineteenth century with the use of this theoretical framework allowed determining to what extent

ethnocultural elements of national consciousness were redesigned in order to expand the definition of the Polish nation. The use of the *ethnosymbolist* analytical framework allows the demonstration of the distinctive ethnocultural elements within the programmes proposed by the National Democrats and the Socialists when designing post-1918 Poland.

Moreover, this study claims that without the ethnocultural elements and specific institutions, which carried the distinctive characteristics of the Polish ethnics since the pre-modern, and the early-modern eras, the national consolidation and the construction of modern Polish state would have been unattainable. This study applies *ethnosymbolism* in order to discuss the role of religious reform, cultural borrowing, popular participation (Smith, 1991:36) in the expansion of a shared identity previously exclusive to the upper strata to the mass population. This thesis hypothesises that although the *ethnic cores* carried the distinctive consciousness from generation to generation it was not until the late nineteenth century when the lower strata became aware of their disparate identity and became included into the nation building project. This study also analyses the particular definitions of the modern Polish nation which crystallised in the nineteenth century and their durability in post-1918 Poland.

By employing categorizations and generalizations, this study describes the criteria under which shaping of national consciousness operated in different periods. This analysis approaches Polish history as a case-study illustrative of a wider phenomenon of ethnonationalism and its outcomes thus providing the modern study of nationalities with a useful pattern for the future understanding of various processes shaping identities in East-Central Europe.

Chapter 4: The Shaping of National Identity

Mieczysław Biskupski (2000) following theories put forward by *modernists*, argues that Poland which appeared in 1918 was an entirely modern construct that bore no resemblance to the early-modern state. Biskupski, in his analysis, claims that not only did institutions which functioned in the Polish state before the third partition (1795) fail to preserve a significant degree of continuity but also failed to incorporate the original republican traditions of *Rzeczpospolita* (Biskupski, 2000:14). According to *modernists*, Benedict Anderson (1983) and Elie Kedourie (1966) the creation of an imaginary bond was crucial in “national revival” within the desired borders. Nationalist elites were responsible for finding links between the pre-modern states and their hypothesised successor states. This argument would present post-1918 Poland as a modern realm which was constructed by nationalist agitators who propagated imaginary links with an ancient realm. This realm, according to the *modernists*, was long gone and the states which came to existence following the French Revolution (1789-1799) merely forged their traditions in order to gain legitimacy.

The birth of nationalist ideology in nineteenth-century Europe irreversibly impacted upon the wider understanding of the modern nation and its evolution into the nation state. It is argued by Ernest Gellner (1994 [1964]) that nationalism was not only an “effect of industrial social organisation” (1994:40) but it also took over the role of religion in establishing a new secular order based on distinctive language and culture (Gellner, 1994). The secularisation of Europe progressed through the weakening of dynastic realms as well as through the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The circulation of modern ideologies in the form

of print language allowed nationalist intelligentsias to introduce the masses to the concept of nation and the role designed for them within this pioneer construct (Anderson, 1983:80). Such ideas became the foundation for those Polish émigré politicians who either believed that there was a need to break away from the burden of past inequalities and create an entirely new society without the rule of the *szlachta* (Walicki, 1982:34-35) or those who believed that reconstruction of a modern Polish state required the creation of an influential bourgeoisie capable of leading of social groups in the hypothesised state (Prazmowska, 2010:5; Snyder, 2003:4-5).

Proponents of *modernism* argue that without institutions binding peoples within a unified state it is difficult, if not impossible, to talk about continuity of those states for generations and forming integral parts of different empires. Institutions such as a recognized government and/or a parliament passing official legislation without external interference are some of the main pointers of self-determination necessary for a state's survival. *Modernists* claim that without this crucial link between different periods in a state's history the dominant realms absorbed weakening regional affiliations. Conversely, successive generations without a crucial link to the lost body politic developed a distinct identity based on criteria specific to their contemporary condition. The difference between the pre-modern and modern political situation of Poland is frequently seen as that of two different constructs (Biskupski, 2000). In 1795 with the third and final partition of the state, centuries of political development necessary for maintaining the statehood came to an end. Following this period all of the remaining lands formerly constituting *Rzeczpospolita* along with its population were incorporated into the Russian, Prussian, and Habsburg Empires. Following the partition of the Commonwealth its distinctive ethnocultural characteristics were safeguarded by the *szlachta* and the clergy. This study identified

these two well-educated social groups as capable of preserving the distinctive elements shared by the Polish nation¹¹ through periods of political turmoil or even statelessness. This ability to guard the myths of origin, literary, and political traditions allow identifying these two groups as *ethnic cores*.

Institutions and elements crucial to the revival of modern states are recognized as strategic in shaping and forming the modern state and the links that these modern states share with their predecessors. Smith also claims that:

(...) Locating such ethnic cores tells us a good deal about the subsequent shape and character of nations if (and when) such nations emerge. It helps us to answer in large part the question: who is the nation? and to some extent: where is the nation? (Smith, 1991: 38)

Construction of modern Poland and continuing process of shaping a single national identity on the foundations derived from the early-modern Commonwealth required combining of the pre-1795 republican traditions with the modern state model (Brykczynski, 2010, Snyder, 2005). Much of post-1795 Polish history would allow this conclusion yet there are peculiar ethnocultural elements of the Polish past which demand further explanation and periodization. The role of the Church, unique customs preserved by the *szlachta* and the distinctive cultural (and linguistic) traditions derived from the pre-partition Poland, appear central to the process of shaping modern national identity in the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939). The following sections of this study will analyse *when* and *how* these pre-partition identities were disseminated. Analysis of population censuses allows assessment of the process of national consolidation at the turn of the twentieth century. With the

¹¹ Pre-1791 nation consisting only of the upper strata

application of *ethnosymbolism* allowing wider analysis of ethnic cores and ethnocultural elements transmitted from the early-modern realm it becomes possible to demonstrate societal links which continued to function following the ultimate partition of the Commonwealth. Indeed, inquiry into these associations and the social preconditions existing in the region offers a more thorough understanding of the wider nation building process in east Central Europe.

4.1 The Role of “Ethnic Cores” in Shaping Modern Poland

The collapse of the Polish Republic (1792-1795) did not lead to a single programme of state reconstruction but rather a disagreement among the elites over the envisioned future model of Poland. Between the drafting of the constitution of 3 May (1791) and the final partition of 1795 the main idea of the defenders of the “Old Republic” was that of gradual and moderate expansion of the nation (Lukowski, 1994:84). Their inability to prevent the imminent third partition (1795) led to a revision of the *Rzeczpospolita’s* political impotence and a thorough analysis of the ailments which led to the gradual deterioration of the Commonwealth and the ultimate loss of sovereignty.

Expansion of the “nation” was deemed necessary by the nationalist elites. This designation [of nation], previously enjoyed exclusively by the upper strata, had to become more inclusive in order to ensure the reconstruction of Poland. The revolutionary ideas of the eighteenth century France and North America were echoed by the constitution of 1791, insurrection of 1794, and by *szlachta* following the third

partition of *Rzeczpospolita*¹² in 1795. The idea of universal suffrage which would reinvigorate of the state was pioneered in Poland by the veteran of revolutionary struggle in North America, Tadeusz Kościuszko. In *The Proclamation of Połaniec*¹³ (*Manifest Połaniecki*, 1794) Kościuszko acknowledged the need for expansion of Polish citizenship to include the population drawn from the lower strata. Similar enlightened ideas began to circulate following the establishment of the *Sejm Czteroletni* (Great Sejm, 1788-1792) as well as the constitution of 3 May (1791) (Davies, 1981:539; Lukowski, 1994:78). These historic events became important in shaping the national myths in the late nineteenth century. Patrice M. Dabrowski (2004) claims that “the events of the final years of independent statehood became the cornerstone for the late-nineteenth-century Polish optimism about the future” (Dabrowski, 2004:102).

The key obstacles to introducing significant changes to the structure of the state were (aside from the international constraints¹⁴) linked to the enormous social divisions. The ruling *szlachta* included only around 6-8 per cent of the population, which although high in contemporary Europe, left the majority of the remaining population in a terrible situation (Brykczynski, 2010:650). Peasants operated according to the feudal principles and virtually belonged to the landowners (Lukowski, 1994:78-79). The nation which both the nobility and Kościuszko saw as their fatherland was seen by peasants as a construct to which they did not belong (1994:79; Davies, 2005). Another issue slowing down the development of the state

¹²*Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów* (from Polish): Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, from 1792 known as *Rzeczpospolita Polska* (Republic of Poland)

¹³ The Proclamation of Połaniec (*Uniwersał Połaniecki*)(1794) Act signed by Tadeusz Kościuszko dedicated to emancipation of peasantry and improvement of their financial situation. It was aimed to allow peasants to become citizens in order to take part in the insurrectionary war against Russia (1794).

¹⁴ Poland became a patronage of the Russian Empire in the eighteenth century and required permission for alterations in different areas of domestic politics.

was the lack of the middle classes with rights equal to those of the landowners. This anachronistic system preserved national identity exclusively to the upper strata slowing down the creation of a bourgeoisie conscious of a shared territorial identity (Davies, 2005:9; Brykczynski, 2010:650).

The problem of participation in Kościuszko's insurrection of 1794 became one of the themes in the rhetoric of *émigré* thinkers such as Prince Adam Czartoryski through the first half of the nineteenth century. This issue would reappear in the writings of political philosophers and artists throughout the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries. Works discussing the question of nation and citizenship in the works of Joachim Lelewel, Maurycy Mochnacki, Roman Dmowski and others had an impact on the understanding of Polish nationality especially among those peoples previously excluded from participation in the political life of the state.

Furthermore, historical events such as *Sejm Czteroletni*¹⁵, 1791 constitution, and the insurrection of 1794, were used to incorporate the masses into the previously exclusive Polish nation in the late nineteenth century. These achievements, along with the commemoration of historic battles, such as the bicentennial of The Relief of Vienna in 1883, became essential in imagining the Polish nation as consisting of the entire population (Dabrowski, 2004:103), beyond religious, linguistic, or ethnic boundaries, which gained prominence in the second half of the nineteenth century.

¹⁵ *Sejm Czteroletni* (Great Sejm; 6.10.1788-29.5.1792) was, among others, devoted to preservation of Polish independence and introduction of revolutionary socio-political reforms aiming to modernize the state.

4.1.1 *Szlachta*

The *szlachta* which was considered as the only *caste* of citizens within the state, continued to dominate politics as well as cultural development from the late Middle Ages until the Age of Enlightenment (Davies, 1981; Tazbir, 1986 (a)). It was indeed the nobility which codified many of the traditions specific to their group and in effect to the future of Polish society (Snyder, 2003). It is necessary to further elaborate on the position which the gentry held in the Commonwealth as its status allows for further discussions on the role it played during the era marked by the state's dissolution. Successive unions between the *szlachta* and the elected kings allowed codification of certain laws which with time gained significant importance and were recognized as the basic principles of 'democracy of the gentry' (Walicki, 1982:11; Brykczynski, 2010). They also elevated the nobility to the status of the heritage bearers and the protectors of Christian culture in Europe (Tazbir, 1986 (a)). Since the first election of the king in the sixteenth century and creation of *artykuly henrykowskie*¹⁶ (King Henry's Articles, 1575) each king-elect had to agree upon certain laws created by the nobility. With successive elections, these laws became greater claiming most of the significant authority of the sovereign and granting it to the gentry. On a political level the *szlachta* "enjoyed rights relative to the sovereign" (Snyder, 2003:22) on the cultural level the gentry was involved in creation of numerous myths surrounding both its origin¹⁷ and the turning the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth into a great European power.

In the eighteenth-century the costs of the freedoms granted to the nobility continued to mount. Andrzej Walicki (1982) and Janusz Tazbir (1986a) argue that

¹⁶ Set of privileges granted to the nobility, agreed upon by the king.

¹⁷ The Polish gentry claimed a direct descent from the warrior Sarmatian tribes who allegedly had created the first Polish state (Davies, 1981, Walicki, 1982, Snyder, 2003).

the nobility was unwilling to modernise from the inside. The slow progress of the state was inherently linked with the myths of election of the nation. Walicki claims that "(...) the Golden Freedom of the Polish gentry was only a historical anomaly or a strange anachronism – a relic of the pre-absolutist feudal anarchy" (Walicki, 1982:12).

The inability to change this political impotence obstructed modernisation which in effect delayed the process of evolution of the middle classes. Preventing necessary change had negative effects upon the state and led to a growing division between the archaic social class and those excluded from political activity. Decisions made by the landowning gentry did not foster industrialisation, and in effect "eighteenth century Poland (...) [was] characterised by the decline of its cities and by the unchallenged rule of the nobility" (Walicki, 1982:12). This obstructionism blocked socio-political changes without which the creation of a politically significant bourgeoisie was not possible. These and other disagreements led to political divisions between the nobles who in effect had created confederations¹⁸ united against the modernisation of the state and the strengthening of the monarch's position. Moreover, the constitution of 1791 recognised the special role of the *szlachta* in the preservation and shaping of Polish national identity. In the Second Article of the constitution "*Szlachta Ziemianie*" (Noble Landowners), the upper strata are recognised as the lawmakers and the highest authority in the state. The *Szlachta* were also recognised as the defenders of freedom in *Rzeczpospolita (II Szlachta Ziemianie, Konstytucja 3 Maja, 1791)*.

Enlightened groups within the *szlachta* believed that change was inevitable but due to a variety of circumstances they were not able to introduce the alterations

¹⁸Confederation of Bar 1768-1771 and Confederation of Targowica 1792

to the ailing system. Some of the steps taken by the nobility became of primary importance to the process of mythmaking rather than to the socio-political transition required within the contemporary realm, “in Polish eyes, the refusal to accept the political situation as reality has formed an essential spur to national consciousness” (Davies, 1981:532). It is important to note that both the *Sejm Czteroletni* as well as the constitution of 3 May (1791) had an impact on the creation of the myth of a progressive republic aiming to become a modern state. The inability to implement either the constitution or the *Proclamation of Polaniec* (1794) did not have an obvious short or mid-term impact, however, within a century it became clear that these events laid the foundation for modern Poland and provided essential tools necessary for consolidation of the Polish nation.

Furthermore, the modern symbols of Polish ethnicity were marked by both the courageous acts denouncing the Russian protectorate¹⁹ and the hopeless battle against the superior forces of advancing enemy. Finally, it is important to outline some of the central ideas from the *Proclamation of Polaniec* issued by Tadeusz Kościuszko on 7 May 1794. The document preceded Napoleon Bonaparte’s calls for the abolition of serfdom, although it was never officially implemented and did not have any actual overt political impact at the time of its introduction. Its aims for including the lower strata of the society in the war with Russian empire gained only moderate support (Davies, 1981:538-539).

Andrzej Walicki (1982) argues that the achievements of the Polish Sejm in the late eighteenth century became the turning point the Polish nation. Indeed, ideas for involving a wider spectrum of society in political activity were not implemented until

¹⁹ In 1716, after the Commonwealth’s imminent defeat in the Great Northern War (1700-1721) *Silent Sejm* (1716) gave away patronage of the Polish state to the Russian Tsar, this political situation remained the status quo until the final deconstruction of the state in 1795.

the second half of the nineteenth century. To the *szlachta* however, accustomed to their privileges and not prepared to share their 'golden freedom' such proposals seemed controversial. The upper strata recognised elevation of the masses to the status of citizens as a threat to the early-modern democracy of the nobility, granting the upper strata extensive privileges. This event, although dividing the traditionalist nobility from the progressive idealists such as Hugo Kołłątaj, triggered a debate on the decay of the Commonwealth, and future improvements necessary for the state to address issues concerning the emergent middle class and the peasantry gaining national awareness (Walicki, 1982:33).

Although, the *Szlachta* lost its sovereign state in the late eighteenth century it was able to create a gradual programme of national renewal. Although the achievements of the *Sejm* and the *Proclamation of Polaniec* had only a limited impact in the 1790s, a century later these events became ethnocultural symbols which were used to create a bridge with the masses, elevating them to the rank of nobility. The *szlachta* fall into the category of what Anthony D. Smith defines as *political cores* capable of carrying and disseminating national myths and ethnocultural traditions in different periods of history (Smith, 2008:108). Although pre-modern and early modern allegiance to the state was shared only by the upper strata with the masses excluded from the society, in the nineteenth century commemorations of the glorious past, and the achievements of the Polish antiquity became an element of shared national identity (Dabrowski, 2004:106). The upper classes, however, required support from Roman Catholicism which, until the final partition, was the religion of nearly half of the population of the Commonwealth (Smith, 2008:109).

4.1.2 The Roman Catholic Church

By the late-nineteenth-century the Church was able to claim a paramount role in constructing a bridge between *szlachta* and the lower strata. Until the nineteenth-century the Church did not have the dominant role in shaping the national consciousness. In fact, according to some historians, remained only one among many elements of Polish consciousness (Pease, 2009; Porter-Szucs, 2011).

The clerical monopoly over education was weakened, the reading public delighted in a long list of anticlerical satires, the lifestyles of the elites grew ever more secular, and the Church had to defend itself against attacks from enlightenment theorists (Porter-Szucs, 2011:6).

Furthermore, although some historians (such as Ewa Jabłońska-Deptuła) claim that Catholicism was the crucial element in preservation of Polish ethnicity, Porter-Szucs (2011) argues that there were other “spaces of expression” allowing the preservation of the ethnic organic definition of Polishness. In fact, the myths and traditions were to a large extent preserved in the literary tradition and until the second-half of the nineteenth century “the Church was just one of many sites for cultivating Polishness during the period when there was no Polish state” (Porter-Szucs: 2011:8). The Church remained one of the *ethnic cores* codifying distinctive ethnocultural elements and disseminating them in the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth century the Church preserved the ethnic-organic rather than the territorial tradition of the state derived from the Commonwealth. Competition between different ethnic groups for self-determination narrowed the appeal of the polyethnic realm. Furthermore, the ethnocultural traditions preserved by the Church were not designed to reconstruct the early-modern societal ties. Roman Catholicism provided a continuity of pre-1795 state effectively shaping the framework for the organic Polish nation. This could be evidenced by the unwillingness of Pope Pius VI to

support the Kościuszko insurrection as implementation of the constitution (1791) was an immediate threat to the status of the Catholic Church in *Rzeczpospolita* (Porter-Szucs, 2011:210).

Moreover, Janusz Tazbir (1986) claims that Catholic Church was only able to gain the role of a hegemon with the deterioration of the state institutions. The decay of the bureaucratic system created an environment in which populism came to the fore. While through the existence of the Commonwealth the Church remained present in state affairs it was not central to Polishness until the nineteenth century as it was one of the faiths (Tazbir, 1986(a):80-81) and was not granted a special status until the constitution of 1791.

When its citizens failed to perform all of their duties, God cut its territory significantly. (...) [Poland] was compared to Jerusalem, punished by God in the same manner for committing sins (Tazbir, 1986a:211)

The state institutions recognised the Church as the last bastion of sovereignty as relations with the states' neighbours were becoming sour. The nobility unwilling to reform became involved in escapist ideas such as the *antermurale christianitatis*²⁰, hoping that the "Western character" of Poland would protect it from destruction (Hutchinson, 2005:173; Tazbir, 1986 (a) 204-219). This political tradition of Poland as the furthest bastion of civilisation to the east of Rome or as the contemporary Jerusalem remained influential within the rhetoric of the Church and was disseminated in the nineteenth century in the literature of Romanticism.

Furthermore, the xenophobic traditionalists were adamant that the Holy See and "civilized Europe" could not afford to lose the outpost of Western civilisation. The myths of national election and the messianic role of the Polish nobility circulating

²⁰*Antemurale* (Latin; *przedmurze*, Polish) was the final line of defence before enemy reached city walls. In the eighteenth century Poland was compared to the final line of defence of the Christian world from the "barbaric" east (Hutchinson, 2005:173).

prior to the destruction of the state became influential in the following century and were propagated by the Romanticists. In 1791 the Church was granted the role of the “reigning national religion” which led to strengthening of the position of the institution across *Rzeczpospolita* (I Religia Panujaca, Konstytucja 3 Maja, 1791).

“The reigning national religion is and will be the holy Roman Catholic faith with all its laws. Conversion from the dominant confession to any other confession is forbidden under the penalty of apostasy (...). The religion obeys us to love others, worshippers of all religions (*I Religia Panujaca, Konstytucja 3 Maja, 1791*).

Neal Pease (2009) argues that while in the early modern Poland Roman Catholicism was merely a “salient indicator of Polish identity” (Pease, 2009:5) in the nineteenth-century it became the only functioning institution preserving the continuity of the Polish nation. In the nineteenth-century the Church became a bridge linking the upper strata and the peasantry. When the Church assumed its role as a transmitter between the early modern Poland and the partitioned Polish ethnies it also acquired a role of ethnic core responsible for disseminating the national myths in the nineteenth century. The Church (according to *ethnosymbolism*) became one of the Polish ethnic cores with the ability to transfer specific “social and cultural parameters”. The Church was able to preserve “certain events, heroes, landscapes and values [which] formed a distinctive repository of ethnic culture” (Smith, 1991:38).

Moreover, the Church played an important role in the preservation of the character of the organic Poland rather than the polyethnic Commonwealth. It was able to attract the nationalist elites as well as the lower strata leading to a consolidation of the ethnic Poles rather than other ethnic groups which inhabited the partitioned state. Although the nineteenth century nationalists hoped to widen the appeal of the envisioned *Rzeczpospolita* within its pre-1795 boundaries, this measure

remained unappealing to non-ethnic Poles, who increasingly aspired to create their own nation-states (Dabrowski, 2000). One of the earliest attempts to enfranchise the masses into the body of citizens, previously held exclusively by the nobility, was through linking events inherently linked with Polish national history and religious celebration. Presentation of the distinctive national character through “juxtaposition of religious and national events” (Dabrowski, 2000:402) allowed for the inclusion of non-ethnic Poles in the process of statecraft. Although the nationalist elites and the Church “paradoxically, just as the nation was being broadened to include peasants, regardless of their ethnic affiliation, there did not appear to have been any room for non-Catholics” (Dabrowski, 2000:410). This ambiguity in the language of Polish nationalists and the Roman Catholic Church authorities disconnected the followers of Latin-Rite or Eastern-Rite Churches.

The period of Romanticism which lasted in Poland until the 1860s, frequently utilised various tropes affiliated with spirituality and faith. Roman Catholicism was essential in the works of Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855) and Juliusz Slowacki (1809-1849) providing them with a source of mysticism and creating a link between religion and the nation. The idea of the state promoted by the poets and artists remained stagnant. The messianism²¹ (discussed further in the following section) of the Polish nation, however, remained anachronistic. It did not address the issues of social polarisation which would surface in the following decades.

The attempt by the elites proved unsuccessful to construct a national identity. It was not until the “Galician Massacre” of 1846 and the failure of the “January Insurrection” of 1863 that the elites acknowledged their inability to achieve

²¹ Messianism (*mesjanizm*): Messianism was both a literary and political trend among certain strands of the Polish émigrés presenting Poland as a state chosen by God with a mission to save all other oppressed nations (Walicki, 1982:58).

independence without the masses. In fact, the campaign of 1863 saw strengthening of the ties between ethnicity and religion as many Roman Catholic followers cried: “For God and Fatherland” (Porter-Szucs, 2011:167). The distrust between the peasantry and the nobility became an obstacle in consolidating of the nation.

Anti-Catholic campaigns, aiming to alienate the population from the Church, had a reverse effect as the desperate populations resorted to religion for both guidance and deeper meaning in their lives. This in effect redefined the role of the Church in modern Polish history. The obstacles posed by *Russification*²² in the Russian partition lands as well as Otto von Bismarck’s *Kulturkampf*²³ strengthened the role of faith among the Polish subjects of those empires and led to the coining of a stereotype of a Catholic Pole (*polak-katolik*²⁴) (Pease, 2009:7), which came into a wide use in the twentieth century.

Ethnic groups that formerly comprised the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, found that not only religion but also that their language was an expression of distinct ethnic provenance which could no longer be omitted in the process of national revival (Snyder, 2003:42-43; Kamusella: 2007:140). People of non-Polish ethnicity, such as the Ruthenes or the Jews were forced to consider assimilation in order to fit into the social framework of the hypothesised Polish state.

The nationalist elites challenged Russian policies of forced conversion which followed the 1863 uprising and attempted to include the followers of Greek Orthodoxy in the envisioned Polish nation. In Austro-Hungarian Galicia the

²²*Rusyfikacja* (Russification): policy aiming at eradication of Polish culture by abolishment of Polish language and Roman Catholic Religion (Kohn, 1971:66; Roszkowski, 2009:8).

²³*Kulturkampf* was a policy introduced by the German Prime Minister Otto von Bismarck (part of *Realpolitik*) aiming to assimilate populations with the dominant culture of the state (Garlicki, 2000:144).

²⁴*Polak-katolik*- “the conviction that to be Polish was to be Catholic and (...) not to be Catholic was not to be genuinely Polish” (Pease, 2009:7)

authorities were reluctant to accept any attempts of the Russian Empire to convert the Ruthenes. The Holy See preferred to turn a blind eye on manifestations of *Ukrainophilia*²⁵ rather than forge links with the Russian Orthodox Church. Furthermore, “the Vatican treated Ukrainophilia as lesser evil than Russophilia” (Snyder, 2003:124). Yet neither the Russification process, nor the policies of the Austro-Hungarian Empire or those belonging to the Polish nationalists can be seen as having been successful. Instead a distinct identity based on Greek Catholicism and a mixture of Ruthene dialects initiated the process of shaping of the Ukrainian nation in the late nineteenth century (Snyder, 2003:124-125).

From the 1870s onwards it was becoming evident that in Galicia the Ukrainian, rather than Polish or Russian, identity was becoming a significant counterbalance to that promoted by the Polish speaking elites. The evidence shows that by the late nineteenth century “only about 3 per cent of the population in the Russian provinces of Volhynia, Podolia and Kiev declared Polish as their first language” (Snyder: 2003:120). It became clear that the unsuccessful uprisings of 1830, 1846, and 1863 weakened the appeal of the Polish culture among non-ethnic Poles. Furthermore, the deteriorating appeal of the socio-political traditions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth was observed with the establishment of institutions such as the Shevchenko Society²⁶ in Lwow in 1873 (Kohn, 1971:67). Polish nationalism was losing ground to the national revival across the former *Rzeczpospolita*.²⁷ The inability to establish any secular institutions which would enjoy

²⁵Ukrainophiles- advocates of the use of local vernacular and the distinctness of local people from Russians (Snyder, 2003:124).

²⁶Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861): his romantic poetry became a powerful demonstration of the distinct Ukrainian identity (Davies: 2005:53)

²⁷ *Rzeczpospolita Obojga Narodów* (from Polish): Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, from 1792 known as *Rzeczpospolita Polska* (Republic of Poland)

a wide support among the populations led to the vanishing of the polyethnic traditions of the early-modern realm.

With regard to the people of the Jewish faith who communicated in various languages including Yiddish, Hebrew, Russian, Byelorussian, and Polish, the situation was complicated from both the perspective of citizenship and that of religion in the nineteenth century. Although in some regions, especially in towns in the eastern regions of the former *Rzeczpospolita* Jews constituted a substantial proportion of the population and in some cases a majority of the towns' populations²⁸ the Jews were not able to press forward their claims for an independent state. This was because although urban areas were dominated by Jewish populations, the surrounding rural areas were dominated by the Catholic and Greek Orthodox populations. Timothy Snyder (2003) argues that the lack of national tradition in Europe and the population being scattered across East-Central Europe rather than focused on any particular region pushed the Jewish people towards support for the polyethnic rather than monoethnic national states (Snyder, 2003:57).

Jewish claims for citizenship granting them more opportunities as well as religious freedom fostered anti-Semitic sentiment among Roman Catholic and Orthodox populations. In the region of Poznan (German empire) "Jews considered themselves to be Germans in terms of both citizenship and nationality (...). Poznanian Jews transformed themselves from Polish into truly German Jews over the course of the nineteenth century²⁹" (Drummond, 2001: 461-464). In the Russian empire, the

²⁸Mińsk (51 per cent Jewish), Homel (55 per cent Jewish), Pińsk (74 per cent Jewish) (Snyder, 2003:56)

²⁹ The Polish population of the region responded with an anti-Jewish as much as anti-German policy *Swój do Swego* ("each to his own") boycotting non-Polish businesses.

development of Zionism³⁰ was directed at proponents of assimilation with the dominant culture. The Zionist response was clear “(...) in their use of Yiddish and their advocacy of Hebrew they could further distance Jewish culture from Polish” (2003:57).

Moreover, the poor economic situation in the Russian Empire posed a number of problems such as social inequality and overpopulation in cities such as Warsaw which in return led to the growth of anti-Semitism across Greater Poland (*Wielkopolska*) (Davies, 2005:150).

4.2 The Foundations of the Modern Polish Nation

In the midst of the nineteenth century, nationalist agitation in East-Central Europe lay the destroyed *Rzeczpospolita* with the elites struggling to comprehend what had led to its ultimate fall. One of the largest European realms of the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries had suddenly disappeared, leaving behind one of the most numerous political elites in Europe. Freedom of the Old Republic romanticised by the Napoleonic campaigns of the early nineteenth century had merely created an autonomous Duchy of Warsaw. Following the fall of Napoleon Bonaparte, the romanticised vision of the noble Poland led to the “November Insurrection” of 1830, bringing nothing but misery and further waves of emigration (Walicki, 1982:24-28).

The nationalists deemed it necessary to enfranchise the peasantry and the urban populations crystallising into modern European middle classes were becoming aware of their identity. This widening scope of the Polish nation required masses of

³⁰ Zionism called for creation of a Jewish homeland. In Eastern Europe this was a complex matter and its aim was dedicated to distancing Jewish people from any assimilationist attempts from the Polish or other nationalisms (Snyder, 2003:56-57)

population demanding independence from the foreign rule. The matter of national belonging in order to reach the population without regard for their ethnic, religious or linguistic affiliation had to be drafted carefully allowing inclusion of the greatest numbers of a people dispersed across the territories of three different Empires.

Achieving the aim of national liberation through insurrections failed, yet the advocates of an independent Poland were capable of readjusting their programmes to the evolving socio-political situation. The understanding of nationality and citizenship among the *émigré* as well as internal political elites continued to evolve and as the agitation for an independent Poland continued, the out-dated state model where the Polish elites and Polish culture would set the tone for future development remained unacceptable. The oppression in the hands of the Polish nobility across the *kresy*³¹ through the nineteenth century made the future relationship unsustainable (Snyder, 2003:121-123).

The growing need to incorporate the peasantry into the hypothesised Polish state required revisiting and reframing the national past allowing the nationalist agitators to gain prominence and promote their cause. Some of the liminal figures of the Polish *émigré* societies such as Prince Adam Czartoryski (1770-1861), or Joachim Lelewel (1786-1861) dedicated their works to widening the definition of the Polish nation. Although representing competing visions of the future state, both Czartoryski and Lelewel discussed the Polish nation through the prism of a population extending beyond the upper strata previously perceived as citizenry (Czartoryski, 1847: III).

³¹ *Kresy* (Kresy Wschodnie) eastern territories of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

In the nineteenth century the connotation of the Polish nation was altered from the original *naród szlachecki* (Nation of the Gentry³²), (Walicki, 1982:16; Brykczynski, 2010:652-653) and effectively widened to other social strata inhabiting the territory of the former Commonwealth.

The competing diaspora in Rome, Paris and London saw the future of Poland differently. The *émigré* groups could not achieve consensus as to which territories would become the theorised Polish state (Walicki, 1982: 65-70). Following the “Galician Massacre” of 1846 when the peasantry turned against the landowners, slaughtering the nobles and burning the estates, it became clear that shaping a common understanding of the Polish identity was required in order to avoid such conflicts. It was argued by Andrzej Walicki (1982) that because the gap between the peasantry (*pospolstwo*) and the nobility (*szlachta*) was so great, the idea of a body of citizens sharing equal rights and identity was through the nineteenth century simply unimaginable (1982:70).

4.3 Nationalist Rhetoric in the Nineteenth Century

Poverty and underdevelopment of the rural areas of the Austro-Hungarian and the Russian Empires led to waves of migrations and the creation of diaspora in Western Europe (France, Great Britain) and in North America (Canada and the United States of America) (Roszkowski, 2009:8). Following the “January Insurrection” (1863) and disenchantment with Romanticist ideologies³³ came an era of passive attitudes

³² Only the people of noble birth were considered as citizens of the state, this excluded any other social groups from active political participation

³³ Authors of Romanticism claimed messianic role for the people of the former Commonwealth. They believed (Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Slowacki) in all partition revolutionary movement which would recreate the Polish state

towards any form of armed rebellion against the partitioning empires. It was argued that the immediate damage following crushing of the rebellion was so severe that “if Polish identity was to be retained, then other means of defending it had to be found” (Prazmowska, 2010:18). Defeat of the final uprising was indeed a low point for a once thriving Polish culture. Drastic change in approach to the case of national identity in the partitioned state may be observed in writings and speeches of the *émigré* authors.

In the decades following the loss of sovereignty, Polish *émigré* elites were involved in revisiting the past, the decayed state and understanding numerous issues which had led to the destruction of the state. The *émigré* society constructed around Prince Adam Czartoryski (1770-1861) located in the Parisian “Hotel Lambert” argued that although the majority of the changes proposed during the 4 years *Sejm* (*Sejm Czteroletni*, 1788-1792) and by the 3 May Constitution (1791) were short-lived and unable to prove their progressive ideas, the enlightened message of the constitution which proposed gradual changes to the social structure of the state was righteous (Czartoryski, 1847). It was in the interest of Prince Czartoryski to present to the public his idea of republicanism concentrated on the achievements of the final years of sovereignty rather than those of the corrupt and oppressive nobles. Prince Adam’s *émigré* organisation with its main thinkers such as Karol Hoffman (1798-1875) argued that the state’s traditions were out-dated and Poland-Lithuania’s gradual decomposition was as a result of anomalous internal developments (Walicki, 1982:37-38).

Moreover, Andrzej Walicki (1982), argues that although some of the main thinkers of the monarchist camp (Hotel Lambert) shared certain features of

conservatism, the Prince himself was rather “more of a liberal” (Walicki, 1982:37). Following the unsuccessful insurrection of 1830 “the constitutionalists” were forced to rethink their strategy and discuss further issues such as the extent of the Polish nation with regard to its social base and the place of different ethnicities and social groups in the destroyed *Rzeczpospolita*. Czartoryski, although supportive of the construction of a polyethnic state believed that non-ethnic Poles could not become the driving force in construction of an independent state as they could not be relied upon. He was nevertheless aware of the substantial numbers of the non-ethnic Poles (as perceived through the prism of the language and religion) who would have to be presented with equal rights in order to support reconstruction of modern Poland.

(...) [Jewry] oppressed severely by those whom they have offered their loyalty to, recall Poland, remembering, just how much it used to provide for them. (...) They suddenly began to understand that in their own interest they should connect with the other inhabitants of the common lands³⁴ (Czartoryski, 1847; 61)

In the opinion of Prince Adam Czartoryski and his camp it was in the best interests of all groups to find a consensus based on the laws outlined by the constitution (1791). Such process would involve social groups such as the bourgeoisie becoming active in support of an independent Poland. Furthermore, according to the conservative camp, the lower strata of society were ready to join the citizenry but only those who were citizens (such as the city and town bourgeoisie) were able to actively take part in the life of the state (Walicki, 1982:33). To many political theorists in Poland and abroad the draft of Poland proposed by the monarchists was unacceptable. The revolutionary period led some nationalist agitators to oppose such a divisive system and to advocate the incorporation of the

³⁴Translated by author from *Mowy Xiecia Adama Czrtoryskiego of roku 1838-1847*: “[ż ydzi] Meczeni okropni przez tych którym sie oddali, zwracaja oczy ku Polsce, przypominaja sobie ile im dawniej świadczyła. Ped ducha dochodzi I do nich, dla ich sprawy radzilby laczyc sie z innymi mieszkancami spolnej ziemi”

entire population rather than the selected middle classes into the active body of citizens.

Although the former lands of the Commonwealth were not directly involved in the Springtime of the Nations (1848) *émigré* thinkers could not deny the fact that the political climate in Europe was changing rapidly. All camps were forced to revise their strategies. It became clear that the movement which involved various social groups had had an unparalleled impact on the understanding of nationality and citizenship. The empires were forced to create a new set of laws in order to keep the masses obedient. Such laws included the *ukaz* (law) of 1861 within the Russian territories which granted full emancipation (introduced in the Congress Kingdom by the *ukaz* of 18 March 1864) to the peasantry (Davies, 2005:138). Events such as the Cracow Rising (1846) and the Springtime of Nations (1848) proved that masses were important in any attempt to reconstruct the Polish state. This was observed by Prince Adam Czartoryski who in the first instance supported the cause of the Insurgency of 1846 as the will of the people. In the collection of speeches *Mowy Xiecia Adama Czartoryskiego* (1847), the author acknowledged that the conflicts between the peasantry and the nobility were in fact a civil war, perceiving the peasantry as Polish nation. Furthermore, without the creation of a bond between the social groups, the traditions stemming from the Polish past were doomed:

I have to admit, I would have never thought that the so-called communism- madness caused by the deterioration, here and there, of civilisation, would have access to our residents (...). In the villages you could hear voices claiming that old Polish brotherly and Christian truths were no longer valid (...) (Czartoryski, 1847:111)

Joachim Lelewel on the other hand blamed Czartoryski and the monarchists for the slow progress with regard to the shaping of a strong Polish nation. He argued

that citizenship and full participation in state affairs should become a universal right of all inhabitants of the hypothesised Polish state (Walicki, 1982:34-35). Lelewel openly criticized the social structure and ideas for the reconstructed Polish state as proposed by Prince Adam Czartoryski and his followers, arguing that the corrupt elite should relinquish its role in the construction of modern Poland. The ideologue understood that it was not possible for the peasantry to accept the return of the oppressive system. Claiming equality among classes by the monarchists was according to Lelewel outrageous and was nothing more than a continuation of the hypocrisy which led to the downfall of *Rzeczpospolita* (Lelewel, 1855:3-6).

In order to construct a modern national identity which would include the masses it would be necessary to undermine the corrupt system which had led to its destruction. The shaping of a modern Poland and a Polish people would require in the first instance a clear break from the 'oligarchy of magnates' and the destructive influences of the Western enlightenment (Walicki, 1982:34-35). Lelewel demanded that other political circles accept that without unified laws no progress in the reconstruction of the Polish state was possible and that the system of inequality which destroyed the Commonwealth was untenable.

Unification had to take place among the commoners, the non-noble for the sake of freedom. It was due to the fact that role of peasantry was leading to continuous servitude as they belonged to the landowner: these commoners should be bound by the same civil law along with the gentry (Lelewel, 1855:211)

Lelewel, although calling for equality of the peasantry, promoted the construction of modern Poland on Slavic roots. This idea spread by the ideologue was perceived as an awakening of pan-Slavism which envisioned the national revival on pre-modern national foundations. It was also argued that Lelewel's definition of the

Polish nation did not create a framework which would allow clear definition of a Pole (Davies, 2005: 51).

Similar ambiguities created fertile ground for the ideas spread by the Polish Democratic Society (*Towarzystwo Demokratyczne Polskie*; TDP). The TDP promoted ideas which in the early stages of its existence were parallel to those of Joachim Lelewel. However, when Wiktor Heltman published his *Great Manifesto* (1836) it became clear that its programme was promoting radicalisation and construction of a coherent national programme. Stanisław Worcell (1799-1857) who at first accepted Lelewel's ideas concluded that the political situation required radicalization and firmer action against the partitioning powers (Davies, 2005:211). According to both Worcell and Heltman the only way to create a pure republican state was by developing democracy (Heltman, 1866). The TDP argued further that the new Polish state had no other choice but to remove all ties linking it with the un-republican and un-democratic 'democracy of the gentry' (Walicki, 1982:36). It was vital to demonstrate that reconstruction of the Polish state and its well-being was only possible if social groups of different ethnic provenance could cooperate and shape a better future for the entire state.

Wiktor Heltman whose work influenced the twentieth century ideologues argued that the envisioned Poland should be shaped through its past greatness. Referring to the achievements of Poland-Lithuania under the Jagiellon dynasty, where the cooperation between various ethnic and religious groups was central to the state's success, Poland could yet again gain freedom. Heltman called for national consolidation claiming that: "(...) the great mission for Poland was not yet completed

(...).Torn unity and dispersed national forces gave a natural outcome: common weakness” (Heltman, 1866:3-4).

Another significant aspect of the TDP’s agenda was the alleged messianic role of the Polish noble nation. Radical thinkers from the left of the political spectrum used literature by aforementioned nationalist writers such Mickiewicz (1798-1855) and Słowacki (1809-1849) to propagate romantic messianism among the Polish nobility (Davies, 2005:38). Criticism of the messianic trend was also present within the literature of the era and it was represented by Cyprian Kamil Norwid (1821-1883). Norwid argued that during the revolutionary year of 1848 Polish people needed to share their future with the rest of Europe as much as they should cherish their past (Walicki, 1982:322-323).

In the post-1863 environment the *émigré* organisations lost their credibility. Repression by the partitioning powers led to the development of novel forms of opposition such as *gradualism* and *loyalism*³⁵ (Roszkowski, 2009:9). Although throughout the 1860s and the 1870s the revolutionary groups were still involved “with student demonstrations, radical agitation in the countryside, and even political assassinations” (Porter, 2011:352), military insurgency was discredited for decades to come. The widespread persecutions of educational institutions and the Church resulted in weakening of the connection with the early-modern state (Snyder, 2003:34-36).

³⁵ Loyalism was a policy which required from Polish citizens to follow the policies of the partitioning powers

4.4 Redefining the Nation

The Romanticist visions of noble revolution led by the Polish *szlachta* against the partition powers gradually became anachronistic and the reconstruction movement led by the elites could not motivate the mass population of Polish speakers to call for self-determination. The failure of the nineteenth-century uprisings demanded a different approach which would effectively lead to reconstruction of *Rzeczpospolita*. The approach which gained a following in the second half of the nineteenth century identified the pivotal role grass-root work and widening of the national consciousness was aiming at improvement of the welfare of society through hard work and cooperation among Polish speakers. The expansion of Positivist³⁶ literature and organic work³⁷ (*praca organiczna*) programme outlined the long-term goals of the Polish nation and revitalised the Polish identity. Moderate opposition within the boundaries of the law allowed strengthening of the ties between the Polish speakers in the urban cultural centres. The creativity of the Positivist authors allowed collection of the elements of the national consciousness and re-imagining Poland. The period of repressions, which followed the January uprising (1863-1864), increased the role of Polish literature and culture in shaping the new generation of Polish intellectuals who became “critical of the gentry’s preoccupation with fomenting uprisings while ignoring the social consequences of industrialisation” (Prazmowska, 2010:20).

³⁶ Movement initiated in the second half of the nineteenth century which introduced scientific approach to philosophy and literature. In the territories of partitioned Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, Positivism became central in shaping anti-Romanticist approach to the socio-political sphere and promotion of development through science and grass root work.

³⁷ Body of society was compared to biological organism in which each particular organ is substantial to its proper functioning just as each element of the society was necessary for its further development (Garlicki, 2000:159).

The 1870s and the 1880s were dedicated to organic work and the gradual development of society. Decades of steady work allowed the construction of modern national identity from the foundations upwards (Garlicki, 2000: 158-159). The conservative visions presented by the monarchists proved anachronistic. The nationalist elites of the late nineteenth and the early twentieth century acknowledged the role of all inhabitants in attaining future autonomy and eventually independence. According to the Positivist authors, Poland and its people constituted an organism. Ethnic Poles needed each other to oppose alien programmes aiming at the weakening of the divergent socio-political culture shared by the Polish people (Davies, 2005:33; Porter, 1992:640).

This novel approach was aimed at the revitalization of the modern Polish middle classes inhabiting Warsaw, Krakow, Wilno and Poznan situated in three different states. A Polish people was to develop, but only through minor achievements and rapid consolidation of all social groups into a single society. It was a programme of gradualism³⁸ promoting development through hard work which in effect became the slogan of the Conciliatory³⁹ camp (Davies, 2005:33). Key thinkers of this movement were Aleksander Świątochowski and Bolesław Chlebowski. Novelists and poets such as Eliza Orzeszkowa (1841-1910), Maria Konopnicka (1842-1910), Bolesław Prus (1847-1912) and Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916) argued that the preservation of a distinctive identity could be attained through self-improvement of ethnic-Poles and ridding the population of the memory of the stratified society. The

³⁸ In literature gradualism went under the term positivism. In partitioned Poland it was popular among the late nineteenth and early twentieth century authors and thinkers supporting gradual development rather than insurrections which according to positivists denied years of social progress towards national independence.

³⁹ The conciliatory camp focused on the gradual development of the Polish people which would eventually give independence: they also opposed insurrections.

main focus of these activists was development of society through “establishing schools, cooperatives, self-help circles and model farming” (Prazmowska, 2010:26).

Indeed by the late nineteenth century political participation by all social groups was observable. Only some of the parties were aiming to reach the people from across the three partitions. Among others, the most influential Polish organisation formed in the late nineteenth century included the National Democratic movement (*Narodowa Demokracja*; ND, 1893), the Polish People’s Party (PSL, 1895) and the Polish Socialist Party (*Polska Partia Socialistyczna*; PPS, 1893). The final decade of the nineteenth century and the early of the twentieth century witnessed “increasing mass participation in social and political life” (Prazmowska, 2010:28).

4.5 Ethnic-Organic and Civic-Territorial Models

The two leading strands which crystallised at the turn of the century perceived Poland from two conflicting angles. Neither the vision of the ND nor that held by the PPS became dominant. However, it was prior to the 1918 independence that programmes of both the leading organizations (ND and PPS) outlined their optimal Poland. Dmowski and Balicki framed the Polish nation similarly to the way in which Johann Gottfried Herder and Immanuel Kant envisioned the German nation in the eighteenth century. Balicki, the chief ideologist of *endecja* claimed that the nation is the consciousness of the citizen, the ultimate good, and its ultimate goal should be predominantly concentrated on the social ethics. Moreover, Balicki called for strengthening of Polish national identity through exclusion of non-ethnic Poles from the envisioned state. According to Balicki incorporation of Jews and Germans was threatening to the distinctive national character (Balicki, 1903:25).

Piłsudski, on the other hand, raised in the tradition of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth had an immeasurable influence on the process of shaping the polyethnic model of Poland, The PPS vision was based on the idea of civic Poland rather than ethnically Polish population conterminous with the envisioned state borders. The National Democrats believed that mutual effort of all the “national forces” such as the Polish culture, religion (Roman Catholicism), ethnocultural elements would allow regaining national dignity, and eventually reconstruction of Poland. Dmowski, in his flagship work *Thoughts of a Modern Pole* (1903), claims that he is not only connected to the contemporary national consciousness but also to the ancient principalities and kingdoms which shaped his national identity (Dmowski, 2007:28). Although *endecja* focused their actions on moderate steps aiming at expanding this national consciousness to populations from across the former Commonwealth according to Dmowski, ethnic groups such as the Jews could not become part of the Polish nation. He firmly believed that the Jewish peoples’ identity continued to crystallise over centuries and its traditions could eventually come to overpower the youthful Polish nationalist movement (Dmowski, 2007:164).

4.5.1 The Ethnic-Organic Model

National Democracy was established in 1893 and became the first of the two forces central to the shaping of the modern Polish identity. The vision of Zygmunt Balicki (1858-1916), the founder of the ND, was to undermine the contemporary European political trend of peaceful coexistence. In his *National Egoism and Ethics* (1903), Balicki argues that construction of independent Poland trumps all other considerations (Balicki, 1903:26). Balicki together with Roman Dmowski became

involved in the construction of Polish nationalist ideology which would influence the leading political organisations in the twentieth century (Dawidowicz, 2004:135).

The National Democratic ideologues set out a programme which would entirely change the understanding of the national history and shape the aims for the future development of the Polish nation. The term nation in the jargon of *endecja* gained a novel connotation. Previously the term would refer to all nobility without regard for ethnic background. Paradoxically, although on the surface the term appeared inclusive its role was to disenfranchise all other social groups from identification with *Rzeczpospolita*. Roman Dmowski understood that being a Pole carried particular responsibilities including preservation of the achievements of successive generations of Poles and other peoples who influenced the shaping of the distinctive ethnocultural traditions (Dmowski, 2007:30).

Furthermore, Dmowski's particular political programme became known as "national realism."⁴⁰ Dmowski blamed the weakness of the pre-partition *Rzeczpospolita* on corruption of *szlachta* and the passive attitudes of the state authorities⁴¹. Furthermore, the author argued that the will to cooperate with non-ethnic Poles was a weakness which ultimately led to the downfall of the republic. Anachronistic policies derived from ancient ideals blocked the Polish nation from absolute domination over the minorities inhabiting traditionally Polish lands (Dmowski, 2007; 23). Moreover, the National Democrats argued that populations which were not willing to assimilate into the dominant Polish culture would have to

⁴⁰ According to the program of "national realism" opposed the Romanticist approach to politics. Its role was to clearly present the situation of Poland and the options for future development. It opposed glorification of the uprisings or any form of martyrology.

⁴¹ As a parliamentarian of the Russian Duma, Dmowski was dedicated to protection of the Polish interests within the Russian Empire. He was also dedicated to promotion of the Polish question on the international arena.

leave the hypothesised state. The analysis presented by Dmowski led him to believe that Poland had to be aggressive and that Polish high culture should lead to the creation of a Great Poland with proud citizens. In his writings the leading ideologue of *endecja* proposed a model of "(...) an expansive Poland stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea and from the Dnieper to the Oder" (Porter, 1992:639). The frontiers of Polish culture were according to the National Democrats further than it was ever imagined and ethnic Poles had to reclaim their rightful land. Zygmunt Balicki in his *National Egoism and Ethics* (1903) argued against the polyethnic traditions of Poland. To Balicki, the approach to national identity through the prism of cohabitation of Poles, Jews, Germans and other ethnicities was to decrease the chances of Poland becoming independent. Dmowski firmly believed in a distinctive Polish national identity which trumped all other identities. In one of his interviews he stated "If a Jew is going with us, if he [Jew] is not combating the national goals, we treat him as one of our own. If not, we fight him" (Wergieński, 1907). Although in his 1903 work Dmowski identified the Jewish population as a factor weakening the Polish character in his later works he acknowledged that through assimilation a fraction of Jewish people could stay in Poland (Dmowski, 2007:164).

The borders of Poland were (...) not limited by ethnography or history, but were determined by the transcendent needs of the living nation- needs tied to an eternal international struggle for physical existence and national expansion (Porter, 1992:645)

Dmowski's research led him to believe that the creation of a strong state required a strong and proactive population. The survival of the Polish nation required ethnic Poles to acknowledge that nations and peoples were in a perpetual state of war: in order to salvage the Polish nation other ethnic groups had to be defeated (Dmowski, [1903] 2007: 43). The programme presented by the National

Democrats appeared to be realistic. This was because the growing divisions evident across the former *Rzeczpospolita*. The Lithuanian and Ukrainian nationalisms⁴² which were laying claim to the territories integral to *Rzeczpospolita* prior to 1795 strengthened the appeal of the ethnic/exclusive programme. The ethnic Poles inhabiting both the rural and urban regions of the *kresy* saw the weakening of the Polish “high culture” and the influence of the nobility in the remote regions (Snyder, 2003:25).

Following the implementation of *Kulturkampf* in the German partition, religion became one of the guardians of the distinctive national consciousness in the Prussian partition. The role of the Catholic Church in the Protestant Prussia became essential in 1872, when instruction in Polish language became restricted. Otto von Bismarck’s government dedicated substantial finances to pursue the aim of colonizing the lands of the former *Rzeczpospolita* and assimilating the Polish speaking population. Paradoxically, it was the well-organized Prussian bureaucratic machine with its strong judicial system which allowed the Poles, citizens of Prussia, to organize Polish organizations such as the Association of Workers’ Co-operatives, and combat unlawful activity undertaken by German settlers (Prazmowska, 2010:23).

Elizabeth A. Drummond (2001) claims that “(...) the Catholic Clergy had, alongside the nobility (*szlachta*), long been one of the two main pillars of Polish nationalism” (Drummond, 2001:462). Furthermore, it was through the nationalist agitation of the Roman Catholic priests that the population was becoming aware of belonging to a separate ethnic group. This influential role in spreading the nationalist ideology allowed the Church to claim a dominant role in shaping the modern Polish identity.

⁴² Lithuanian and Ukrainian nationalisms did not become active until the second half of the nineteenth century. Following the “January Uprising” (1863-1864) Polish culture became perceived as weak and out-dated allowing alternative national identities to flourish.

4.5.2 The Polyethnic/Inclusive Model

According to the Socialists attempts to assimilate non-ethnic Poles and exclusion of Jews and Germans, meant construction of a small and weak Poland. Piłsudski argued that Poland had to fully use its potential created by the polyethnic populations inhabiting East-Central Europe and by sharing some of the ethnocultural and political traits established in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. Unlike the National Democrats, who believed that the modern nation should be formed upon the pre-modern and ethnic foundations, the PPS believed that the construction of modern Polish nation required implementation of state model created by the Jagiellon royal family. The Jagiellon state model, as outlined by the PPS, perceived Poland beyond the narrow ethnic definition of the nation. The view shared by the PPS perceived Poland as a patchwork of communities, and understood that using language or religion to determine the borders of Poland would result in losing a significant portion the territory of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Porter, 1992:650; Tomicki, 1983).

The Socialist leadership firmly believed in reconstruction of Poland upon its early-modern foundations in the form of a modern Commonwealth (resembling a federal state) bound together through the appeal of the shared history and the role of the Polish “high” culture which, according to the Socialists, shaped the Polish nation. The state model proposed by the PPS was described by Timothy Snyder in a following manner:

The socialist federalism, a halfway house between early modern patriotism and modern mass politics, can be distinguished from Dmowski’s National Democracy in three ways. First, it was inherited tradition rather than invented history. Elite families who wished to restore the Grand Duchy (*Rzeczpospolita*) were operating within generationally continuous conceptions of nationality. Second, socialist federalism was advanced enlightening the masses but by conspiring with trusted comrades (...). Third, socialist federalism presumed that the nation was not a linguistic but a status group. (Snyder, 2003:58)

The Socialists argued that without the original lands of Poland-Lithuania the hypothesised state was prone to internal discord and vulnerable in the international arena. The PPS leadership knew that recklessness and selfishness of the nobility had destroyed the *Rzeczpospolita*. According to Waldemar Paruch (1997) the PPS was aiming to expand the definition of Polish nation to allow other ethnic groups to become citizens of Poland while preserving their distinct identity (Paruch, 1997:48).

In contrast to the vision demonstrated by the National Democrats, the Socialists defined the nation in political, historical and territorial categories whereas the leadership of *endecja* saw the Polish people predominantly as an ethnic and linguistic community. Furthermore, the construction of the modern state upon the traditions sourced from the pre-partition state would according to the PPS leadership resolve social and ethnic matters without implementation of any specific national programme. The memory of the Commonwealth, according to the Pilsudskiites was strong enough to survive the upsurge of nationalism. The ideologues of the PPS agreed that in the hypothesised Poland the central role had to be assigned to the bureaucratic state machine supporting all citizens rather than aims of any particular ethnic group. According to Adam Skwarczynski, one of the chief ideologues of the PPS, "(...) existence of a nation (*narod*) without a state (*państwo*) makes it handicapped: only as a state (*państwo*) may a nation thrive (...)" (1997:56). It becomes evident that in contrast to the *endecja*, to the Socialists there was no equation between the nation and the state. The construction of a federal Poland required the widening of the definition of the Polish citizenship. This envisioned state could only be sustained through implementation of the civic territorial state model.

The outbreak of the First World War in 1914 was more beneficial to the independence programme proposed by the Socialists rather than that of the *endecja*. The programme of building national awareness led by the National Democrats remained steady. The Dmowskiites saw prospective independence in the construction of a strong ethnic community capable of achieving independence in a political rather than a revolutionary manner. Moreover, the educational programmes across the three partitions allowed ethnic Poles to acknowledge the role of organic work. The nationalist organisations perceived the Socialist programme as out-dated (Pankowski, 2010:16-17) with another national revolution leading to the undermining of the progress achieved.

On the other hand, the Socialists, in a Romanticist fashion, saw the outbreak of the war as a chance for the reconstruction of the Commonwealth. In the political thought of the PPS, the *Second Rzeczpospolita* would incorporate the lands lost to the aggression of the absolutist empires. Poland as a political idea binding various ethnic communities would continue its military struggle until the Commonwealth was restored within its Jagiellon frontiers. Polish cultural tradition⁴³ would according to the PPS play a central role in shaping both the political and social programme of the envisioned state. The dominant role of the Polish culture in the eighteenth century and in the early nineteenth century evaporated by the turn of the twentieth century leaving divergent ethnic communities increasingly isolated. The PPS was faced with a hopeless campaign to recreate a polyethnic community.

⁴³ including both the political culture and the high culture of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth

4.6 Conclusion

Following the collapse of the early-modern state in 1795, Polish nationalist elites remained dedicated to Poland-Lithuania. The allegiance of the nobility to the state rather than to the monarch was a sign of an early political identity. According to the *szlachta*, the future of the state was in their hands rather than the hands of the elected king. Analysis of the primary and secondary sources, such as the 1791 constitution, *the Proclamation of Polaniec*, or the national debates among some of the leading intellectuals, demonstrates the process of codification of the national symbols and their dissemination in the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. These aspects of identity were also used to preserve the population's character following the failure of pre-partition Poland.

The early-modern patriotism demonstrated by the nobility during the nineteenth century insurrections and fuelled by the Romanticist authors represented an attachment to the ancient realm which continued to exist in the imagination of the upper strata. Following the unsuccessful liberation struggle led by the elites, it became clear that the unifying national myths and symbols could no longer belong to those elites. Kosciuszko, Lelewel, Czartoryski, and many other Polish statesmen became aware of the urgent need to extend the definition of nation beyond its narrow interpretation. The rapid industrialisation and the dynamic increase in the educated urban middle classes at the turn of the twentieth century influenced the spread of nationalist thought. This chapter also acknowledged the role of the nineteenth century social and technological advancements which according to Gellner (1994) were at the foundation of the modern nation. Gellner's work, however, did not take into considerations some of the factors which Smith identified as central to shaping of

modern nations. With the use of *ethnosymbolism* it became possible to analyse the impact of the pre-modern and early-modern consciousness on shaping the modern nation.

Furthermore, the liminal figures of Polish patriotism such as Kościuszko played a vital role in the reframing of citizenship in Poland. Indeed it was the outbreak of the French Revolution (1789-1799) that became the first step in acknowledging that the conception of the Polish nation was anachronistic. The awakening of the masses, as described by Joachim Lelewel in the nineteenth century, was the key to the construction of a modern Poland on primordial Slavic foundations, rather than artificial class divisions. Lelewel demonstrated only one amongst many ideas for the construction of modern Poland. Nevertheless, his revolutionary writings, alongside those of the conservatives, recognised the essential role of the Polish antiquity in shaping the modern nation.

This chapter argues that Polish nation was reinvented with the existing ethnocultural elements acquiring novel meaning. The “Galician Massacre” of 1846, when the Galician peasantry turned against the landowners, evidenced the lack of connection between the serfs and *szlachta*. While this argument could support the *modernist* claims, with regard to the inception of the nation building process, it does not explain the persistence of ethnocultural elements and myths which became essential in consolidating the populations from across the three partitions under similar banners only a few decades later. Through the juxtaposition of pre-partition national symbols with religious celebrations the mass population was becoming aware of belonging to a particular nation.

The distinctive character of Polish ethnicity was to a large extent preserved by the Church and the nobility which prior to the destruction of the *Rzeczpospolita* acted as ethnic cores and guarded distinctive myths. . These ethnic cores influenced the expansion of the Polish identity and promoted claims for independent statehood. Preservation of tradition by the clergy and the *émigré* societies shaped the modern national currents. Nearly a century after the destruction of Poland-Lithuania political organisations such as the PPS or the ND created their visions of the Polish state and nation based upon pre-modern and early-modern history.

The National Democracy and the PPS shared ideas which echoed the traditions of the Piast and the Jagiellon royal families. The *endecja* protected the 'truly' Polish heritage which according to them was lost in the Jagiellon era dominated by the nobility. The nation according to the writings of Roman Dmowski and Zygmunt Balicki had to be Polish in a purely ethno-linguistic sense. The Church became acknowledged as essential to this tradition as an inseparable tool utilised by the nation rather than as a foreign institution. The ND's message was to re-educate the inhabitants of the former Commonwealth according to the nationalist requirements. This in effect would allow assimilation of the Slavic minorities into the nation. Effectively, the groups unwilling or unable to join the nation would have to leave the envisioned state.

In contrast to the realist vision was the Romanticist vision presented by the Socialists headed by Piłsudski. The ideologues of the PPS argued that the most appropriate way to reunite the populations of the destroyed Commonwealth was through establishment of a federation. This state model would allow all communities to preserve their distinct identities. Furthermore, the Socialists described modern

Poland primarily as a state rather than a nation. Ethnic provenance, religious or linguistic affiliation would remain private matters of the Polish citizens.

The agenda of the PPS remained vague on the matter of the national programme in the hypothesised state. In twentieth century Europe the construction of a strong nation appeared essential to the protection of national borders. This socio-political situation led Dmowski to fundamentally disagree with Piłsudski. The discord between ethnic minorities prior to 1918 became a signal that the national question would persist in an independent Poland.

Chapter 5: Nation and Nationality in Post-1918 Poland

5.1 From the Great War to Independence

Gaining independence in November 1918 was only the first step in the reconstruction of Poland (*Map II*). The modern state gained its sovereignty as a consequence of the First World War and through the brief period of its existence (1918-1939) the formation of a unified state remained the overriding issue for the authorities. From the moment of its inception, Poland struggled for legitimisation both externally and from within. The outside struggle was predominantly linked with the territories claimed in all directions and the populations which, in effect, were incorporated into this state. The military struggle which lasted until 1921 (*Map II*) for the territory which would include the pre-1795 Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (*Map I*) had a myth-making role to the Socialists and Józef Piłsudski who identified Poland with the territory and shared civic identity rather than with any particular ethnic group.

Piłsudski was one of only a handful of politicians to predict that the defeat of Russian forces would allow the independence claim. It was through his timely action that the military was able to enter the Polish cities under Austrian and Russian control and implement pro-Polish authorities. Austrian and Russian armies weakened through the war were unable to stem Piłsudski's forces. It remained the key interest of Piłsudski to reach and reclaim the greatest possible proportion of the pre-partition Poland prior to the post-war peace conference (Zaremba, 1981:62). Territorial disputes, however, weakened Poland from the onset as it was involved in international quarrels with its neighbours, the League of Nations and with the

“Ukrainian, Byelorussian and Lithuanian communities [which] showed no desire to be included in a new Polish state” (Prażmowska, 2010:88).

Piłsudski was aware that it was the responsibility of the Polish army to secure its eastern border. The western frontier, however, was dependant on the decision of the leaders gathered in Versailles (Zaremba, 1981:62). This opinion was not shared by the leader of the National Democratic movement and the Polish delegation in Paris. Roman Dmowski’s ambitious programme saw Poland within the borders of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, extended further at cost to Germany (Kaczmarek, 2011:100). In order to resolve territorial disputes, the Versailles Peace Conference took the case of Polish territory into consideration. The United States President’s *Fourteen Points* programme hinted that Poland would be reconstructed within territories with an indisputably Polish population (Malec-Masnyk, 1991:10). In order to secure the well-being of religious and linguistic minorities in Poland and the *Entente* a treaty granting equal rights to people of ethnicity other than Polish⁴⁴ was signed.

Poland is technically without borders, everything what we can gain in the West depends on the Entente, if it wishes to squeeze Germany a bit more or a bit less. In the East the matter is different, there are doors, which continue to open and close and it all depends on who and how wide they will be opened by force (Malec-Masnyk, 1991:13)

The nation building process which accelerated in the nineteenth century led to fragmentation of the populations formerly linked by the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. The ultimate collapse of the institutions of the *ancient regime* effectively led to the disconnection of many non-ethnic Poles with the traditions of Poland-Lithuania. Although high culture had previously unified the populations

⁴⁴Traktat Miedzy Głownemi Mocarstwami Sprzymierzonemi A Polska, 28 June 1919

within the political nation,⁴⁵ in the twentieth century the majority of the symbolism bonding the polyethnic noble nation was rejected. Piłsudski and the Polish Socialist Party (PPS), however, continued to rely on the traits such as the shared political tradition and the overriding Polish national identity derived from the Jagiellon era.

The twentieth century observed the rise of nationalist agitation across East-Central Europe. The regions which formerly constituted integral parts of Poland such as Ukraine and Lithuania saw that they too could construct their independent states. The Socialists were aware of these political circumstances. Nevertheless, the Pilsudskiites believed that through demonstration of military might and reinvigoration of the inclusive model of Polish nationalism they would be able to regain control over the swathes of land and the non-ethnic Polish populations in the *kresy*⁴⁶. Furthermore, military intervention in the *kresy* was driven by two key targets. Firstly, conquest of the eastern parts of the former Commonwealth would give Poland the strongest possible shape. Secondly, incorporation of these territories would weaken Russia by establishing a federation of nations and ethnic groups capable of stemming the ambitions of the Eastern neighbour (Pankowski, 2010:17).

The shaping of the Polish frontiers continued until the signing of the Treaty of Riga in 1921. Until then the national borders remained in constant flux making it extremely difficult to begin the process of moulding a monolithic Polish nation. The territories, such as Samagotia or Ruthenia remote from Warsaw's influence, remained disconnected from the federal programme promoted by the Polish government. From 1921 it became the priority of the government to consolidate the

⁴⁵ Political nation (or civic nation) was defined by the Socialists as the country in which the dominant role in binding the inhabitants was granted to the state's institutions rather than any particular ethnic group.

state previously divided between three empires. The first government was trusted with the role of unification of the territories controlled by the Polish military. This task was extremely difficult within the framework of a wide spectrum of disparity in the complex processes of codification, political traditions and economic development within the three partitions (Zaremba, 1981:24).

The attempts to define Polish nationality on the basis of the polyethnic identity outlined by the Socialists appeared unattainable in the nineteenth century and religion and language became the main indicators of national identity in Poland. Firstly, the mass population which was previously not considered as citizenry was not emancipated until the second half of the nineteenth century offering an ambiguous link with the nation shared exclusively by the nobility. Secondly, the population regarded as Polish was spread across the vast territory between the Odra and Dnepr rivers in which they shared the land with Germans, Ukrainians, Jews and many other national and ethnic minorities (GUS, *Rocznik Statystyczny Miast Polski*, 1928; Eberhardt, 1996:91-94).

The ethnic groups within the territories which formerly constituted an integral part of the Russian Empire and which were adjoined to Poland, refused assimilation with Poland which among minorities was widely perceived as a national state. The attempts of the Socialist leadership to define Polish identity in civic rather than ethnic terms suffered two crucial setbacks which proved impossible to surpass in an attempt to construct the nation acceptable to the bulk of the minorities within its frontiers. Firstly, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk signed in 1918 granted independence to Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine, weakening the legal claims of the Polish authorities to these territories. The 1918 treaty also gave a green light to inhabitants

of these areas to seek recognition of their own national claims. Secondly, after the devastating military campaign between 1918 and 1921 the Polish leadership was forced to sign the Treaty of Riga (1921) which effectively divided Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian populations between Poland and Bolshevik Russia making the envisioned federation implausible (Kaczmarek, 2010:55).

5.2 Religious and linguistic affiliation in interwar Poland

Through the analysis of population statistics according to the research of Piotr Eberhardt (2001) and the National Population Census of 1931 it is possible to examine the Polish population through the prism of religious and linguistic affiliation. When assuming that the declared language determined nationality, then 68.9 (21.9 million) per cent of the Second Polish Republic's population defined their ethnicity as Polish. The Ukrainian population constituted 13.9 per cent (4.4 million), the Jewish ethnic group 8.6 per cent (Hebrew and Yiddish speakers) followed by Belarusians (5.3%), Germans (2.3%), and others

The ethnic structure of Poland through religious denomination presented a state in which Roman Catholics were the dominant religious group covering 64.8 per cent (20.6 million) of Polish citizens. However, other religious groups constituted a significant counterbalance to Roman Catholicism with Orthodox Christians accounting for 11.8 % (3.76 million), Greek Catholics 10.4% (3.36 million), Jews 9.8% (3.13 million), and Evangelical Protestants 2.6% (835.2 thousand) of the state's population (GUS, *Pierwszy Powszechny Spis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z dnia 30 wrzesnia 1921 roku*, 1927). Analysis of the 1921 and 1931 census demonstrated that the respective populations were mostly concentrated in specific geographic locations,

the Ukrainians inhabiting for example south-eastern Poland and the Jewish population predominantly living in the urban areas in central and eastern Poland (*Narodowy Spis Powszechny na rok 1921, 1927; Narodowy Spis Powszechny na rok 1931; Eberhardt, 2001:112*).

These numbers influenced the Nationalists and the Socialists in drafting modern Poland. Whereas the PPS aimed to expand identification with a Poland which included ethnic minorities, the ND preferred the course of assimilation and expulsion. While the *endecja's* Dmowski (based on numbers of Polish speakers and Roman Catholics), called for ethnic Poles to assume a dominant position in the Second Republic (Dmowski, 1927), the PPS disagreed with assimilationist programmes perceiving Poland as a polyethnic state. Articles 87 and 89 from Chapter V of the 1921 Polish constitution also stated that Polish citizens could not claim citizenship of any other country and that the foremost duty of each citizen was loyalty to the Polish Republic. Furthermore, according to Article 96 all citizens regardless of their ethnic background were equal in the eyes of the law. According to Article 109 every Polish citizen had the right to preserve their “national” identity and to cultivate their distinctive language and culture (*Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 1921 roku*). This 1921 Act officially abolished the *szlachta's* previous status, thus defining the Polish nation as a population of all those who inhabited the territory of the state rather than any particular group. The constitution also officially supported national, ethnic, and religious minorities inhabiting Poland, granting them equal rights with other citizens (*Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 1921 roku*, Articles 109, 110, 111).

Moreover the 1921 constitution (17 March 1921) which preceded the Treaty of Riga (18 March 1921) was dedicated to forming a framework which would allow the polyethnic populations incorporated into Poland to exist within the boundaries of one state. The Treaty of Riga of 1921, which finalised the competition for the border between Poland and Bolshevik Russia, weakened the state model proposed by the Socialists by partitioning the Belarusian and Ukrainian populations (Paruch, 1997).

The 1921 population census and the constitution outlined the proposed model of the Polish state. It also demonstrated the differences in interpretation of where Poland was and who Polish people were. Analysis of the political programmes and proposed by the PPS and ND (ZLN) sheds light on the distinctive perceptions of the Polish nation in the interwar Poland.

5.3 The Socialist programme

The PPS leadership perceived Poland not through the prism of ethnicity but rather through the populations of different ethnic provenance bound by the traditions of Poland-Lithuania. The authorities were aiming to build a country which would satisfy the needs of the majority of the inhabitants and give them an opportunity for participation of which they were deprived as subjects of empires. According to the leading daily newspaper *Robotnik* supportive of the PPS Poland could only become strong as a polyethnic and multi-faith state. Rather than insisting on the dominant position of any ethnic group, the Republic should be concerned with equal rights and opportunities for workers and the working intelligentsia. Furthermore, according to *Robotnik* the aim of the PPS was to build “a democratic and republican Poland for the working masses and for the furtherance of world progress and peace” (*Robotnik*,

15.11.1922) and only the Socialist PPS was determined to “connect the working people of the urban and the rural areas” (*Robotnik*, 4.11.1922).

Formation of a federation and the construction of a nation built upon early-modern traditions was the ambition of Piłsudski. He sought to rebuild the *Rzeczpospolita* rather than build a new Poland. This goal was taken up by the first transitional government headed by Prime Minister Jędrzej Moraczewski. His role was to shape an overriding Polish identity which would stem any interethnic animosities. Moraczewski and Piłsudski wanted to make Polish state institutions recognised across the state. Competition between the Socialists and *endecja* in the early 1920s was predominantly concentrated on the shape of Poland and the definition of Polishness. According to the leading newspaper in interwar Poland, the PPS identified “the Polish nation (...), not as a nation-state but a state of nations” (*Gazeta Warszawska, The Warsaw Daily* 21.12.1922). Moreover, according to the pro-Piłsudski newspaper *Kurier Poranny* (*The Morning Courier*) the state was of the utmost importance and all citizens were essential in further development of Poland (*Kurier Poranny*, 31.10. 1922). *Kurier Poranny* and *Robotnik* (*The Worker*) opposed the right-wing propaganda, perceiving it as unconstructive and weakening Poland during a difficult political period. For them, the goal of Polish democracy was to grant democratic rights and equality to all Polish citizens (Kaminska-Szmaj, 1994:118).

In order to strengthen identification with Poland the authorities identified the key institutions which would help in accelerating this process. From the earliest stages of statehood a symbol considered as central to the Polish national identity was the Polish Army (WP), which was given an almost mythical status and inherited some of the “noble” traditions of the nineteenth century insurgents. To Piłsudski and other

Poles who were brought up in the national spirit under foreign rule the Polish Army “was an element of Polish nationality (...), [which] would complete the political work” (Zaremba, 1981:18). Although symbolism of the WP was effective in the areas which contained a substantial Polish majority, within the regions with a significant percentage of minorities the Polish forces were perceived as occupants no different to the previous rulers. Moreover, the military language was also utilised in political campaigns where the competing political camps were in fact presented as enemies. This approach of newspapers tied to PPS or *endecja* (ND, ZLN) allowed the media to appeal to the population and to involve the citizenry in activities connected to nation-building (Kaminska-Szmaj, 1994:75).

Józef Piłsudski’s credo “Poland has to be great or it will not exist at all” (Paruch, 1997:51) defined the relationship with the states’ neighbours and the non-ethnic Poles. His political ideology appeared to his opponents as anachronistic and incomplete. This state model could not survive the surge and the appeal of the contemporary nationalisms (Pankowski, 2009:17). Piłsudski was reluctant to forsake federal Poland as, unlike the National Democrats, he was certain that Poland could only reclaim its position in Europe through extension of Polish citizenship to all inhabitants of Poland-Lithuania. This particular state model perceived that it was the role of the entire body of citizens, irrespective of their ethnicity, to take the responsibility for shaping the state. Piłsudski and the Socialists argued that social equality and national development would be achieved in polyethnic Poland (*Robotnik*, 19.11.1922; *Robotnik*, 28.11.1922).

What was referred to as “nostalgic republicanism” remained entrenched in the PPS’s national programme (Snyder, 2003:41). However, in contrast to the

expectations of the first government, the diversified and deeply fractured society was reluctant to accept this imposed identity. Piłsudski, frustrated with the slow process of resurrection of the Polish-Lithuanian national identity assumed the role of “the heir to the Old Republic’s achievements [and] also of a competent corrector of its traditions” (Paruch, 1997:40). This (self-conceived) role of Piłsudski, as a “father” of the imagined Polish citizenry continued until his death in 1935.

Although the PPS refused to openly endorse the Church, it became clear that the period of statelessness had granted the Church the role of a pillar of shaping and preserving the Polish nation (Drummond, 2001:462; Tazbir, 1986; Davies, 2005). Aside from religion, Polish ethnicity was preserved within the literary culture and thus manifested through the use of the Polish language and historical achievements. The role of Poland as the last bastion of Christianity (as it was perceived by the nobility as the final frontier of ‘civilization’) was an important part of the Roman Catholic tradition carried from the Middle Ages (Tazbir, 1986).

Furthermore, it was concluded by the PPS that recreation of the early-modern union of nations in the form of a federation was attainable even though the Lithuanian nationalist elites refused any integration with this proposed construct (Zaremba, 1981:88). The Socialists proposed the programme of cooperation between various small nations of East-Central Europe under the patronage of Poland. This programme was named Prometheism⁴⁷ (*Prometeizm*). One of the key thinkers and publicists Mieczysław Niedziałkowski, writing for *Robotnik*, contemplated the building of a “Peoples’ Bloc” (*Blok Ludowy*) unifying nations into the voluntary Union of the Baltic Nations rather than through military intervention. The lack of interest in

⁴⁷ *Prometeizm*: a programme introduced by the Socialists which proposed creation of loose federation of East-Central European communities based on common security from Bolshevik aggression.

voluntary membership led to the intervention of the Polish Army in the East (Śliwa, 1983:222-223).

Moreover, although the Socialists refused to acknowledge the need for a national programme, it was imperative to regulate the role of the ethnic Poles among ethnic groups within the Second Republic. According to the PPS, the non-Polish national groups undergoing the crystallisation of their own national identity required clear affirmation that they could retain their distinctive cultural character in Poland. Subordination of the nation to the state, rather than the opposite, was a step which would allow the non-ethnic Poles to associate with the idea of federal Poland. Polish newspapers associated with the PPS, such as *Robotnik*, remained opposed to nationalist agitation stemming from the right-wing press such as *Gazeta Warszawska* or *Kurier Poznański* (*The Poznań Courier*). The PPS continued to combat nationalism perceiving it as contradictory with the state's interest (Kaminska-Szmaj, 1994:217).

The formation of a successful federal state was only attainable through establishing strong ties between all ethnicities within the Polish state and in return the construction of a national identity superseding local affiliations (Paruch, 1997:59; Zaremba: 1981:208). Political actions such as *Prometeism* became essential in rebuilding the trust of the citizenry from the *kresy* through the rhetoric of East European, Caucasian and Baltic alliance rather than formation of a nation state dominated by ethnic Poles. By contrast, it was postulated by the *Endecja* that Poland had to be reconstructed by ethnic Poles. Unlike the Socialists, the ND drew a clear definition of Polish national identity along religious, cultural and linguistic lines. While the publicists of *Robotnik* discussed ways to consolidate the polyethnic population of Poland, The leadership of *endecja* and the press associated to the

National Democracy (Związek Ludowo-Narodowy) argued for Poland built upon ethnic foundations (Gross, 1973:135). The PPS was aware of the socio-political repercussions of attempts to build modern Poland around Polish language and Roman Catholicism but the press associated with *endecja* remained relentless in their attacks on minorities especially the Jewish and the German minorities (Dmowski, 1927; Fuks, Hoffman, Horn, Tomaszewski, 1982:37).

5.4 The Nation in the Rhetoric of the *Endecja*

To be a Pole (...) one had to accept Polish “consciousness”, one had to accept everything Polish, including the nation’s past and its historical mission for the future (Porter, 1992:646)

From the earliest stages, the National Democrats clearly addressed the issue of the Polish nation. Through its leading ideologues and dedicated newspapers such as *Gazeta Warszawska* (Warsaw Gazette) or *Kurier Poznański* (Poznań Courier) the movement clearly outlined Polish national heritage and grew more arrogant to the extent of the national frontiers. National Democracy, which changed its name in independent Poland Związek Ludowo-Narodowy (ZLN)⁴⁸, clearly outlined its vision of Poland. *Gazeta Warszawska* presenting the programme of ZLN argued among others for “combating Communism in Poland. moral purity in public life, and protection of the Polish nation from the overflow of the Jewry” (*Gazeta Warszawska*, 31. 10. 1922).

⁴⁸ Związek Ludowo-Narodowy (Popular National Union) was a political party, established in 1919, which role was to connect right-wing politicians with conservative and nationalist options. It also aimed to appeal to populations from different economic background connecting urban and rural populations.

This political agitation and the supreme role of Polish nation in modern Poland was set out by the pioneers of the modern rightist Polish national thought. In their works Roman Dmowski, Zygmunt Balicki, and Jan Ludwik Poplawski argued that ethnic Poles had to understand that their hard work would eventually lead to the construction of an independent Poland. According to the right-wing politicians only the Polish nation (Polish ethnicity) would be able to assume the role of defending independent statehood. Publicists of *Kurier Poznański*, associated with *endecja* identified independent Poland with ethnic Poles and opposed the political dominance of both the Jews and Germans (*Kurier Poznański* 12.11.1922).

Furthermore, attacks on the polyethnic model of Poland proposed by the PPS were associated with the belief that Poland remained under control of national minorities. Dmowski, remained adamant that the previous “extermination of tribes” that had occurred between Poland and Germany would continue in the successive generations (Dmowski, 2007: 41). Dmowski believed that it was his role and that of the “responsible Poles” to educate those members of society unaware of their role in the construction of the modern nation (Mackiewicz, 1941:34). Through the 1910s and the 1920s the National Democrats continued their campaign for education of the population in the spirit of “organic work” in order to further strengthen national identity (Bugajski, 2002:159).

In its attempt to achieve national homogeneity *endecja* dedicated its efforts to the promotion of the ethnocultural traits associated with Polishness and to eradicate elements which were perceived alien to Poland. Application of these tools became evident in the post-1918 propaganda of the ZLN dedicated to defining Poland through the prism of religion and language. This task required assimilation of the

other Slavic populations in Poland and exclusion of both German and Jewish people allowing the foundation of Poland where ethnic Poles would dominate both numerically and culturally (Cordell and Wolff, 2005:21). Adoption of traditions, exclusive to ethnic Poles, would contribute to the building of the strongest possible nation. With the restoration of the “original” national character the ND was aiming to ensure that the Slavic roots of Poland would resurface. This movement, in contrast to the Socialist movement, believed that the state was merely a tool in the hands of the nation and a means for its further expansion (Porter, 1992:653). Although initially the ND “had a flexible understanding of who was a Pole [which] allowed them to claim areas with few ethnic Poles” (Porter, 1992:650) from the 1930s, Polish nationality in their rhetoric was becoming more exclusive limiting the nation to ethnic Poles.

Moreover, the rhetoric of the ND gained a Darwinist dimension. Whereas the PPS camp promoted peaceful cooperation for mutual benefit, *endecja* shared Herder’s vision of a continuing battle for national survival (Porter, 1992:653), denying any possibility of consolidation beyond the lines of ethnicity. According to this primordial vision, nations were integral to the state of nature and the Polish nation had the right to extend its physical frontiers even to those regions where ethnic Poles were in minority.

At the root of the *endecja*’s ideology was the belief that “the borders of Poland were (...) not limited by ethnography or history, but were determined by transcendent needs of the living nation- needs tied to an eternal international struggle for physical (i.e., state) existence and national expansion” (Porter, 1992:645). The nation-building process required re-education of the Polish

population. Dedication and loyalty of its members could only be achieved through articulation of clear rules for membership within the national community. The Nationalists were involved in strengthening the national spirit through improvement of education across Poland and the level of literacy which was lower in the *kresy*. The assimilation process would further support expansion of the borders of Poland allowing the state to expand in all directions⁴⁹. The National Democrats viewed Polish history as an important framework for nation-building which required careful selection of the Polish ethnic symbols rather than revoking the pre-1795 stratified society. At the same time, an ideology of “national egoism” gave the nationalists arguments for either assimilation or exclusion of the element identified as sinister to the Polish citizenry. In order to secure the future borders, the Polish nation would have to determine its position among other nations within Poland and set the plan for assimilation of Slavic minorities into the Polish nation. Dmowski further explained that expulsion of the Jewish and German populations were measures critical for the preservation and strengthening of the nation demanding: “legal discrimination and stripping the Jews of civil rights” (Pankowski, 2010:28). For *Gazeta Warszawska endecja* was the only reasonable political option. According to the newspaper the ZLN was the only force supportive of “Religion [Roman Catholicism] and Family, two eternal lights of the Aryan culture” (*Gazeta Warszawska*, 6.10.1922). *Kurier Poznański* echoed the claims of *Gazeta Warszawska* by supporting *endecja* as the only party capable of introducing “God’s order in Poland” (*Kurier Poznański*, 12.11.1922). *Endecja* identified the Church as the force which would allow strengthening of the position of ethnic Poles. Although PPS granted religion a secondary role in shaping identity Poland, *endecja* claimed that it was necessary to grant Roman Catholicism a

⁴⁹ Mazurek, P. (2012) *Wpływ Polski Na Ogólnoswiatowy Rozwój Nauki* JPilsudski.org

special status which could undermine the threat of Jewish culture and religion (*Gazeta Warszawska*, 14.12.1922; *Kurier Poznanski*, 14,11,1922; Porter-Szucs, 2011:181).

5.5 The State and the Church

The numbers presented in the national census of 1921 further demonstrate the role of the Church in the shaping of the modern national identity (Główny Urząd Statystyczny, *Mieszkania. Ludnosc, Stosunki Zawodowe* (1921), 1927). Piłsudski claimed that “[the] vision of Catholic Poland could not serve as the unifying principle of the Second Republic” (Pease, 2009:5). For Piłsudski’s nostalgic vision, consolidation of the former Commonwealth along religious rather than cultural lines could jeopardise the programme of reconstruction. The Socialist leadership feared that a “Catholic Poland” could alienate non-Catholic and non-Christian populations, such as the Polish Jews, who supported construction of Poland along the civic, rather than ethnic lines. Nevertheless, following independence, it was becoming apparent that Roman Catholicism had become synonymous with ethnic Poles. ZLN claimed that ethics and morality derived from Roman Catholicism should become the foundation of modern Poland. According to the newspapers associated with *endecja* there was a clear division between the Jewish and the Christian population. According to the publicists of *Gazeta Warszawska* there were too many cultural differences to find a common ground in one state (*Gazeta Warszawska*, 11.8.1923).

Although as discussed in the previous chapter, religion in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth could not boast the role of a key indicator of the national identity. Poland-Lithuania remained too large, not only by territory but also by its

populations of many different religions such as Protestantism and Judaism. The previous cultural exchange, halted in the nineteenth century, together with the changing role of Catholicism granted the Church a central role in preservation of the organic definition of Poland. Similarly, *endecja* shifted its outlook on Roman Catholicism and *vice versa*. While in the early twentieth century the clergy called for destruction of *endecja*, perceiving it as secular and anti-Catholic (Porter-Szucs, 2011:180) following independence in 1918 the Church and *endecja* became allies in combating Piłsudski and the Socialists.

The leading role of the clergy ranged from educating the peasantry in the rural regions of the remote, impoverished regions in Galicia to the formation of political parties paving the way for the envisioned independent Poland. Political slogans such as “God’s Poland” (*Kurier Poznański*, 12.11.1922), had an impact on identification with the Roman Catholic Church and the mythologised “Fatherland” (Porter-Szucs, 2011:22-23). In the rural regions, remote from the cultural centres such as Kraków or Lwów, priests frequently “acted as the grass-root spokesmen for Poles against the alien regimes” (Pease, 2009: 22-24). The Church wishing to retain its dominant position in post-1918 Poland allied with *endecja*. Its involvement in the state’s politics, however, was kept under control by Piłsudski. The Socialist newspaper *Robotnik* openly criticised the joint effort of *endecja* and the Church to curb rights of non-Catholics (*Robotnik*, 5.2.1921).

Many of the priests, despite the Socialist opposition, chose to cooperate with the ZLN, who, unlike the Socialists, saw a multidimensional role for the Church in the process of nation-building (Kaminska-Szmaj, 1994:144). Although the leadership continued to minimise its role, the PPS identified Roman Catholicism as one of the

ethnocultural elements which preserved distinctive Polish character. According to the PPS, however, it was only one among many other indicators of Polishness and could not have a decisive impact on the process of state construction (Pease, 2009:5).

An examination of Piłsudski's political life demonstrates the continuing struggle for guaranteeing religious tolerance. Piłsudski, in order to legitimise the extension of Poland's frontiers, was striving to prove that it was through "high" Polish culture rather than through any particular religion that its inhabitants should consider their identity as Polish. According to Piłsudski, it was only through equality that the state authorities would gain legitimacy among Jewish and Orthodox populations. When in 1926 Piłsudski became the head of state following a *coup d'état*, the leadership again refused to accept the Church as a tool in the campaign of "purification" (*sanacja*) (Paruch, 1997:251). Strengthening the central role of citizenship founded upon equality of all members of the civic nation rather than based upon religious or linguistic affiliation remained the cornerstone of the political tradition shared by the Socialists.

From the mid-1930s however, the authorities were becoming clear supporters of national identification through the prism of ethnic symbols. The romanticist era represented by Piłsudski would come to an end with his death in 1935 and his outdated ideals were forced to give way to *endecja's* realism. In the increasingly divided society choosing promotion of national identity in ethnic rather than civic terms, the Camp of National Unity (*Oboz Zjednoczenia Narodowego*; OZN) began to consider itself as a party committed to Catholic values (1997:252). This fact had further consequences and a detrimental effect on the relationship between Catholics and other religious groups inhabiting Poland.

5.5.1 Roman Catholicism as a Pillar of Polishness

Roman Dmowski in his key works *Thoughts of a Modern Pole* (*Mysli Nowoczesnego Polaka*, 1903), *Separatism of Jews and its Sources* (*Separatyzm Żydów i jego źródła*, 1909), and *The Church, Nation and State* (*Kościół, Naród i Państwo*, 1927) argued that Catholicism was in many ways an integral element of Polish ethnic identity. In the early twentieth century, Dmowski had remained cautious about this relationship, only hinting that there was a role for the Church in binding of the “historically” Polish lands. However, in his latter works, Dmowski indicated that the Episcopate’s continuing support in the struggle of the Polish nation could further contribute to the shaping of loyal Polish nationals. The *endecja* movement saw Roman Catholicism as a tool in achieving a considerable level of homogeneity among ethnic Poles from across the divergent regions of the former Commonwealth. The ND’s ideologues recognised this cooperation as mutually beneficial to both the nation (*naród*) and the Church. The *endecja* saw the role of the Church as subordinate to the needs of the nation (Dmowski, [1903] 2002: 55-59).

Unlike the Socialists, Dmowski, was ardent in utilising religion in the process of statecraft. In his work the spiritual leader of *endecja* argued that:

Roman Catholicism is not simply an addition to the Polish national identity (...), it is instilled within nationality and to a significant extent it is the essence of Polishness. Attempts to divide the Roman Catholic faith from the national identity, and Polish nation from its religion and from the Church, leads to destruction of the very essence of the nation (*The Church, Nation and State*, Dmowski, 1927)

The Church becoming indistinguishable from the state posed a threat to integrity of Poland and Polish citizenship as proposed by the PPS. To *endecja*, loyalty to the Polish state could only be determined through belonging to the national community as defined by language, religion and shared cultural tradition. Such an

understanding of belonging to modern Poland was have serious repercussions and stirred dissatisfaction among the non-ethnic Poles. The National Democrats identified the source of threat to their perception of nationality. *Gazeta Warszawska* claimed that *endecja* was fighting for Poland with “the Left, the Jews, the Communists, Germans, Russians (...)” (*Gazeta Warszawska*, 10.12.1922). The competition between the two opposing camps continued to deepen through the 1920s, resembling a clash between two armies (Pankowski, 2010: 24).

Although Piłsudski still held a leading role in the state while passing the March constitution (1921), parties affiliated to the “national” rather than to the Socialist thought, were able to assign the “leading role” to the Church: “the Catholic faith being the religion of the overwhelming majority of the nation, occupies in the state a leading position among religions endowed with equal rights” (*Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*, 1921: Art: 114). The clergy became more supportive of a Poland founded upon ethnic rather than civic traditions (Porter-Szucs, 2011:331).

5.5.2 The Church and the First Democratic Elections

The agreement between *endecja* and the Church finally became a successful electoral strategy. Within the territories incorporated into independent Poland between 1918 and 1921, the population of Polish ethnic provenance constituted overall nearly 70 per cent of the citizenry of the state (linguistic 68%; Roman Catholic 65%). The first elections in January 1919 demonstrated how significant both *endecja* and faith were in the lives of the majority of ethnic Poles. *Endecja*, which in the elections was represented as the Popular National Union (*Związek Ludowo-Narodowy*; ZLN), was able to secure a substantial fraction of the seats in parliament (136), the Polish

Peasant Party, *Wyzwolenie*, came second in the parliamentary elections (58 seats), whereas the Socialists (30 seats) were only able to gather a fraction of support next to parties with nationalist leanings (Kaczmarek, 2010: 79-80). These elections evidenced the role organic work played in the construction of the modern Polish nation. Preservation of the national character in the era of nationalism proved effective in electoral nationalist agitation (*Powszechny Spis Narodowy na rok 1931*, Główny Urząd Statystyczny).

In a parliament dominated by the supporters of *endecja*, the question of citizenship continued to divide politicians from the left and the right of the political spectrum. The church authorities saw this political election as an opportunity to become more involved as active participants in the political life of Poland. The Polish Episcopate became supportive of the national right in a response to the Socialist disregard towards its role in national reunification. The inability to satisfy the need of the Church for gaining the central role in Poland was a miscalculation on the part of the PPS. The first population census (1921) proved how scrupulous *endecja's* calculations were, demonstrating that identification with Poland through Roman Catholicism was especially high in the rural areas (*Pierwszy Powszechny Spis Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej* (1921), Województwo Białostockie, Tablica XI, 1927).

The Episcopate, although given the “leading role”, was unable to create the conciliation within the polyethnic and multi-faith society. It would remain equivocal about Piłsudski, unofficially supporting *endecja*. Evidence of this illicit support to the national movement can be found in the response to the assassination of the first Polish President, Gabriel Narutowicz elected in 1922. Its ambiguous response to the assassination fuelled inter-ethnic animosities weakening both the delicate

democratic foundations and confidence in the active participation of non-ethnic Poles in the political life of the nation. Sharing Piłsudski's Polish-Lithuanian identity, Narutowicz, elected mainly by the Socialists and the "minority vote", personified the polyethnic face of Poland. Piłsudski and Narutowicz were supported by the *Kurier Pranny* (*The Morning Courier*) newspaper which claimed that both these men were "great citizens" dedicated to serving Rzeczpospolita. *Robotnik* echoed these claims by calling Narutowicz "a good Pole" and "an intellectual European" (*Kurier Poranny*, 10.12.1922; *Robotnik*, 10.12.1922). On the other hand, *endecja*, and the press linked to the ZLN claimed that it was impossible to discern the national allegiance of Narutowicz, undermining his achievements and calling him Lithuanian or pro-Jewish rather than Polish (*Gazeta Warszawska*, 8.12.1922)

The Church failed to support the authorities, remaining ambiguous about the attack on the democratically elected state authorities. This turned the guardian of Polish culture from the period of partitions into a villain of the post-1918 brief period of self-governance. The Roman Catholic Church in Poland accepted that during the period of partitions it could not rely on support from superiors in the Vatican, leading to the development of a level of autonomy from the Pope. This disconnection created a supposition of its ability to become the ultimate judge of the political stage, able to decide on such matters as the future shape of the Polish nation. This disregard for Piłsudski led to the personal involvement of Pope Pius XI, growingly concerned about the Church's close ties with *endecja* (Pease, 2009:65).

5.6 The Decline of the Federal Programme

The spatial division of the population in independent Poland exacerbated the obstacle which all governments would have to face: the lack of cohesion. The period of 123 years without government unfolded the weakness of the polyethnic state model. According to the national census, population was clearly divided along ethnic lines primarily in the East (*kresy*) and populations in the border areas could rarely be defined as belonging to a particular ethnic group (Eberhardt: 2001:112-114).

The issue of disparity was addressed early after the state's inception in the "Minorities Treaty" (signed in 1919 with the League of Nations). Requirements for additional support for all linguistic and religious minorities became the main theme of the act signed in Versailles. The legal ramifications of this treaty became not only difficult to implement, but were also considered a "humiliation" for the Polish authorities (Michlic, 2006:73). Concern for the wellbeing of populations incorporated into the territory of Poland, led to the drafting of the treaty the role of which was to provide a legal framework for relations between the state and non-ethnic Poles (over 30% of population) inhabiting the state's territory. The document bound "Poland (...) to assure full and complete protection of life and liberty to all inhabitants of Poland without distinction of birth, nationality, language, race or religion" (*Traktat Między Głównymi Mocarstwami Sprzymierzonymi i Stowarzyszonymi A Polską*, Article 2, June 1919).

The enforced minority status of non-ethnic Poles in Rzeczpospolita, granting them the right to preserve their distinct culture and education in the distinctive language, became an obstacle to both to *endecja* and the Socialists. The PPS programme remained adamant that a specific law for the minorities was not

required, as the recreated political traditions of the Commonwealth would suffice (Paruch, 1997:51). The Treaty of Riga and the constitution both signed in March 1921 outlined the borders of Rzeczpospolita and the equal status of all populations incorporated into Poland. The inability to incorporate the territories previously integral to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth became costly to the model proposed by Piłsudski and the PPS. The constitution, which followed the 1919 minorities act signed in Paris and preceded the Treaty of Riga, became the document which officially defined the relationship between the citizens of Poland (*Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej z 1921 roku*).

Although the federal concept coupled with cultural autonomy appeared as a viable solution towards resolution of the political stalemate, from the early 1920s the project dedicated to creation of the “political” nation consisting of all nationalities, continued to deteriorate. The ruthless political campaign led by the extreme right wing nationalists leading to the assassination of President Narutowicz (1922) was only one of the symptoms of the fractioned society. Ineffectiveness in the introduction of policies which would allow identification with the Polish state became an obstacle in the integration process.

The early 1920s demonstrated the fragility of both democracy and the polyethnic state model. The nation was perceived through the prism of ethnicity. Narutowicz, elected for the office required the support of the Socialists and the minorities. Although selected by Piłsudski he was, according to the nationalist agitators, not the President of the Poles, his Lithuanian background remaining one of the central elements of the *endecja* campaign. Opposition to Narutowicz evidenced the cost of the construction of the nation on the ideology shaped by Dmowski and

Balicki. Slogans such as “Away with the Jewish President”⁵⁰ presented a definition of Polish people in contrast to that offered by the Socialists.

Following Piłsudski’s retirement in 1922, the programme of federal Poland deteriorated further. The *Sejm* dominated by the National Democrats did not agree with the programme outlined by the former Chief of State. The ethnic groups in the *kresy* were divided in the process between Poland and Bolshevik Russia and effectively denied the chance to form their own nation-states. This failure of the Socialists also led to Lithuanian and Ukrainian nationalists, who did not wish to conform to the Polish state model, seeking unification and independence with Bolshevik rather than Warsaw’s support. Popular dissatisfaction with the secessionist sentiment in Ukraine, led to the general boycott of the parliamentary elections in 1922. The population threatened by the growing pressure towards assimilation with Poland became alienated from the institutions of the state. This situation persisted across the *kresy* and the authorities were forced to react to the dissatisfaction with the proposed state model. The Polish government also realised that the fear of “Polonisation” among Lithuanians was the factor influencing their politics and so all of the attempts of return to the idea of “Lublin Union” as a uniting factor had to be abandoned (Zaremba, 1981:208)

5.6.1 Towards Authoritarianism

The “May coup” (*Przewrót Majowy*) of 1926 could not heal the deteriorating socio-political situation. Its long-term effects were devastating to the fragile state

⁵⁰ Godziemba *Endecja a Zabojsstwo Prezydenta Narutowicza* <http://www.jpilsudski.org/artykuly-ii-rzeczpospolita-dwudziestolecie-miedzywojnie/polityka-wewnetrzna-i-gospodarcza/item/1730-endecja-a-zabojsstwo-prezydenta-gabriela-narutowicza>; 17 May 2012

institution. Through an attack on the Polish parliament (*Sejm*) the Pilsudskiites further damaged the deteriorating social trust. The shreds of trust were further destroyed by imprisonment of political opponents four years later. The anachronism of Piłsudski's programme was echoed in 1928, when the minorities shifted their support towards lists representing their own ethnicity. The programme of regaining the trust of the population from across the state proved unsuccessful.

Furthermore, the lack of decisiveness in actions of the military led to a general confusion about the role of the coup. Introduction of an ambiguous programme of political and social purification (*sanacja*) provided a brief moment of hope for political stability and reunification of the political elites (Davies, 2005:315). The attempted rejuvenation was aimed at regaining social trust and support. The two programmes: *inter-sea*⁵¹ (*intermarium*) and Prometeism (Paruch, 1997:51) abandoned by the *Sejm*, regained prominence.

The authorities also found that in order to gain the support of the populace in the East it had to "force out the Russian elements from the Orthodox Church while at the same time resigning from enforcing Polish national imagery" (Paruch, 1997:152). Popularisation of the national programme founded upon polyethnic traditions was handed to Stanisław Bukowiecki and Tadeusz Hołówko. Their task was the revitalisation of the state's education system and the construction of Poland's image appealing to the entire population. Guaranteeing freedom for all minorities to cultivate their own traditions was part of the government's aim to foster "good citizens of the state by not converting Germans or Ukrainians into Poles, or Evangelicals and Orthodox into Catholics" (Paruch, 1997:151). For the *sanacja*

⁵¹ The rejuvenated version of the Commonwealth promoted in the early 1920s by the Pilsudskiites. In post-1926 Poland this programme was redefined by Józef Beck as the "Third Europe" programme.

movement, the path towards regaining citizens' trust in the state authorities was through creating and propagating a set of moral rules. The parliamentary stalemate and the regressing economic situation halted the process of consolidation in Poland. Populations from across the state remained disconnected from the central government in Warsaw. The rules such as honesty and inter-ethnic cooperation were not codified but rather they were an honourable commitment based on traditions adopted from the early modern Poland (Paruch, 1997:54-55). According to Piłsudski, the *Sejm* had become a corrupt institution which could no longer represent Polish society as its main focus was on their privileges rather than the future of Poland:

“What I think about the most is the process of thoughts of parliamentarians. What do they say about the society? The parliamentarians only speak of the parliament. Whether there is two, three, twelve of them, each one of them is the parliament. (...) Parliamentarians need money, money, money (...). This is anarchy” (*Wywiad udzielony przez Józefa Piłsudskiego Bogusławowi Miedzińskiemu 26. 8. 1930*)

It became Piłsudski's personal mission to recreate a joint Polish-Lithuanian state. The strengthening of regional ties would according to Piłsudski strengthen the role of Poland in the region. Moreover, the Chief of State, disenchanted with the functioning of the parliament applied authoritarianism to expedite functioning of the state institutions. Furthermore, after the coup of 1926, Piłsudski began to openly criticise the 1921 constitution calling it “chaotic” and “unclear”. In an interview from 1930, Piłsudski claimed that parliament was unable to act efficiently under such constraints. His impatience with the democratic process led to open criticism of the parliament and growing pressure on the parliamentarians (*Wywiad udzielony przez Józefa Piłsudskiego Bogusławowi Miedzińskiemu 26.8.1930*).

Although until the late 1920s parties of the Polish Left such as *Wyzwolenie* and the PPS were able to accumulate the votes of the national minorities , by 1928 this support was transferred to their own ethnic lists (Groth, 1965:656). This shift further weakened the Socialists, fortifying the appeal of the nationalists. The national minorities were unable to find effective support which would protect their rights in the wake of growing domination of the majority. The adoption of assimilation as a realistic method for achieving national consolidation led to waves of dissatisfaction in Ukraine in the late 1920s. All protests against the continuing absorption of ethnic and religious minorities were brutally “pacified” by the Polish military (Bugajski, 2002:160). Persecution of the Uniate Church, representing the majority of Ukrainian population had severe repercussions for the legitimisation of state institutions. Furthermore, the authorities in Warsaw never fulfilled their promise to both the people and the League of Nations in 1919 to introduce Ukrainian as the official language in the region (Prazmowska 2010:104). Józef Beck, the Polish Foreign Minister from 1932, openly opposed the constrictions imposed by the League of Nations on Poland.

5.6.2 The Resurfacing of Ethnic Nationalism

Attempts to create civic national identity floundered as Piłsudski was unable to fulfil the specific needs of the national minorities such as territorial and cultural autonomy. The dissatisfaction of the communities was also linked to the deteriorating economic situation. In the *kresy* the national minorities felt not only cheated after the promises of autonomy were not fulfilled, but also underprivileged compared to the ethnic Poles (Snyder, 2003:141). They found a voice in the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists

(OUN). The OUN opposed any form of participation of Ukrainian peoples in the political life of Poland. Participation of Ukrainian parties in the elections of 1928 became a controversial issue which according to the OUN was a tool for assimilation with the Polish ethnic nation. Acts of terror targeting not only Polish officials but also Ukrainians willing to accept the overriding Polish political identity led to reprisals by the Polish military (2003:143).

The role of Polish army extended far beyond the military sphere. It was a principal instrument for forging social and national unity (Davies, 2005:310)

In order to stamp out the threat to the Polish statehood, the military became involved in a programme of brutal “pacifications”. Attacks by the army on organisations such as cultural and religious institutions suspected of collaboration with the insurgents only fuelled the pro-independence sentiment (Zaremba, 1981:166-167; Kulesza, 1985:148). Aggression targeting the Greek-Catholic Church, one of the symbols of the Ukrainian identity as an accomplice in the acts of terror, isolated the Ukrainian population making the Jagiellon national model obsolete.

Deterioration of the internal political situation and successive departure from parliamentary politics further disconnected ethnic Poles from citizens of other ethnic provenance. With Piłsudski moving away from public life, his entrusted colonels began to work towards the creation of a strong Poland upon the military code. The role of the *Sejm* continued to weaken through the early 1930s with the authorities disregarding public opinion. The decaying international situation further influenced the passing of the April constitution (*Konstytucja Kwietniowa*) in 1935, which significantly strengthened the role of the President, virtually seizing any remnants of

Sejm's role⁵². The role of the president could not be questioned by the juridical organs and his actions would be judged solely by “God and history”, indicating traits echoed by *sanacja's* moral code.

The 1935 constitution passed by the authorities labelling it as “Piłsudski's will” deviated from the model of universal Polish nationality. It mirrored political trends of authoritarian rule in other European countries. On the basis of the new constitution ethnic Poles would play a key role within the state and it was their duty to protect Poland from any threats to its stability. Using the deteriorating international situation the authorities denied any calls for territorial autonomy. The definition of nationality was also undergoing an important change. Far greater power in the hands of the president evidenced the centralisation of all institutions, both state-wide and regional pulling further away from the original programme proposed by the PPS and the 1921 constitution (Paruch, 1997:273; Winnicki, interview, 2012).

The failure of the polyethnic model strengthened the government's argument that the main focus should remain on ethnic Poles who were the only citizens capable of defending Polish statehood in the case of aggression. It also became extremely important to ensure that Polish national identity was strengthened as in the future it would become crucial for settling strategically important regions for Poland (1997:249-251).

When Piłsudski died in May 1935 a rejuvenated National Democracy, in the form of the Organisation of Young Nationalists (Związek Młodych Narodowców; ZMN), began to seek cooperation with the Piłsudskites represented by the Non-partisan Block of Cooperation with the Government (Bezpartyjny Blok Współpracy z

⁵² Kallas, M. *Konstytucja kwietniowa* (1935) <http://edukacja.sejm.gov.pl/historia-sejmu/polskie-konstytucje/konstytucja-kwietniowa-1935.html>

Rządem, BBWR) (Zaremba, 1981:182). The National Radical Camp (Obóz Narodowo-Radykalny, ONR) which trumped all other fractions of the National Democrats was the manifestation of a turn towards fascist trends in mainstream Polish politics. Many of the concepts previously alien to Piłsudski's camp such as anti-Semitism were slowly creeping into mainstream politics. The popular distrust towards ethnic minorities as un-Polish led to acts of violence which continued to increase through the 1930s across Poland. The growing division between the ethnic groups in educational institutions was growing and the authorities were either turning a blind eye on the deteriorating situation or could no longer preserve the inclusive national programme. In addition, the "Bench Ghettos" (*Getta Lawkowe*) were introduced across higher education institutions in Poland (Krajewski, 2014, *Polityka*.)

In 1937 Colonel Adam Koc, President Ignacy Mościcki and Marshall Edward Rydz-Śmigły established the Camp of National Unity (*Obóz Zjednoczenia Narodowego*; OZN) with a rhetoric resembling that of the National Democrats rather than that of the Socialists. The OZN radicalised the visions of Dmowski and Balicki. In the late 1930s Poland was no longer safe for the ethnic minorities. The programme of the authorities perceived construction of a homogenous Poland as it was in their interest to preserve an independent Poland. Non-ethnic Poles, according to the authorities, did not wish to make sacrifices for the Polish nation (Pankowski, 2010:19).

(...) [T]he right wing of the *sanacja* movement opted to exploit anti-Jewish sentiment as a means of gaining stability and means of greater influence among the various parties representing the political right (Michlic, 2006:71)

Waldemar Paruch argues that after 1935 the authorities were plotting a political course consisting of three key branches: nationalism, Catholicism and totalitarian rule (Paruch, 1997:256). This novel direction excluded people who would

not identify themselves as Poles from active political life. The “Polonisation” programmes, dedicated to the assimilation of non-ethnic Poles, were embraced by the military in regions of strategic importance. The ethnic Poles in the late 1930s became the sole owners of the Polish state. With prioritisation of one ethnic group over another, further distinctions were inevitable. The influence of Italian and German fascism popularised the concepts of national purity and introduced them to the political mainstream in Poland. Distinctions between ethnic groups and concern for ethnic purity led the OZN to propose creation of ghettos for non-ethnic Poles. The proposed ghettos would, according to the nationalists, “guarantee national autonomy for minorities and security for Polish nation” (Paruch, 1994:273-274).

5.6.3 The Roman Catholic Church as a Tool of Ethnic Mobilisation

The term *Polak-Katolik*⁵³ was coined in the interwar period. Throughout the 1920s, the newspapers affiliated with *endecja* questioned the allegiance of Jewish people to independent Poland. Agitation against the Jewish population and the supporters of polyethnic Poland remained present in the press and in nationalist rhetoric. *Gazeta Warszawska* saw Jews as the eternal enemies of Christianity while other pro-*endecja* newspapers echoed Dmowski’s arguments against the assimilation of Jewish population which apparently did not share the Christian morality and ethics (*Gazeta Warszawska*, 16.11.1922; *Kurier Poznanski*, 14.11.1922).

In the 1930s, with the deteriorating economic and international situation, the crisis of polyethnic Poland continued to deepen. With the failure of the PPS programme for the reconstruction of Poland upon its ethnocultural foundations and

⁵³ Catholic-Pole

the republican political traditions derived from Poland-Lithuania the Church acquired the central role in the definition of the Polish nation. This paramount role of the Church clashed with the previous declarations and equality of all citizens in Poland.

Furthermore, following the introduction of the 1935 Constitution, the role of the Church in the preservation of the nation was officially recognised by the Polish authorities. The Roman Catholic press, notably the *Maly Dziennik*, maintained that it was impossible to define a Pole without referring to Roman Catholicism and went as far as to argue that without the Church Poland could not survive (Porter-Szucs, 2011:330). Furthermore, the 1935 Constitution formally granted the Church superiority among other state religions (Konstytucja Kwietniowa, 23 April 1935). Many religious buildings and other non-Catholic institutions were either destroyed or “Polonised” in order limit the role of the “anti-Polish” institutions. The reframing of nationality “created a category of Poles of Greek-Catholic, Orthodox and Evangelical faith” (Paruch, 1997:253).

As the old leadership within the *sanacja* programme began to fade away in the early 1930s, the Church regained its political influence which had been held back by its close ties with *endecja* were criticised by the Vatican. This growing influence of the role of the Episcopate was simultaneous to the successive weakening of the idea of civic state model and the drifting towards ethnonationalism. The Church was granted a significant role in Polish national revival, becoming not only an indicator of Polishness but also the key force bonding Poles from across the state (Pease, 2009:157).

For the OZN, Roman Catholicism would in conjunction with the military code create a higher form of morality and effectively a devout patriotism. The Church regained its status which led to minimisation of the role of the non-Roman Catholic institutions. In the late 1930s Poland did indeed return to certain traditions which it had followed in the pre-partition era. In effect, when it became clear that the government was unable to influence the population through reforms and attempts to create a political nation consisting of all citizens failed, it resorted to Roman Catholicism as the symbol of civilisation and ultimate sacrifice. In the eastern parts of Poland where religion was identified by the regime as the main threat to the stability of the state, the authorities approached this issue in a following manner: "(...) in the Polish *kresy* any government must concern itself with religious questions and support the Latin rite as an element of Polishness" (Pease, 2009:157). The process of institutionalisation of religion was also important in terms of creating particular moral sanctions derived from Roman Catholicism which had an impact on the relationship between state religion and religious minorities (Paruch, 1997:253).

5.7 The Second World War and the Aftermath

The homogenisation of Poland in the years preceding the outbreak of the Second World War fractured inter-ethnic relations. The attempts of the OZN to create a nation congruent with the state, capable of defending the state from outside invasion, proved unsuccessful. Piłsudski's idea of a federal state vanished in the 1930s leaving ethnic-Poles as the Polish nation. Non-ethnic Poles were disconnected from the nation building process and in the period leading to the outbreak of the Second World War the minorities were perceived as enemies of the state.

Relations with Nazi Germany continued to deteriorate through 1938 and 1939. The attack launched by the German forces on 1 September 1939 was quickly followed by an invasion by the Red Army on 17 September in accordance with the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact, making it impossible for the Polish forces to simultaneously defend both fronts (Kaczmarek, 2010:380-382). Poland was divided between the Soviet and German armies. The German section of Poland was incorporated into the *Grossdeutsches Reich*. The murderous policies aiming at achieving ethnic purity were put in place and many individuals considered as non-German were displaced. The programme of Germanisation was implemented predominantly in Upper Silesia (Cordell ed.; 2000:105). Polish society underwent a process of Aryanisation. In order to achieve this goal, the authorities implemented a programme which would segregate the population. The *Deutsche Volksliste* (German National List, DVL) created a racial order which allowed for the creation of a homogenous society (2000:108). During this brutal process, hundreds of thousands of Poles were murdered, and many more died as a result of destitution and disease.

The programme imposed by the invaders was more than a bureaucratic machine aiming to determine whether the population was sufficiently "Germanised". It also further distorted the relationship between the communities inhabiting Poland. The disappearance of state regulations and introduction of ethnic terror by the Nazis, forced the local communities to prioritise their ethnic ties rather than any civic patriotism. The aggression and implementation of a system based upon an ethnic model, led to destruction of millions of people, primarily Jewish communities from across Poland, but also ethnic-Poles, Roma populations and others (Eberhardt: 2001:122-123).

Atrocities against the Slavic, Jewish, Roma, and other populations committed by the German Nazis but also by the local Polish, Ukrainian, and Lithuanian populations in various regions of occupied Poland led the politicians from the Government-in-Exile and the to consider separation of ethnic populations in East-Central Europe. To the Polish politicians residing in London, homogenisation appeared as one of the key proposals for the post-war reconstruction of Poland (Fleming: 2010:26).

Between 1941 and 1942 (...), removal of the Germans and acquisition of German territory dominated thinking. Underpinning these views was the notion that minorities such as Belarusians and even Ukrainians within the new Polish state could be assimilated and even integrated into the Polish mainstream (Fleming, 2010:25-26)

It was already assumed that there would be a need for the ethnic populations to “move” to different sections of the post-war political map. The idea of an ethnically homogeneous Poland became the dominant political vision and the only concern for the exiled Polish Government was related to the difficulties of proceeding with the enormous scale of future forced and voluntary population transfers.

Hopes for the creation of an independent state disappeared with the crushing of the Warsaw Uprising in October 1944. For his part, Joseph Stalin’s aim was to connect the various Polish leftist organisations operating in the territory of occupied Poland and within the USSR. The creation of the Polish Committee of National Liberation (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*; PKWN) aimed to remove all opposition which would not become subordinate to Stalin’s plan; for example the National Army (AK) (Kaczmarek, 2010: 481:482). The PKWN was also responsible for the creation of the act of inception of “new Poland” (Manifest PKWN, 1943) which rejected the 1935 constitution and accepted the 1921 legislation approving the democratic future of political organisation and in effect the future Poland. The PKWN

became the executive power and the State's National Council (*Polski Komitet Wyzwolenia Narodowego*; KRN) became the legislative branch. These new regulations under the auspices of the Soviet Union became known as Lublin Poland (*Polska lubelska*) in reference to the city where the new government would reside until independence.

By the time the war ended in May 1945, up to seven million of Poland's pre-war population had been killed. The impact of the mass purges of the Jewish population, Slavic, Roma, and other ethnicities, destroyed the connections between these groups which had been established during the interwar period and prior to the creation of Poland in 1918. The new authorities used the destruction of the Polish nation to support their own aims of creating a new state on the basis of ethnic difference (Eberhardt: 2001:135-136).

The final destruction of the patchwork of ethnic communities in East-Central Europe during the Second World War undermined one of the fundamental elements of Poland's continuity. One of the *ethnic cores* which remained central to reconstruction of Poland in 1918 was its polyethnic character defining the realm until the eighteenth-century partitions. Despite the interethnic animosities which became evident after the independence in 1918, the Polish authorities continued to refer to historical processes such as the distinctive ethnocultural traditions and myths which shaped the contemporary state. The *longue duree'* remained evident in the functioning of the interwar Poland. Various ethnic and national groups which found themselves within the borders of Poland, frequently against their will, were growingly disenchanted with Warsaw's aggressive assimilationist programmes. The conflicting national programmes of *endecja* and the Socialists allowed, similarly to the

nineteenth-century organisations, ethnic self-renewal. Anthony D. Smith defines some of the key mechanisms of such rejuvenation which were observed in the interwar Poland (Smith, 1991:35). Firstly, the Church underwent the reform and it was forced to adapt to its new role in independent Poland. Competition with other religions for central role in the state led to multiple conflicts with the Socialists and the Vatican City (Hutchinson, 2005: 144; Pease, 2009). Secondly, the mass population was elevated to form a body of citizens. The introduction of universal suffrage allowed for popular participation in the democratic process. Finally, myths of ethnic election, outlined by Smith as one of the key aspects of ethnic self-renewal, became central to the entire ethnic group rather than only the upper strata (Smith, 1991:34).

The Second World War put an end to polyethnic Poland. This political tradition which remained one of the foundations of early modern Poland did not survive the conflict which drew clear lines between ethnic groups in East-Central Europe. The atrocities committed during the Second World War influenced drafting of a new Poland in borders dissimilar to its predecessors.⁵⁴ Furthermore, the ethnic structure of Poland would change after the war with many ethnic Poles forcefully moved from the territories incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1945 into remodelled Poland. Similarly, other ethnic groups, especially Germans, who lived in post-Yalta Poland, were affected by these revisions (Eberhart, 2001:139).

These extensive changes which involved mass expulsions and reconfiguration of Poland required support from the pro-Soviet Polish political leadership which would create a narrative for such extensive change. With the return to the “original” pre-modern borders of Poland, the nation, defined through the prism of ethnicity

⁵⁴ During the Yalta Conference in February 1945 it was decided that Poland’s territory would be reconfigured. It lost 179,300 sq km of the eastern territory, gained 100,270 sq km of eastern Germany (Eberhart, 2003:137-138)

rather than territory, was becoming officially the most common interpretation of the population and territorial shifts. The rhetoric of *endecja* and the authoritarianism of the 1930s remained among the elements bridging the interwar with the Communist Poland.

5.8 The Construction of “Piast” Poland

Poland formally reappeared on the map of East-Central Europe in the summer of 1945 after it was decided by the Allies in Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July-August 1945) that a significant westward shift and substantial population adjustments (*Map III*) were required in order to accommodate Soviet expansionism. These alterations were at the expense of Wilno and Lwów, two of the main centres of Polish culture, which were incorporated into the newly created Lithuanian SSR and Ukrainian SSR. Loss of the territories known as *kresy* was “compensated” by moving Poland’s borders into territories that either had had no links with Poland since the Middle Ages (Western territories) or had no past relations with Poland (former Eastern Prussia) (Davies, 2001:88-90).

With the front shifting westwards through the late 1944 the PKWN established its headquarters in Lublin. In early 1945 PKWN, with Soviet support, was granted a status of provisional Government called the Temporary Council of National Unity (*Tymczasowy Rząd Jedności Narodowej*, TRJN) opening a power struggle between the authorities supported by the majority of the Polish population (the Government-in-Exile in London) and the Temporary Council of National Unity with the Soviet Union as its guarantor (Wolff-Powęska, 1993:49-50).

The Polish Worker's Party (Polska Partia Robotnicza; PPR) abandoned the search for reconciliation of various nationalities and religions. Instead the Party leadership focused on identity in ethnic rather than civic terms as the path for the future national construction in Poland (Fleming, 2010:16). In order to build compliance among the majority of the population incorporated into post-1945 Poland, the authorities used the language which resembled political traditions of the National Democratic movement rather than that of the Socialist party. Homogenisation of the Polish population was identified as essential to securing of the shifted borders.

5.8.1 Mimicking *Endecja's* National Programme

Nations, it is argued, are not enduring, homogeneous, substantial communities with fixed traits and essential needs, but simply practical categories imposed by states intent on classifying and designating large numbers of their populations in suitable ways, as was attempted and to some extent realized in early Soviet nationalities policies (Smith, 2008:24).

It was already presumed by the Soviet sponsored "Lublin government" and by the leadership in London as early as 1943, that the most effective way to ensure stability of national borders in East-Central Europe was through the creation of an ethnically homogenous Poland (Cordell, 2000:78). In a drive to build a Communist Poland the authorities appropriated elements of the ethnocultural tradition collected at the turn of the twentieth century while at the same time the Soviet sponsored regime according to Smith "miss[ed] out entirely on the understandings, sentiments and commitments of large numbers of people" (Smith, 2008:24).

Nationalist circles also envisioned an ethnic nation conterminous the state borders as early as 1943. This plan would be achieved through expulsions of the population, identified as German from the post-war territory of Poland. Other ethnic groups residing within Poland, such as Ukrainians and Belarusians were largely expelled with a small minority integrated and eventually absorbed into Polish society (Fleming, 2010:25-26; Wójcik, 2002:31).

Through the process of utilisation of the National Democratic programme the authorities were also aiming to legitimise the rearranged national borders. The TRJN was informed after the conference in Yalta (February 1943) that Poland would sustain substantial territorial losses in the East. In return, Stalin pledged to support claims for shifting Polish borders westwards at the expense of Germany. Confirmation of this substantial alteration of Polish territory required acceptance among the population. This issue was resolved through redefinition of Polish national identity through the prism of the pre-modern Polish history. Through a return to the Poland of the medieval Piast royal family and its territory it was possible to address the issue of the westward shift. The rhetoric of the “return” to the ancient Polish lands became linked to a return to the traditional Polish national identity based upon ethnicity. The anti-German propaganda compared Germans to the Teutonic Knights identified as the eternal enemies of the Polish statehood. Furthermore, posters released by the Department of Education and Upbringing (Wydział Polityczno-Wychowawczy) was responsible for “reclaiming” the ancient Poland from Germany with phrases such as “Kolberg must be Kolobrzeg” or “We haven’t been here since yesterday, we used to reach far west” (Jaworski, Strembski, *Plakaty propagandowe z lat 1945-1989*, 2007).

The authorities were also able to recognise the role of the organisations dedicated to the incorporation of the alleged Piast territories in interwar Poland. The Western Institute (*Instytut Zachodni; IZ*) in Poznań promoting “western” thought, linked the interwar period with the National Democratic movement and became the dominant anthropological force behind the process of legitimisation of the post-Potsdam *status quo*. Work of historians, geographers, archaeologists and linguists who researched issues relating to western borders and ethnic groups inhabiting these territories played a key role in the legitimisation of Poland’s westward shift (Tomczak, 1993:162). Between 1944 and 1945 the Polish Western Committee (*Polski Związek Zachodni, PZZ*) and from 1945 the Western Institute pledged their loyalty to the authorities and Poland within its proposed borders (Tomczak, 1993:167-168). The institute became an important tool in homogenisation of the communities after the westward shift. It also allowed reframing the definition of the Polish nation. Centuries of cultural borrowing which shaped the society and cultural traditions were denied.

Through careful selection of various aspects of Polish ethnic past, the Communist authorities embarked on a mission to legitimise the “historical justice” and the return to the frontiers of Polish civilisation (Pankowski, 2010:46). In this period organisations such as the Western Institute in Poznań, assumed the role of supporting the westward border shift. Through research of folk traditions and the primordial past of the western territories, academics from various disciplines continued their work for reunification with the so-called “traditional” Polish lands. The institute’s examination would provide evidence for the reunification with “historic” Polish regions. The Western Institute’s role was to demonstrate that the Second World only accelerated the process of reunification of “recovered territories”

with Poland (Dmochowska, 1993:230). In order to further support primordial links with these territories, the authorities formed the Commission for the Determination of the Names of Places and Physiological Objects (*Komisja Ustalania Nazw Miejscowości i Obiektów Fizjograficznych*) (Fleming, 2010:68).

5.8.2 The Construction of a Homogenous Poland

The establishment of the post-war Poland should also be approached in context of integration of populations from divergent regions. Expulsions of populations prior to and post the arbitrary verification process forced millions of people from their homes. Over 2 million Poles were sent to Siberia and another 2.2 million Poles resettled by Nazi Germany returned to Poland by 1948 making the integration process more difficult for both the authorities, local populations and “expellees” arriving from pre-war territories of Poland between 1944 and 1949 (Ther, 1996:780-781).

One of the directives of the temporary (*Rząd Lubelski*) authorities was to launch the process of expulsions of populations identified as unfit for remaining on the future territory of Poland. Establishing the State Repatriation Office (*Państwowy Urząd Repatriacyjny*; PUR) in October 1944 allowed immediate expulsions of populations recognised as non-ethnic Poles. Although these population shifts were labelled as “voluntary transfers”, the inhumane conditions experienced by all ethnic groups were brutal and demeaning (Fleming, 2010:31). Some of the camps and prisons operating under German authorities were after the war utilised by the PKWN and the TRJN for detention, verification and rehabilitation purposes (Fleming,

2010:34). Following the agreement of September 1944, resettlements, expulsions and repatriations involved nearly 1.5 million people (Kaczmarek, 2010:553).

Agreements regarding population transfers between Poland, Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania were signed in September 1944 and they were put in motion the following month. What was referred to by the authorities as “voluntary transfers” of Polish people into “new Poland” and other ethnic groups into their designated territories, was in fact the first wave of expulsions which would involve millions of people and continue until the late 1940s (Ther, 1996: 790). Although expulsions led by PUR were scheduled to end by February 1945, it became clear that verification and transfers required additional time, extending the duration of expulsions in Eastern Poland until mid-1946 (2010:34). Due to the continuing conflict between Polish and Ukrainian populations it was in the interest of the PKWN to expel all remaining Ukrainians into the territories controlled by the Soviet Union in order to avoid further ethnic persecutions (Prażmowska, 2010:164; Ther, 1996:785).

In Western Poland prior to the Potsdam conference (July-August 1945) PUR was operating without any official state-wide guidelines. The field authorities were frequently responsible for creating the “law of the land” in their own locality. Many German people who did not escape when the Soviet front moved westwards had no one left to protect them. Immediately after the Red Army pushed German forces westwards many people were resettled without any prior verification (Kulczycki, 2001:212; Kacprzak, 2011:150), people recognised as Germans who failed to escape in time were treated as second class citizens. Although some local populations of Mazuria, Pomerania or Silesia were able to persevere through the acts of banditry, they were frequently unable to protect their property from the untamed expulsions

led by the field administration (Kaczmarek, 2010:555; Roszkowski: 2009:158). Formally, guidelines for regional verification of local populations were not released by the Provisional Government until April 1946 (Kacprzak, 2011: 150).

In 1944 and 1945 all cultural elements linked with Germany resulted in verification of a population as German. In some areas, field administrations frequently unfamiliar with local circumstances, took the initiative in separating the German from the Polish populations (Kacprzak, 2011:153). Controversially and only for brief period, white armbands with the letter “N” would indicate people verified as Germans and hence unfit to remain on the Polish territory (Madajczyk, 1998:66-72). Such propositions exemplified the wider social attitude and the demand for revenge on “traitors” and Germans for the crimes committed during the Second World War (Prażmowska, 2010:172). The authorities “provided a safe target on which the population could vent frustration and anger” (Fleming, 2010:83).

Arbitrary treatment of non-ethnic Poles frequently resulted from a conflict between the local population (*ludność rodzima*) and ethnic Poles resettled from *kresy* (*ludność napływowa*). Many encounters were a result of disputes over the land owned by the local populations and inefficient verification effecting forcible detention of people who were in fact eligible for ‘rehabilitation’ (Madajczyk, 1998:72; Ther, 1996:800). People recognised as German nationals were put into prisons and camps where they would either await expulsion or ‘rehabilitation’ (Kulczycki, 2001:213; Madajczyk, 1998:67).

Although in August 1944 all German nationals were stripped of Polish citizenship by the State National Council (*Krajowa Rada Narodowa*; KRN) this legislation was not passed by the TRJN until September 1946 (Madajczyk, 1998:70).

The TRJN adopted the German Peoples List (*Deutsche Volksliste, DVL*) established by the National Socialists during the Second World War for the purpose of ethnic identification and which from 1944 was used in order to verify whether population was from the 'recovered territories' and thus eligible for 'rehabilitation'. This process involved individuals in the 'recovered territories' who before the war were in fact Polish citizens, however, during the war were included in one of the categories of the DVL. Approach to the DVL evolved with time and although in the early stages of verification only people from categories 3 and 4 were successful with group 1 and 2 designated for expulsion, by 1947 people from group 2 were also allowed to reclaim their Polish citizenship (Linek and Born, 2000:138). In order to retrieve their Polish nationality all people whose names were found on the DVL (groups 2,3 and 4) were required to fill out a declaration stating that they were forcefully registered on the German national list which was followed by affirmation of loyalty to "democratic" Poland .

There were also official guidelines for 'rehabilitation' and resettlements set by the Ministry of Public Administration (MAP) in May 1945. MAP divided German population into separate categories based on their position on the DVL and their future usefulness in the process of reconstruction of the Polish state. The process of verification was biased as it did not target populations who migrated from the territories of pre-September 1939 Poland. Populations inhabiting the "recovered territories" who were German or Mazurians, Silesians, and Kashubes whose identity was shaped by various historical circumstances were presumed traitors (Kulczycki, 2001:213-214; Madajczyk, 1998:66). Individuals who were allowed to remain were treated through the prism of the newly adopted communist jargon as either "volksdeutsch" or "autochthon" and were used as forced labour isolated from

the rest of the Polish society. Piotr Madajczyk (1998) argues that the construction of the modern national identity disconnected populations which in the interwar period defined their ethnic background as Polish. The Warmian population, which identified with Poland through Roman Catholicism and Polish culture, created their own enclaves where they spoke German and in the course of time choose to leave for Germany. Among other local populations inhabiting the pre-war borderlands who did not wish to identify with Poland were the Mazurians and Silesians (Madajczyk, 1998: 73-75).

5.8.3 Integration through Adoption of Nationalist Rhetoric

The Polish government assumed that if everybody living in post-war Poland and its western territories was a Pole, all problems would be solvable (Ther, 1996:797).

The Communist authorities preferred ethnic nationalism as the tool for building a strong Polish society. The ethnic Poles from across the pre-war state arriving into the western territories had priority access to all goods and benefits. The Communist authorities saw minorities as backward treating them as second class citizens (Ther, 1996: 797-798; Madajczyk, 1998:82). Referring to newly the acquired territory of Poland it remained the priority of Władysław Gomułka to remove all “Germans” from the territory of Poland while avoiding any losses on Polish side (Kulczycki, 2001:206).

The process of homogenisation of the Polish population was achieved by the Communist authorities through taking advantage of the advancing social disintegration resulting from the exhaustion of the population after the war. The authorities were eager to highlight the “We/They” dichotomy using the extant

distrust of the “expellees” towards the local populations inhabiting ‘Recovered Territories’. Through application of the “We/They” division the authorities were able to redefine who was a Pole. Through policies prohibiting the use of the German language in public and forceful change of names, the authorities were dedicated to creating a uniform Polish society (Kulczycki, 2001:215).

Those who supported this [PPR's] programme and were of the right background were the “We”; those who opposed it and were of the wrong background the “They”. (...) The PPR sought to manage social anger in the immediate postwar period through the configuring of a We/They opposition which attempted to disconnect social tensions arising from a changing economic and political system (Fleming, 2010:67)

When in 1948 Władysław Gomułka lost the leadership of the PZPR, the Central Committee altered its attitude to the nationalist terms shaping the post-war Polish national identity. Although advancing Stalinisation was effecting the destruction of the middle classes, trade and regionalism (Madajczyk, 1998:82) the authorities began to acknowledge that the issue of populations refusing to assimilate into the Polish society needed addressing. This led to verification of the non-integrated local populations along class rather than national provisions (Kacprzak, 2011:158). There were two main angles which led to this alteration. Firstly, there were economic factors related to fears that further loss of specialists from strategic industries (i.e. mining) caused by expulsions and emigration to Germany would slow down production or even bring it to a standstill. Secondly, there was the inability of the authorities to integrate local populations, through prioritisation of an ethnically Polish workforce, resulting in further departures from Poland (Madajczyk, 1998:83). Inability to promote integration led to subsequent departures of local populations from the “recovered territories” in Poland over the course of the following years (Ther, 1996:796-797). Maltreatment in the form of public humiliations, verbal abuse

and acts of aggression created an environment in which many non-ethnic Poles considered migration (Madajczyk, 1998:80-83; Fleming 2010:71-73).

Resettlement of thousands of Polish Jews from the Soviet Union between 1945 and 1948 led to waves of dissatisfaction among ethnic Poles and reluctance to accept varying definitions of Polishness (Madajczyk, 1998:86). People of Jewish ethnic background who received posts within the structures of the post-war authorities were portrayed within mainstream Polish society as foreign agents, planted in Warsaw by the alien regime (Olejnik, 2003:9-10). Many other Jewish people returning to their pre-war homes found local industries and housing already adopted by the Polish “expellees” from Eastern Poland and the Western Soviet Union. These circumstances led to hostilities between the locals and the newcomers. According to official declarations, the authorities were aiming to integrate people of Jewish ethnic background with the rest of the Polish society through eradication of the pre-war stereotypes of linking Jews with the capitalist bourgeoisie (Olejnik, 2003:9; Kaczmarek, 2010:86).

Attempts to assimilate the Jewish population within the state through minimising support from the Western Jewish organisations and further state suppression of all Poland-based Jewish cultural organisations and Jewish media by the late 1940s led to the disillusionment of Jews with the Polish state. It became clear that despite the PPR’s official declarations, the authorities were set to homogenise all sections of society. It is difficult to give the accurate number of Poles of Jewish ethnicity who left for the West and to Palestine before 1950 but it was estimated at 140-200 thousand people (Kaczmarek, 2010:558). The effect of ethno-nationalist

policies in the immediate post-war era led to weakening of any possibility of social conciliation and integration.

5.8.4 The Revised National Programme

By the end of 1949, expulsions from territories with mixed populations had ceased. In regions where minorities constituted a significant percentage of the population, the Central Committee (KC) with the MZO ensured that through resettlements of ethnic Poles into these regions, they would become “Polish in character” (Eisler, 2003:161). When the process of homogenisation was completed in 1949, nationalism left the centre stage and the subjection of the entire population to the Stalinist regime became of primary importance, the shared aim of the nation was parallel with that of the proletariat rather than of any particular ethnic group (Łepkowski, 1983:16-17).

“The shift in the ethnic structure of Poland had many consequences. Until 1945, Pomerania, Lower Silesia, Lubusza, and most East Prussia had a predominantly German character. Following the virtually complete exchange of population these areas became ethnically Polish” (Eberhart, 2001:141).

Expulsions of the non-ethnic Poles which lasted until 1950 produced a radical configuration of Poland’s ethnic mix. According to the 1950 census, more than 97 per cent of people inhabiting Poland were Polish (GUS, *Narodowy spis powszechny z dnia 3 grudnia 1950 r*, 1952). According to Piotr Eberhart (2001), the data provided by the 1950 census is not straightforward and it is difficult to determine the exact number of non-ethnic Poles inhabiting the country. Yet it is clear that the expulsions and

resettlements lasting until 1950 left Poland markedly more homogenous (Eberhart, 2001:141).

It was in the interest of the PZPR to integrate the remaining non-Polish inhabitants by allowing those of uncertain national provenance who were willing to remain in Poland to apply for citizenship. Although in some regions the authorities were stricter with regard to national verification, by 20. July 1950 the *Sejm* had passed legislation which would stop any further persecution of people who during the war had chosen German nationality or belonged to a group “privileged” under occupation (Dz.U.1950 Nr 29 poz. 270). Through amnesty, people who previously failed the rehabilitation or verification process were relieved from any further appeals and were given the same rights as the rest of society (Kaczmarek, 2010:557). Such concessions became acceptable to the Communist authorities only because the social structure of the state had been entirely altered. While ethnic Poles constituted 65.7 per cent (23.2 million) of the state’s population in 1939 by 1950 this percentage had increased dramatically to 97.8 per cent (24.4 million). The number of Ukrainians, the second largest minority in 1939 was reduced from 15.7 percent to 0.7 per cent, while the Jewish population from 9.3 per cent had gone down to 0.2 per cent by 1950 (Bugajski, 1994:362; Eberhardt, 2001:142).

Our class programme, programme of proletariat ideology is now interwoven with the basic interests of the nation, with the very essence of its independence (...) (Bierut, 1952:125)

In his 1952 speech from the VII Plenum of the Central Committee (Komitet Centralny; KC) of the United Polish Workers Party (PZPR) entitled “Towards the Strengthening of Unity between Urban and Rural Areas in the Contemporary Period of Socialist State Construction” (*O Umocnienie Spójni Między Miastem i Wsią W*

Obecnym Okresie Budownictwa Socjalistycznego), Boleslaw Bierut, argued that the role of the authorities was to construct a strong nation through unification of all national forces. He also calls for “further homogenisation” of the Polish economy and a culture which would effectively lead to resurfacing of the “hidden potential” (Bierut, 1952:27-28).

(...) white and red flags, national and Piast belonging interwoven with anti-German propaganda, Mazurek Dąbrowskiego (...), Rota, all these aspects were aiming to underline revolution in national rather than class terms (Łepkowski, 1983:11)

The process of Stalinisation of the Polish state took different shapes and forms. The main aim was to nationalise those remaining groups which continually refused to assimilate with the Polish society. In the early 1950s when the authorities saw Poland as a homogenous state with its entire population regarded as citizens, Poland entered the next phase of nationalisation where all of the inhabitants were subject to invigilation and structural rather than subjective violence as was the case in the 1940s (Fleming, 2010:76). The national and ethnic traditions relating to both secular and Roman Catholic celebrations were replaced with Marxist-Leninist rhetoric demanding dedication to development of the state devastated during the war.

5.9 Kultura as the Medium for Reconciliation

Joseph Stalin’s death in 1953 led to a transformation in the leadership of both the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Its impact was not visible within the Soviet Union, however, until the speech by Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 at the XX Party Congress in the Soviet Union where he criticized the policies of the former leader. In

Poland, the wave of destalinization began in 1955 with changes within the party structures. The disenchantment initiated a dialogue and even some criticism of the PZPR. The Polish people were able to vent some of the frustration which had built up through Stalinism. Political magazines such as *Nowa Kultura* (New Culture) and *Po prostu* (Frankly) allowed intellectuals to launch a debate on the expulsions and contemporary persecutions of the Communist authorities. Some intellectuals were able to find paths around censorship and even to discuss such issues as the anti-Soviet uprising in Hungary in 1956 (Brzezinski, 1967:274; Kaczmarek, 2010:616). The symptoms of de-Stalinization led to a periodical dialogue between the new generation of communist revisionists and the PZPR's ideological journal *Nowe Drogi* which featured discussion on the future of the nation (Prazmowska, 2010:182-183). The transition at the highest level of state hierarchy had the impact of reviving the discussion surrounding the future of Poland. Although the authorities agreed on a change of course, the Soviet experience remained crucial for the future development of Poland (Brzezinski, 1967:245).

Lively debates on the future direction of Polish society also began to emerge abroad among the exile communities. Unlike *Wiadomosci* (News) representing the national programme of the Polish *émigré* societies in London, *Kultura*, established in Paris, refused to sentimentalise the past. It remained open to various solutions attempting to connect the ideas of the pre-war PPS and *endecja* in order to create a framework for the future liberal-democratic state (Hofman: 2007: 76).

Kultura embodied an attempt to recreate the democratic Poland and also to revive the debate on the relationship between state and nation that had been present in interwar Poland. It became the symbol of revisionism. The magazine initiated

dialogue with Poland's neighbours, especially concerning the future relationship with the German Federal Republic (FRG) (Hofman, 2007:78). *Kultura* also became involved in rebuilding a Polish nation upon past traditions. However it did not simply copy the federal idea promoted by Piłsudski but rather modified the understanding of the national question in the *kresy*. Juliusz Mieroszewski was given a responsibility of drafting and shaping *Kultura's* programme for future political relations with Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine. It was a significant step to promote conciliation and partnership with states which until 1939 had formed an integral part of Poland (Kowalczyk, 2000; Snyder, 2003: 221-223).

5.9.1 Realism and Romanticism in the Programme of *Kultura*

Juliusz Mieroszewski synthesizing the interwar models of Poland and the visions for the Polish nation assumed that: "A Poland which would be strong and important in Europe must be a polyethnic organism; this conclusion is derived from the specific political geography of Eastern Europe" (Hofman, 2007:124). *Kultura* sought to build the ideological ties with interwar Poland. Preservation of the continuity of national traditions targeted for eradication under the Communist regime was not only crucial in the reconstruction of democratic Poland but also essential in the shaping of a modern society.

The editors were close to the vision of the *Jagiellon* or polyethnic Poland which would become strong through building bonds with other East-Central European nations. *Kultura* saw Poland as the future ambassador of nations crystallised in the regions formerly integral to Poland. However, unlike Piłsudski, Mieroszewski and Giedroyc believed that it was necessary to cooperate with

Lithuania, Belarus, and Ukraine through “abandoning territorial ambitions and civilizational claims” (Snyder, 2003:223) as preached by the Piłsudskiites in post-1918 Poland.

Kultura synthesized the federalist tradition of Piłsudski and the nationalist tradition of Dmowski, presenting a realistic programme for a future in which the nations of Communist Eastern Europe would enter the contemporary international system as states (2003:225)

Kultura disagreed with revanchist demands with regard to *kresy* issued by the Government-in-Exile in London, as it continued to claim that any such declarations would have a detrimental impact on relations with Germany and the legitimacy of the border on the Oder-Neisse Rivers (Mieroszewski, *Kultura*, 1955; Mackiewicz, *Kultura*, 1956). *Kultura* played a crucial role in changing the perception of Polish people in Germany. Through attempts to start a dialogue on the expulsion process, the intention of *Kultura* was to learn to remember and to forgive (Mieroszewski, *Kultura*, 1955).

Kultura continued to represent Poland in the international arena through the 1970s and 1980s publicising some of the key events and promoting democratic movements within the state. It was also influential in continuing the dialogue with Federal Republic of Germany (FRG). In the 1980s it was supportive of German unification and under the precept “To not forget, to think through, to forgive” continued discussions on reconciliation between both populations which required forgiveness on both sides (Ursyn, *Kultura*, 1985).

From the early 1950s both *Kultura* in Paris and Radio Free Europe (*Radio Wolna Europa*; RWE) were involved in influencing both the intellectuals and the masses. Their role was to inform and give the Polish people a connection with the

world outside the Communist bloc (Hofman, 2007:79). *Kultura* was open to discussions with groups inside and outside of Poland. *Émigré* organisations based in London were unwilling to create a link with organisations from within Poland as they continued to promote a conservative set of values relating only with the previous eras and did not discuss contemporary Polish society. The Paris based *émigrés*, on the other hand, found that only through connecting the divided social groups in Poland could the nation make a change. To authors of *Kultura* the change had to come from within Poland rather than outside (Tyrchan, 2011:50-51). The RWE alongside *Kultura* became a medium of communication between the Polish *émigrés* and the Polish population in Poland. The informative role of the organisation was an instrument of combat against the Communist indoctrination (Giedroyc, Grudzinski, *Kultura*, 1978).

Kultura not only sparked off a debate regarding the most recent Polish history but also became central in initiating the debate on society and its future development. The magazine played a central role in initiating dialogue between the working classes and the intellectuals separated by the Communist authorities. After 1956, the magazine, apart from its role in representing Poland on the international arena, focused on developing a greater social understanding of the events which were taking place in Poland. It became the main role of Giedoryc and his colleagues to find means of informing the population of their aims and to create common aims which would allow the development of collective demands in the future (Tyrchan, 2011:53-54).

The magazine was not only influential with regard to developing the system but it created a plan which saw “Commonwealth as the basis for an alliance of

modern nation states” (Snyder, 2003:229). *Kultura* also identified the Roman Catholic Church as a possible ally rather than a prop of the Polish right arguing that it was necessary to utilise the Church in order to achieve national reconciliation (Zespół Problemowy Polskiego Porozumienia Niepodległościowego, *Kultura* 1977).

5.10 Heterogeneous Poland and the Church

Under communism the Catholic Church held a quasi-monopoly over the production and reproduction of national identity and could control the mobilizing discourse of the nation (Zubrzycki, 2001:631-632)

The Church went through a period of transition in the Communist Poland. Between 1945 and 1947 it played a central role in the programme of the provisional authorities and was granted the task of constructing links with the territories acquired after the war. However, immediately after the Potsdam conference it was utilised as a tool of national verification, allowing the authorities to assess whether populations assumed by Poland were of Polish ethnicity.

Catholicism was understood by many within the PPR as being part of Polishness. Indeed, even the traditional anti-clerical ethos of the PSL was muted, as PSL leader Stanisław Mikołajczyk also recognised the crucial role that the symbolic and cultural Catholicism could have (Fleming, 2010:102)

All measures designed to homogenise the Polish population were launched in order to achieve the highest possible degree of control over society. In the period following the establishment of the provisional government up until 1947, the authorities were adamant that legitimisation of the authorities and strengthening of the security apparatus was of greater significance than establishing Stalinist ideology and propaganda and would in the long term allow greater degree of control within

Poland (Łepkowski, 1983-13-14). The expulsion of the German population following the westward border shift gave way for the Polish Roman Catholic clergy. The claiming of sacral buildings previously in the hands of the German Catholics and German Evangelical Protestants was treated as evidence of the Polish character of the incorporated territories. Prior to the drastic worsening of the relationship between the Roman Catholic Church and the authorities after 1947, it was noted that the years 1945 and 1946 “witnessed astounding religious revival that was supported in various ways by the state (...)” (Fleming, 2010:105-106).

When the PZPR became the dominant force in the *Sejm* in 1948 the role of Roman Catholic Church became obsolete and even threatening. When primordial links with “Piast” Poland were established, suddenly the Church became a threat to People’s Democracy. The authorities found it necessary to regulate the Church, reduce its role within the communist state and to manage its relations with the Vatican. Shifting from a relationship based on mutual benefit, the authorities lost all interest in future cooperation with the Polish Episcopate (Fleming, 2010:109; Kaczmarek, 2010:653).

Through attempts to minimise role of the Roman Catholic Church in the life of Polish society, the authorities unwittingly created a firm opposition to the regime’s legitimacy. Through concealed attacks aimed at the religious institutions and the clergy, the authorities undermined some of their gains achieved with the support of the Church. Prior to the parliamentary elections of 1947, the Roman Catholic Church moved toward opposition. In the following years the relationship soured further as the Holy See issued a decree which opposed the Communist programme (Mazgaj, 2010:31). Through the following decades it would remain defiant in its protection of

Polish national identity, combating communist attempts to redefine Polishness. For its unwillingness to conform to the Communist authorities the Episcopate would face punishments such as the internment of nearly one thousand clerics in the period between 1952 and 1954. The authorities feared that the Church was capable of persuading the population of alternatives to the PZPR. Legislation discussing religious education in primary and secondary schools, passed in February 1953, aimed to create a degree of control over the influence of the Church on young citizens (Mazgaj, 2010:49-51).

The authorities undertook other methods of regulation such as additional taxation and confiscation of non-sacral buildings (Eisler, 1991:117). Among other initiatives, the authorities supported a revival of the pre-war fascist organisation *Falanga* as a pseudo-religious state-supported “PAX” Association. Both were chaired by Boleslaw Piasecki, who represented a mixture of “nationalist, Catholic and socialist rhetoric” (Pankowski, 2010:38). Piasecki, together with the PZPR, waged campaigns against the insubordinate Episcopate and its role in inciting sentiments other than those of Polish ethno-nationalism. Revival of this pseudo-religious organisation evidenced the campaign of the PZPR against the Holy See and the preservation of the tradition of pluralism in Poland (Dworzecka, 1970: 167-168; Kaczmarek, 2010:652).

The repression of the Church eventually culminated in 1965. An attempt to begin a dialogue with priests from the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) during the Second Vatican Council was criticised by the authorities. In the months preceding the Millennium of Christianity in Poland (1966) the Roman Catholic Episcopate issued a pastoral letter to German Catholic and Evangelical churches (18.11.1965) in which Polish Primate Cardinal Wyszynski invited clerics from the FRG to take part in the

celebrations. In the letter the Polish Episcopate in a Christian manner “grants and begs forgiveness” to Poland’s neighbours (Eisler, 1991:118), offering a model of a Polish nation which was conflicted with the anti-German propaganda sustained since 1945. The Catholic clergy became the ambassador of the Polish nation. Nevertheless, the Communist authorities remained defiant, arguing that the past heritage was an element of an out-dated elitist Poland and it had to give way to the socialist progress and classless Polish nation (Mazgaj, 2010:117). Although the anti-religion Communist regime continued to combat the Church perceiving it as a threat to the integrity of the enforced state model over 90 percent of the Polish population continued to declare their faith Roman Catholic which made the Church one of the most powerful influential institutions in authoritarian Poland. The role of the Church in the life of the population forced the Communist authorities to compromise with the Episcopate and find the middle ground in order to avoid a widespread disobedience (Szczerciak, 2006:55-56).

5.11 Fractures in the National Programme

Through the early 1970s the leaders of the March 1968 protests were encouraged by Jerzy Giedoryc to work closely with *Kultura* and organisations within Poland in order to synthesise ideas of both the intellectuals and other social groups. Through 1971 and 1972 issues of *Kultura* discussed new approaches to the role of “organic work”, linking people of various political affiliations. It was also acknowledged by the opposition that the Roman Catholic Church was being underutilised in the struggle against the system (Tyrchan, 2011:117). In terms of the future socio-economic development of Polish society, intellectuals began to find common goals with the

leading Roman Catholic circles surrounding organisations such as the Clubs of Catholic Intellectuals (KIK), *Tygodnik Powszechny* (The General Weekly), *Znak* (Sign) and *Więzi* (Ties). Leszek Kołakowski, one of the leaders of March 1968 protests, believed that although institutions such as the Roman Catholic Church were important for the cohesion of society, the new Poland needed to be built upon an ethical code. Kołakowski, together with other leaders of the leftist opposition, remained concerned about the revival of “right wing nationalist authoritarianism” (Tyrchan, 2011:123). Kołakowski’s opinion was not shared by all of the intellectuals, significantly slowing down the process of establishing links between various segments of Polish society. Influencing public opinion in Poland was a slow process which required both extensive grass-root work and involvement of various intellectual circles. The activists at both the 1968 demonstrations in Warsaw and the 1970 workers protests on the Baltic coast were unable to understand that their struggle for citizen rights required unification (Wałęsa, 1990:83).

Attempts to connect intellectuals with the working classes materialised with the creation of the *Committee for Worker’s Defence* (*Komitet Obrony Robotników*, KOR) which began to represent of the large swathes of Polish society rather than scattered social groups. The creation of KOR became crucial to the future relationship between key components of Polish society, successfully divided by the authorities until 1976. Intellectuals, workers and the clergy were able to begin redefining Polish national identity. All these groups agreed that the “moral reaction” of all these groups is to demand from the authorities to respect certain rights which all citizens should possess regardless of world-view, profession or relationship to the Party (Wałęsa, 1990:84). The Committee also challenged the legitimacy of the authorities by creating organisations defending and supporting workers, taking on a role which was

supposed to be a central feature of a socialist state. KOR questioned some of the ideas at the foundation of the People's Poland (Wałęsa, 1990:84-85).

Worker's protests against high prices which represented the dissatisfaction of nearly the whole of society were followed by brutal repressions. In Ursus, Radom and other cities protesters were beaten, kicked, and arrested. The most common punishment, alongside with the arrests, were mass dismissals of the employees which had a direct economic impact on the families of those who lost their jobs (Andrzejewski, KOR, 1976)

Arrests of members of the opposition from Warsaw and Kraków weakened the Ministry of Interior (MSW) further as following the public outrage it was forced to release many of them from prison (Prazmowska, 2010:202). It was still unclear whether the opposition had a great enough following within other segments of society to launch further demands. Although the Church did not openly support the crystallising opposition due to fear of further oppression from the state, it was becoming clear that the role of faith in the life of ordinary Poles could become the factor cementing the Polish people together (Snyder, 2003:230). It was in the 1970s when the "We/They" divide began to symbolise the struggle of the people against that state authorities. Lech Wałęsa argues that various organisations lacked a component which would connect these frequently ideologically opposing groups and "create a logical whole out of the turbulent 1970s" (Wałęsa, 1990:85).

Furthermore, it was becoming clear that the political elites of the PRL were unable to implement necessary reforms. From 1976, it was becoming clear that the authorities were no longer capable of alarming the population with a threat of internal and external enemies of the Polish nation. *Kultura* dedicated much attention to the growing dissatisfaction with the authoritarian regime. According to Zygmunt Merka the regime's inability the use of the old techniques of intimidation further evidenced that the authorities were unable to stop the grassroots movements in

Poland (Merka, *Kultura*, 1976:75-77). Merka's arguments were further echoed by Józef Kwaśny who observed that the authorities were unable to bring a halt to the developing ties between the intellectual elites and the working classes:

“Currently the leadership of the Party is doing everything in its power to disintegrate the society, political tranquilisation of the society, and atomisation of the intellectuals. The central policy is based on referring to national-patriotic motifs (...). Gierek's camp has been, since Stalin's era, the most pro-Soviet group and the use of national terminology is a nothing but forgery and cynicism” (Kwaśny, *Kultura*, 1976:74).

Moreover, *Kultura* continued to argue that the aim of the Party was to create a conflict between the intellectuals and the Church. The PZPR aimed to attach ethnonationalist elements to the rhetoric of the Church and its liminal figures such as Cardinal Stanislaw Wyszyński, who openly opposed the authoritarian regime.

“Not everyone realises that the aim of [of the Party] is to put a wedge between the Cardinal [Wyszyński] and non-Catholic opposition in Poland. (...). Gierek's camp is well aware that the Cardinal's goal is freedom of the Church and the nation, similarly, freedom is the goal of the liberal intellectuals. The Party claims the Cardinal to be a nationalist and it alters his rhetoric adding antimasonic and antisemitic elements” (Kwaśny, *Kultura*, 1976:75)

The authors of *Kultura* similarly to the intellectuals in Poland became continued to discredit the authorities. It was clear that the PZPR's aim was to further divide diverse social groups. *Kultura* revealed these techniques applied by the ruling party aiming at the atomisation of the nation while at the same time it supported strengthening of the ties between the Church and the liberal opposition.

5.12 Binding the Society

“The Poles want to “be”- and they wanted that even then, when all they and the onlookers thought that they wanted to “have”; when they were taking to the streets

against poverty, against taking away the last scraps of food from them, against transferring the cost of the “dynamic and harmonious” development onto their shoulders (...). Even then in 1956, in 1970, and in 1976, the protesting crowds sang different songs and called for different things, which many did not hear (...). Then they also wanted to “be”, they wanted to save the meaning of their lives together, to find sense in this continuing work; and then after multiple attempts (...) in 1976, they came back transformed (...) creating various forms of self-defence, electing from among their own outside of the system: activists, leaders, their own technicians, poets, organizers, lecturers, ideologists, codes of conduct, their own chaplains and court defenders (...); electing a whole new world of liberty while enslaved, authentic life among dummies and mannequins (...)” (N.N. Czego chca Polacy?, Kultura, 1981:7)

The Communist authorities failed to comprehend the salience some of the central elements of the national identity in Poland such as the myths of origin or the influence which Roman Catholicism had on the preservation of the distinctive national character. Moreover, the authoritarian regime was unable to comprehend the impact which the cultural borrowing had on shaping Poland in successive generations. The appropriation of political slogans linked with *endecja* or anti-Church campaigns did not allow the Soviet-sponsored regime access to the process of shaping the Polish nation. The attempt to undermine the *ethnic cores* combined with the worsening economic situation in Poland resulted in the reconstruction of the national ties away from the official channels. Polish *émigré* organisations were involved in support for the unions and organisations forming after the creation of KOR and later “*Solidarność*”. It was important to involve institutions such as the Church in the unification of the Polish nation. Both *Kultura* and other influential *émigré* societies, such as *Aneks*, aimed to persuade the Roman Catholic Church to take a stronger position against the authorities (Tyrchan, 2011:206). The Church, one of the *ethnic cores*, could only offer a limited support to the opposition. *Kultura* became involved in bridging the opposition and the Church and it also opened a dialogue between the dispersed organizations across Poland appealing to particular social

groups. The émigré organisation required the Church to bond distinctive social groups.

“The initiative in creating a wider collaboration should be part of the responsibility of the leadership of "Solidarność" but the representatives of all social forces operating in a given territory should be involved: representatives of the local administration, trades unions, Church, political organizations, directors, and representatives different trades- workers, farmers, etc.” (Konwersatorium "Doświadczenie i Przyszłość", 1981:172).

The bonding power of the Church became clear with the first visit of the newly elected Pope to Poland in June 1979. Although the Ministry of Interior (MSW) launched the operation “Summer of 1979” (*Lato 1979*) it was unable to stop millions of people coming to see and hear John Paul II whose speeches gave hope and lifted the spirits of a population suppressed by the authorities (Kaczmarek, 2010:726). In total, around 10 million people came to see Karol Wojtyła during his nine-day visit, an event which inarguably had an impact on the deepening of faith among the mass of Poles for whom religion offered the only remaining sense of freedom from systematic oppression and propaganda. In his speeches, the Pope referred to the oppression of the Polish peoples before 1918 and the continuous striving for the preservation of Polish national identity. References to pre-independence Polish history became a metaphor for the contemporary socio-political situation. To a significant extent, this visit became the fuse that had been absent in 1956, 1968, 1970 and 1976. Through the Pope’s own experience of growing up and living in the Polish People’s Republic both the circles of intellectuals and the working classes could relate to his speeches (Jan Paweł II, 2005:146-147). From the beginning of his papacy, John Paul II promoted ecumenical approach and promoted shared European roots in Poland attempting, to open and maintain between Roman Catholicism and other Churches in East-Central Europe (Gawlikowski, 1990:11).

By breaking ties with its interwar links with the National Democracy, the Roman Catholic Church embarked on a mission to unify various strata of the Polish population in order to build a coherent Polish nation. This aim would be achieved by appealing to the authorities on behalf of the Polish nation (Snyder, 2003:229; Wałęsa, 1990:68).

For the first time during our anniversary, priests were present. Shared prayers and songs were a novelty next to the shipyard. It was thanks to priests that our anger and rebellion fused with contemplation (Wałęsa, 1990:93)

The first step towards integration of Polish society was achieved with the Papal visit in June 1979. The First Secretary of PZPR Edward Gierek and his staff failed resolve the economic crisis and the issue of rising food prices, in particular. Loans from the West could tame the dissatisfaction for a while but eventually such short-term measures, without appropriate economic reforms which the PRL required, would only slow down the process of economic disintegration. The effects of these failed reforms together with oppression of the working classes resulted in an explosion of social dissatisfaction (Prazmowska, 2010:206). During the tenth anniversary of the Gdańsk shipyard protests in 1980 and commemoration of those killed by the army both the intellectuals and the Roman Catholic Church authorities were present symbolising the unification of these groups (1990:93).

The government must obey freedom of speech guaranteed by the constitution of People's Poland PRL while at the same time it is not allowed to oppress free publishing houses and supply access to mass media for the representatives of all religions (*Międzyzakładowy Komitet Strajkowy*, Inter-Enterprise Strike Committee, 1980)

The “twenty-one postulates” drafted by workers became the first such listing of requirements from the Government. The workers were not aiming to overthrow

the system but rather requested fair and equal treatment of all citizens. Although the majority of the “twenty-one postulates” focused on the well-being of the working classes, demands for freedom of speech and freedom of the media and conscience were at the backbone of ideas behind the protests of March 1968 and the programme proposed by the authors of *Kultura*. The unity of the workers led to the signing of the “Gdańsk Accords” and the creation of *NSZZ Solidarność* (*Niezależny Samorządny Związek Zawodowy "Solidarność"*, Independent Self-governing Trade Union "Solidarność"). In the short term, the unified action of the workers proved the strength of collective action. The presence of intellectual and political oppositionists such as Tadeusz Mazowiecki and Bronisław Geremek in tandem with Lech Wałęsa created another dimension of cooperation between different groups within Polish society (Prazmowska, 2010:209).

“A certain tradition of images, cults, customs, rites and artefacts, as well as certain events, heroes, landscapes, and values, come to form distinctive repository of ethnic culture, to be drawn upon selectively by successive generations of the community” (Smith, 1991:38)

This combination of distinctive national forces standing in opposition to the authoritarian regime led to the construction of a united Polish nation within the state ruled by an alien regime. *Kultura*, which collected and rejuvenated elements of the early-modern and interwar political traditions preserved the national character which stood in contrast to the model enforced by the Communist authorities. Furthermore, *Kultura* assumed the role of *ethnic core* and following the Second World War was dedicated to transmitting elements of Polish heritage and traditions. Following Smith’s definition, *Kultura* assumed the role of a distinctive repository of

ethnic culture and disseminated this heritage in successive generations, forming a bridge between different national forces.

5.13 The Divergent Visions of Nation in the Rhetoric of *Solidarność*

“For seven years the opposition headed by Wałęsa propagated the belief that “there is no reform without *Solidarność*, It turns out that there can be *Solidarność*, there can be a reform, and at the same time objection from the workers (...). *Solidarność*, can no longer ensure the collision-free course of reforms” (Jagiełło:Romaszewski, *Kultura*, 1989:126).

It became clear that *Solidarność* was facing similar challenges to those of the Communist regime. Attempts of the Communists to create a homogenous nation proved unsuccessful. The PZPR's scheme to build a nation upon traits of ethnic identity mixed with elements of nationalism lost its appeal after decades of continuous repetition. *Solidarność* which offered pluralism and was dedicated to the expansion of the workers rights across Poland. In the late 1980s, the organisation assumed the role of representing the clandestine Polish nation. Economic and ideological disparities linked to the rapid growth of the organization became evident in the late 1980s with different trades demanding additional reforms (Jagiełło:Romaszewski, *Kultura*, 1989:127).

Decades of nationalistic indoctrination had left Poland divided. Although the Communist authorities were becoming increasingly discredited, the draft of future Poland and the interpretation of the national character remained an element of contestation between the oppositionists.

Jan Józef Lipski, one of the founders of KOR and member of *Solidarność*, criticised the chauvinistic political campaign of the PZPR and in his essays appearing in the late 1970s and 1980s, he presented an alternative vision of Poland to that preached by the Communist authorities. His works became a symbol of the pluralist vision for Polish society and constituted an opposition to nationalism and megalomania propagated by the Communist authorities. In his essay, Lipski argued that “xenophobia and hatred towards everything “foreign”, and national egoism cannot be reconciled with the Christian foundations of Poland. Patriotism, on the other hand, may be reconciled. Moreover, Lipski undermined nationalist chauvinism saying that “Love of everything Polish- is a common form of the national, “patriotic” stupidity (...). Patriotism is not only respect and love of tradition, it is also the unrelenting selection of the traditional elements and the duty of intellectual research in this field” (Lipski, *Kultura*, 1981:4-5).

Jan Józef Lipski together with Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuroń and other leaders of the opposition openly attacked the vision of Poland supported by the Communist authorities. Equally the oppositionists feared that the weakening of Polish Marxism-Leninism would allow right-wing organisations promoting the idea of exclusive nationalism to demand recognition in Poland and in effect weaken relations established with Poland’s neighbours. To the opposition on the left side of the political spectrum, this threat loomed larger with the division of KOR into separate organisations with programmes resembling competing schools of political thought (Tyrchan, 2011:235). Similarly, *Kultura* analysed the changing relationship between ethnic Poles with the Jews, Germans, Lithuanians, and Ukrainians. In an attempt to find an interethnic understanding authors of *Kultura* attempted to expand the narrow definition of Poland propagated by the PZPR. Through research of the relationship

between different ethnicities in Poland and in East-Central Europe such authors as Czesław Miłosz or Andrzej Szczypiorski exposed Polish xenophobia and antisemitism in the interwar Poland, during the Second World War, and in the Communist state.

“Poles and Jews experienced a great loss during the Second World War. It is a great loss and pauperisation to Poland that the Jewish spirit will never again enrich our culture, which was, after all, formed by Poles and Jews. To a lesser, but still a meaningful extent, it was shaped by other peoples of *Rzeczpospolita*. For the Jews it was a painful blow as they lost the country which for many centuries was their great asylum, for others it was simply their homeland (...)” (Szarf; Szczypiorski, *Kultura*, 1979:132)

Furthermore, Jerzy Giedroyc and his colleagues had promoted cooperation between the intellectuals and the working classes from the 1950s through to the 1980s and when *Solidarność*, envisioned by *Kultura*, became a reality. The committee combining workers from various industries together with the Roman Catholic Church and the intellectuals realised that only through cooperation would they be able to create a democratic Poland. Although they came together in *Solidarność* in order to rebuild the state so that it would reflect and fulfil the needs of its citizens, the ideas of some members challenged the pluralist vision of Poland envisioned by *Kultura* and the leftist opposition. As in the struggles within the PZPR in the 1950s and the 1960s, the *Solidarność* underwent a crisis of its own, leading to divisions into partisan groups of “True Poles” and others (Pankowski, 2010:58). Among the organisations which influenced *Solidarność*, there were those which, similarly to National Democracy, saw Polish history in terms of a national struggle and the survival of Poland among other hostile nations. The Young Poland Movement (*Ruch Młodej Polski*; RMP) supporting shipyard workers and later influencing the ideology of *Solidarność* (Jagiełło:Romaszewski, *Kultura*, 1989:122-123; Wałęsa, 1990:89),

In the 1980s, *Solidarność* began to represent more than exclusively shipyard workers. It was an organisation which would bridge various social and political groups creating a platform collectively calling for a democratic alternative. The Polish population was able for the first time in decades to see that it was the people who were Poland and not the authorities (Wałęsa, 1990:95). Such a realisation became possible through the grassroots work of the opposition, defiance by the Roman Catholic Church and a non-conformist vision for Poland drafted by various contributors in *émigré* organisations and magazines such as *Kultura*. In effect, political symbols became less important than national symbols of both “Romanticism” and “Realism” which had prevailed the decades of censorship and shaped the core of the *Solidarność* movement (Pankowski, 2010:61; Snyder, 2003:220-221). Desperate attempts by the authorities to control social anger through means such as the introduction of martial law in 1981 were only of short term use, unable to stem the growing division between the Polish nation and the state authorities. The murder of the dedicated supporter of *Solidarność*, the priest Jerzy Popiełuszko symbolised the sacrifice of all members of the movement in overthrowing of the oppressive system:

(...) [P]riest Jerzy demonstrated that when facing violence we [Polish nation] are all on the same side. I was able to say by his coffin (...): *Solidarność* lives because you sacrificed your life for the cause (Wałęsa, 1990:371)

With the PZPR losing ground, the Party was unable to propose any reforms which would have any impact on the mood of Polish society. The first idea for talks between the authorities and the opposition appeared in February 1988 in the magazine *Konfrontacje* and from this point onwards, the continuing protests of

industrial and mining sectors led to the acceleration of the inevitable meeting between the leaders of the Polish state and the Polish nation.

Czesław Kiszczak representing the PZPR began his semi-official meetings with the leader of the trade unions Lech Wałęsa in September 1988. Although certain groups within of the opposition did not agree with the meetings between the PZPR and the leader of *Solidarność*, these talks continued and on 16 September after the first meeting between the Non-Governmental All-Poland Alliance of Trade Unions (OPZZ) with its governmental counterpart, the parties within the coalition with PZPR, the decision was taken to organise “Round Table” talks in October 1988 (Kaczmarek, 2010:778).

“The contemporary reality was perceived as black and white, constructed of conflicting elements: the authorities- opposition, Communists- *Solidarność*, Wałęsa-Jaruzelski. (...) after the last plenum KC PZPR and after the resolution of National Executive Committee *Solidarność* it is necessary to find a different approach to comprehend the socio-political transitions taking place in Poland” (Jagiello:Romaszewski, *Kultura*, 1989:121).

Solidarność could not survive the transition to mainstream politics. Despite the success of the trades union in the 1980s, to many it became clear that although the organisation was constructed by the people and served the people over time it lost its impetus and fractures became evident (Charłamp, *Kultura*, 1989:142:143).

5.14 Conclusion

The independence of Poland had become a reality in 1918 with the demise of the polyethnic empires responsible for partitioning *Rzeczpospolita* in 1795. The construction of modern Poland was closely connected to various forces operating in

East-Central Europe and in other parts of the continent. Modern Poland, as drafted by Piłsudski and the PPS, adopted the polyethnic foundations and the respect for the early-modern political traditions. The elevation of the mass population to the status of citizens included people of all faiths and ethnic affiliation. The Socialists, who outlined the first model of the state and combated until 1921 to include all peoples of Poland-Lithuania in the Second Rzeczpospolita effectively failed. This programme which proved out-dated became moulded with that of *endecja* propagating an ethnic definition of Poland and the assimilation of other peoples in East-Central Europe to the Polish tradition. This interpretation of the nation became recognised as the “national egoism” and became one of the dominant political features in the late 1930s and was after the Second World War adopted and adapted by the Communist authorities attempting to legitimize their rule in Poland.

With the use of *ethnosymbolism*, this chapter analysed whether particular institutions such as the Church or the *szlachta* retained a role of *ethnic cores* capable of collecting, codifying, and disseminating elements of ethnocultural tradition and wider Polish heritage shaped by different ethnic groups across Poland. The newspapers, journals, and secondary sources from the interwar period, as well as those from after the Second World War, demonstrate continuity of a distinctive national character in Poland. Although the state remained partitioned for 123 years, the symbolism and traditions which remained essential to the preservation of national identity among the *szlachta* became crucial to the mass population. This “distinctive repository of ethnic culture” allowed expansion of the nation and preservation of the cultural heritage. Although cultural borrowing and ethnic renewal became limited following the Second World War, the émigré organisation, domestic intelligentsia, and the Church retained memory of the democratic tradition and

pluralism in the interwar Poland. Memories of independent statehood and democratic traditions served as a blueprint for the future Polish state. The political tradition of the PPS or the ZLN remained a resource for the intellectuals during the period of authoritarianism. The authors of *Kultura* collected the ideas outlined by different intellectuals and initiated a debate on Poland's past and present. They were able to create a sense of continuity between democratic Poland (1919-1926) and the clandestine opposition which over decades of atomisation was becoming dissatisfied with the worsening economic situation and the Communist ethnonationalism which was dedicated to depriving Poland of its cultural heritage.

The Church, which became one of the elements of cultural heritage essential to the preservation of the distinctive national identity following the partitions, underwent the transformation in the interwar Poland and during the Communist period. While in interwar Poland it remained the right arm of *endecja*, openly critical of the Socialists and demanding a clear role in shaping Poland and guiding Polish people after the Second World War and especially in the late 1940s it became a target of the Communist authorities. The internal reform of the Church in this period demonstrated the role which Roman Catholicism had in the life of the Polish nation. Although in interwar Poland it was predominantly associated with organic definition of Poland after the Second World War it became a symbol of freedom and pluralism.

Kultura, which assumed the role of *ethnic cores*, became a forum for the national debate. It was able to collect the writings of Polish dissidents and establish a relationship between distinctive social groups disintegrated by the authoritarian policies. Its main achievement was to allow an honest discussion on Poland's past which allowed shaping of a dialogue with Poland's neighbours and the minorities

existing in Poland. The magazine supported building of a strong relationship between the liberals and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland which would allow discrediting of the PZPR's policies. It also informed Polish people in Poland and abroad about the achievements of organisations such as KOR and *Solidarność*

Chapter 6: National Identity in Post-Communist Poland

“The atmosphere in Poland today favours falling into extreme opposite to Communism. The Right is enjoying great support, frequently seen through the simplifying lens of the Communist propaganda, although now it is praised and not condemned. A significant proportion of *Solidarność* activists turned away from, once popular within the organisation, ideal of social justice (...). The liberals claim that equality cannot be reconciled with freedom” (Modzelewski, *Kultura*, 1991:3)

The collapse of Communism opened a new chapter in the competition for shaping of the national character in Poland. The divisions of the political arena in the early stages of the transition period resembled wider divisions within society. Although a majority of politicians in Poland wanted to forget about Poland's Communist past immediately the growing social cost of the systemic transformation weakened national ties (Modzelewski, *Kultura*, 1991:5-6). Divisions on the early 1990s political stage express the longings of the Polish society. On one side Polish people were anxious about 'returning to Europe', while on the other; Polish people wanted to stay true to the traditional elements which had allowed the preservation of a distinctive national identity through the lengthy period of authoritarianism and the Second World War. Analysis shows that the political competition in this period was predominantly centred on socio-cultural rather than economic consideration (Antoszewski, 2000:75). National identity in post-Communist Poland remained a subject to competition between two leading strands. Poland became split between the two main currents which described Poles either as an organic or as a territorial community.

Solidarność which had led a united nation against the oppressive state authorities in the 1980s became obsolete in democratic Poland. Competition among members of the trades union and various activists led to a discrediting of the

organisation. The united front which had been able to fight for freedom from authoritarianism for a decade did not survive beyond collapse of the PZPR. Aggressive competition and personal attacks among people linked to *Solidarność*, combined with worsening economic situation had a detrimental impact on Polish citizens. Between June 1989 and October 1991 the absence in parliamentary elections grew from 38 to 57 per cent (Wolicki, *Kultura*, 1991:47).

“[Voters] were paralyzed in their civic duty by the presented political options and ideological content. (...). They were presented with “substitute” content by the right-wing parties such as ZChN (...) or KPN and the wide range of small parties (...). The “substitute” content (...) suggests to the voters that a necessary and the most important feature of a politician is their ideological background: the catechism and the April constitution⁵⁵ serve as Mao’s Red Book” (Wolicki, *Kultura*, 1991:48).

Furthermore, the relationship between *Solidarność* and the Church in the 1980s allowed the right-wing Political parties to claim Roman Catholicism as the essential element of their campaigns. The Church, identified by the right as central to the preservation of a distinctive national character during PRL required assurance that its sacrifice during the Communist period would be rewarded. The Christian-national and the national-conservative parties identified the Church as the core of the Polish nation (Wolicki, *Kultura*, 1991:50).

Ethnocultural Traditions and the process of Shaping Political Programmes According to Ryszard Herbut (2000) political parties which officially entered the political platform assumed contrasting elements from different periods from the past. The cleavages which became most evident during the process of splintering *Solidarność*

⁵⁵ The 1935 constitution was the final act signed by Pilsudski before his death

were divided between the traditional and liberal cultural attitudes and economic etatism in opposition to economic liberalism. These cleavages, however, do not demonstrate some of the main problems following the collapse of Communism. Herbut argues that the post-Communist and anti-Communist division between parties created an independent sphere of competition which through the 1990s overtook other considerations.

On the socioeconomic dimension, the UW is much closer to the SLD than to other post-Solidarity parties, but the chances of co-operation between both parties are slender on account of genetic differences. With regard to the SLD and the PSL, once again genetic factors help explain why the two continue to co-operate with one another, just as much as they explain the continued alliance between the AWS and the UW" (Herbut, 2000:102)

Although in the last decade of the twentieth century Poland was predominantly an ethnically homogenous state, this picture was a recent phenomenon. The liberal parties recognised that it was in fact heterogeneity and centuries of cultural borrowing which continued to shape Poland with its citizens in every successive generation. Extension of equal rights to the national and ethnic minorities inhabiting Poland became a crucial element in the process of shaping the Polish nation of territorial and polyethnic traditions rather than purely ethnic traits. Following the decades of nationalist propaganda of the Communist party, Poland was able to return to the inclusive definition of the nation and expand the narrow definition of the Polish nation enforced during authoritarian rule. The transition from the organic definition of Poland, which remained central to the administrations in the late 1930s and during the PRL, granted ethnic Poles a dominant and privileged

position in Poland. Following the collapse of Communism this competition between Poland founded on the polyethnic traditions, and the nation centred on Polish ethnicity remained influential and became evident in party programmes. Over the course of twenty-five years, parties continued to search for ideas in the interwar programmes outlined by the ZLN and the PPS. The *ethnic core*, which during the authoritarian period stored much of the Polish cultural heritage and political traditions were able to disseminate a vast amount of literature in the liberal democratic state. The two currents which crystallised in the nineteenth century remained important in the Third Polish Republic.

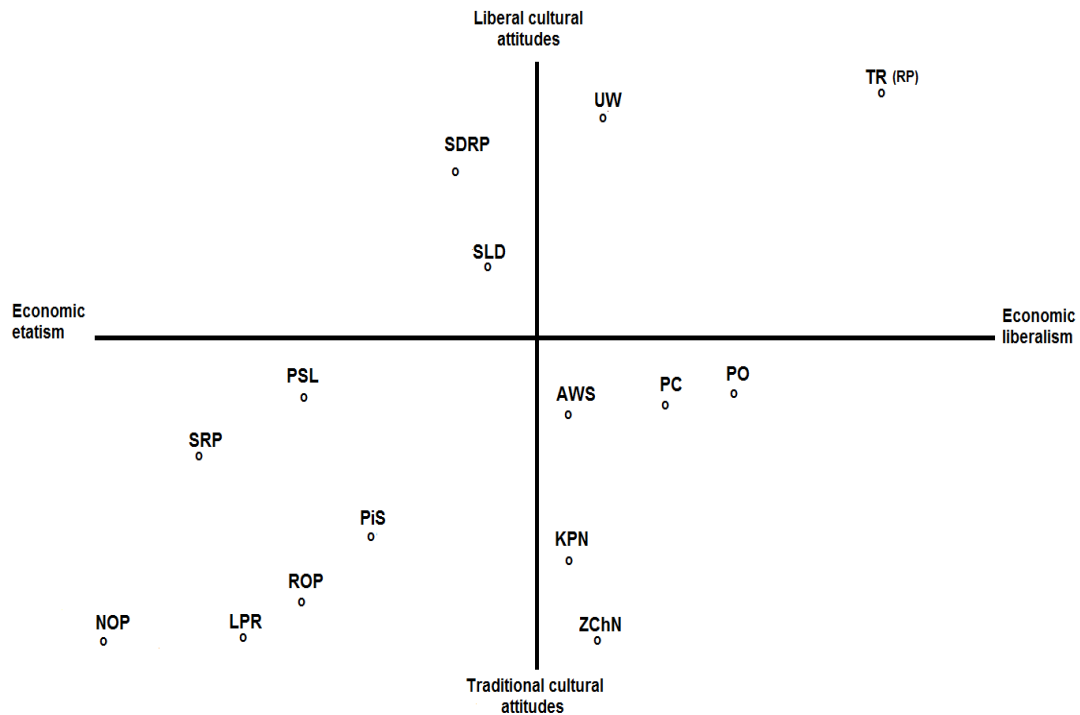


Figure 1.1: Two-dimensional political spectrum in post-1989 Poland

KPN: Confederation of Independent Poland (established 1979)

NOP: National Rebirth of Poland (established 1981)

ZChN: Christian Democratic Alliance (1989-2010)

SdRP: Social Democratic Party of the Republic of Poland (1990-1999) transformed into Social Democratic Alliance (SLD from 1999)

PSL: Polish Peasant Party (established 1990)

PC: Centre Agreement (1990-2002)

SRP: Self-Defence of the Republic of Poland (1992-2012)

UW: Freedom Union (1994-2005)

ROP: Movement for Reconstruction of Poland (1995-2012)

AWS: "Solidarity" Electoral Action (1996-2001)

PO: Civic Platform (established 2001)

PiS: Law and Justice Party (established in 2001)

LPR: League of Polish Families (established 2001)

RP/TR: Palikot Movement (established in 2011) transformed into Your Movement in 2013

(figure 1.1: Herbut, 2000:103)

6.1 Solidarity after *Solidarność*

After achieving its ultimate goal of ousting the Communist regime *Solidarność* splintered into various factions competing for leadership in the new Poland. The political parties which appeared in Polish politics which appeared in this political space (*figure 1.1*) appeared predominantly concentrated on socio-cultural issues rather than the pressing economic matters. Parties of the Right used populism to appeal to the voters highlighting the differences between them rather than shared goals (Skórzynski, 1991:138).

Furthermore, despite the programmatic analogies between the ex-Communist and anti-Communist parties in the economic sphere, issues related to identity and the role of the traditional values played a central role. The two-dimensional spectrum (*figure 1.1*) further demonstrates the socio-cultural and economic cleavages which became evident after 1989. The spectrum demonstrates the position in where most of the parties were located after the collapse of Communism. This clear turn towards the Conservative and Christian Democratic programmes was evidenced by the sudden appearance of numerous parties defined by the “traditional cultural attitudes” (*figure 1.1*). This turn may be explained by seeking support from the Church in the parliamentary campaign.

(...) [A]n issueless regime divide between the principal agents and collaborators of the communist regime and those who rallied to the *Solidarność* camp is moderately pronounced and may make it difficult to engineer coalitions among parties with similar stances in the two-dimensional issue space but different historical roots in these alternative camps (...) divisions among the parties that emerged from the *Solidarność* camp and are now located in the Christian-national sector of the policy space often derive not from policy disagreements but from personal animosities and organizational rivalries (Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, Tóka, 1999:387)

The bitter rivalry between the leading political parties with positioned in the close proximity on the two-dimensional political spectrum (*figure 1.1*), such as ZChN

(Christian Democratic Alliance) or KPN (Confederation of Independent Poland), were unable to find common ground. Political parties from across the spectrum were unable to appeal to a growing number of voters who were becoming concerned that “group interests and political ambitions took priority over creating solid political programmes” (Poleski, 1992:22).

“KPN, which continues to shift between coalition and the temptation of rule, appears helpless. Despite the mythmaking abilities of its leader, the awareness of continuing state crisis took away the KPN’s confidence (...). They can no longer use propaganda to sell their recipes and ideas. Their behaviour demonstrates their obsessions with petty matters and the need to argue about meaningless issues” (Wolicki, 1992:64-65).

Tomáš Kostelecký (2002) argues that although Prime Minister Mazowiecki’s administration “achieved its main goals , it had some detrimental side effects such as a sharp drop in actual incomes, a decline in industrial output, and a rapid rise in unemployment” (Kostelecký, 2002:67) it was not able to soften the high cost of transition. Moreover, the social cost of transition led to rapid disenchantment of the population with the policies of Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s government. Mazowiecki was widely criticized also by his former political partners (including Lech Wałęsa) who were attempting to distance themselves from the difficult and unpopular reforms. Furthermore, Mazowiecki fearing that animosities and accusations between the post-Communists and the post-*Solidarność* could impede formation of a society and halt the progress of cooperation with the “international community” suggested drawing a dividing line between the old system and the post-Communist Poland. (Marczewski,1990:108-110). Mazowiecki’s government and observers outside of Poland were becoming aware that the map of Europe was rapidly changing opening to Poland and other states in the region new possibilities. These political

developments in East-Central Europe created a void which required reconstruction of the societal ties and resetting of the relationship between Poland and its neighbours.

“I do not know whether Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland will create a politically influential trio. I do not know what our relationship with the Baltic States will be. One system ceased to exist and the new one has not crystallised yet (...). It is essential to survive this difficult period of transition from socialism to the free market economy. It will be a long period (...), it will require novel forms of cooperation in Eastern Europe” (Modzelewski, *Kultura*, 1991:21).

With regards to the neighbourly relations, *Kultura's* authors for decades guided the development of Poland's connection with already existing states and Soviet Republics on the course of independence. The reconstruction of societal ties became essential to creating a strong Poland as a viable partner for the European community. Although a distinctive national character prevailed the decades of atomisation, it was necessary to connect the disparate elements of Polish identity.

“The government, through its politics, ensures the safety of the state, it receives external support and kindness towards the transformation taking place in the country. This political course includes Poland in the wider European cooperation dedicated to building unity on our continent; it also transforms and improves the relationship with neighbouring countries and nations” (Skubiszewski, 1990:5-6)

6.1.1 Mazowiecki's "Thick Line"

According to Władysław J. Stankiewicz (1996), the Polish political system of the late 1980s and the early 1990s, resembled the structure of post-totalitarianism, which was a form of transitional period. Furthermore, Stankiewicz claims that in this particular period distinctive ethical, political, psychological, social, and cultural elements compete with one another for:

“the primacy in the period of systemic transformation leading from “real socialism” to some other political system (...). Moreover, this period like a mirror, which allows Western democracies to see the reflection of their previous phases, capture in a split moment this “primordial” period preceding the new social contract”(Stankiewicz, 1996:6)

The transitional period between authoritarianism and liberal democracy stalled the process of national consolidation. The waning elites of the PZPR in a desperate attempt to remain in power were forced to collaborate with the opposition. The direction of Poland became unclear with two opposing forces shaping the domestic and international politics of Poland. Poland’s aim to join the democratic West became jeopardised with the combination of the undemocratic decision-making in the early stages of the Polish parliamentary democracy. The goal of Mazowiecki’s government was the creation of a system in which the Polish population would identify with the institutions of the state, especially with the Parliament.

“When parliamentary rules did not take root, and the rule of law is not yet sufficiently protected, the corporatism may deafen and tame the youthful democratic culture. The politicians, secretly negotiating, may treat the law instrumentally. This scenario, could in return, perpetuate the authoritarian model where law is not a boundary of power but a tool in ad hoc political manipulations” (Lamentowicz, Kultura, 1989:62).

Nevertheless, Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s government emphasized the role of the European Community (EC) in ensuring the liberal-democratic development of Poland. The transitional government recognised that it was necessary to appeal to the widest possible body of citizens in order to re-establish a democratic system in Poland. In order to reach this goal, it was necessary to avoid post-Communist persecutions of the previous regime’s collaborators and to steer the parliament in the direction of necessary reforms. The government, which identified rapid unification

with the European Community (and other international institutions) as imperative to the strengthening of the position of Poland in East-Central Europe, wished to avoid internal conflicts which could regress the ambitions of Poland.

“The government, which I am creating, takes no responsibility for the liability which it inherits. It has, however, an impact on the circumstances in which we operate. We split away the history of our recent past with a thick line. We will be responsible only for what we have done to help extract Poland from her current predicament” (Mazowiecki, Expose, 1989)

The Prime Minister proposed the so-called “thick line” (*gruba kreska*) programme. This line would become a metaphorical boundary between the Poland that had existed and the Poland which was born out of the opposition to the oppressive system. Although it was the aim of the programme to unite all Poles in the struggle for a democratic state the “thick line” formed stereotypes and divisions among the nationals (Mazowiecki, 2013). Mazowiecki’s proposal aimed to make a clear distinction between the past and the present. Although its aims, as described above, sought to achieve a peaceful internal transition, it became recognised as one of the most controversial aspects of post-Communist Polish history. According to the conservatives the “thick line” stalled the process of national consolidation and allowed the former Communist elites (*nomenklatura*) a continued significant role in state affairs (Lipinski, 2008:280-283).

6.2 The Formation of Modern Political Thought

Post-Communist Poland faced a vast array of issues related to economic, political and socio-cultural transition. Rebuilding of the nation in Poland required legitimisation of the state institution which would relieve the *ethnic cores* and assume the central role

in shaping democratic Poland. The ethnocultural elements, the tradition of cultural exchange, or the linguistic heritage, which allowed the preservation of the distinctive national character through the authoritarian period, were incorporated by the official institutions. These elements, central to through periods of limited sovereignty, were, in the post-Communist period, bound by a single denominator which was Europe. Despite the ideological competition, the successive democratic administrations identified Western European cultural heritage and global democratic institutions as the blueprint for Poland's development. Joining Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), and the European Community (EC) became the leading objective (Skubiszewski, Expose, 1991). The discrediting of the Communist system and the collapse of the Soviet Union resulted in shaping of a pro-Western European political thought in Poland.

“The direction of foreign affairs, selected by our nation in 1989, despite a wide range of issues and instability of domestic politics, remains the force stabilising and strengthening our independent statehood. It is a tool in our dynamic activity in accordance with European community and international community. It is because of the selected national goals which interplay with the European and global peaceful development” (Skubiszewski, Expose, 1991)

Despite the domestic turbulence following the collapse of Communism and the costly transitional period, Poland's goal of joining wider European and global institutions was no longer threatened by external aggression. Consolidation of the national forces within democratic European framework would allow strengthening national identity within Poland.

In post-Communist Poland, however, the society remained divided and the worsening economic situation did not allow strengthening of the ties damaged by the decades of authoritarianism. This costly economic transition resulted in growing

social distrust, isolationism, and the sense of insecurity. Although more parties appeared on the political stage none of them offered solutions which would steer the nation away from the crisis (Kaczmarek, 1996:50-51).

The political parties which influenced the political stage in the 1990s were representative of particular attitudes of the Polish society, deprived of ability to make decisions about the future of their state. This frustration became evident on the political spectrum (*figure 1.1*). Parties which appeared in this period identified the organic definition of Poland as appealing to the largest group within the society. Elements of the political tradition derived from the interwar period of democracy (1919-1926) influenced programmes of KPN or ZChN. The political parties in the post-Communist became involved in competition in the socio-cultural sphere (*figure 1.1*) giving them an opportunity to use the most recent history as a tool of political competition in the contemporary Poland. Economic problems, despite their gravity in the early 1990s were merely a backdrop to the ideological contestation (Kostelecký, 2002:70; Szczerbiak, 2005:62). Despite the substantial increase in the ethnically Polish population after the Second World War, creating a *de facto* ethnically homogenous Poland (Eberhardt, 2000:161), post-communist politicians of the Social Democratic Party of the Republic of Poland (*Socjaldemokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej*; SdRP⁵⁶) were presented by the National Conservatives as the greatest threat to the integrity of Polish society. Unlike the right-wing parties and the Christian-nationals, striving to demonstrate at least some degree of ideological continuity with the parties existing the interwar Poland, the post-Communist parties were “trying to disassociate themselves from their totalitarian past” (Kostelecký, 2002:77).

⁵⁶ From 1999 *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej*; Democratic Left Alliance; SLD

Competition between the parties in the 1990s was reminiscent of competition between *endecja* and the Socialists in the interwar Poland. Following the collapse of Communism, parties of the Right (with traditional cultural attitudes at the foundation of their political programmes), accepted the Church as the “moral compass” which would guide Poland. Roman Catholicism was recognised by the Conservatives and the Nationalists as a necessary tool in the process of national consolidation in post-1989 Poland (Pospieszalski, *Kultura*, 1996:52-53). On the other hand, the programme of the ex-Communists and the liberal parties identified the development of Poland and its citizens with establishing closer ties with Western Europe. The growing competition between the traditional approach to the national character and the pro-European programme deepened in the post-Communist Poland. Unlike the liberal parties such as SdRP or UW the political parties defending Polish ethnocultural traditions did not wish to follow the European social development but rather stay true to the national achievements (Koraszewski, *Kultura*, 1997:56-57). The appeal to the organic character of Poland rather than the polyethnic heritage was demonstrated by segments of the conservative and right-wing parties in the subsequent campaigns surrounding presidential and parliamentary elections (1990, 1991, 1993) as well as the referendums regarding the constitution (1997) and membership in the European Union (EU) (Vermeersch, 2012:130-131).

6.2.1 The Socio-Cultural Sphere of Competition in Poland

In the 1990s, the ‘historic’ political cleavage present in interwar Poland (organic-territorial) was absorbed by the right-wing, Christian-national and Social-Democratic parties. This cleavage was represented by the traditional right-left party division and

following the accession to the EU it was absorbed by the two leading conservative-right parties: the Civic Platform (PO) and the Law and Justice Party (PiS) (Markowski, 2006:816-817).

In interwar Poland the *endecja* distinguished Poland as both the nation and the state. Through claiming the paramount role of the ethnic nation, the interwar Nationalists called for a construction of national identity with the ethnic Poles as a core of the national community (Hutchinson, 2005:40). In post-Communist Poland, ethnic homogeneity was no longer a major concern for the Christian-national and the right-wing parties; however, the weakening role of the Church and bolstering ties with the supranational institutions exposed the growing ideological cleavages of the Polish population (Prażmowska, 2010:259). In order to strengthen the communal ties the right-wing parties adopted the programme of “Polonisation” (*Polonizacja*) which in the post-Communist Poland required education in patriotic spirit. Propagation of the distinctive culture and the role of the ethnically Polish population in the preservation and reconstruction of national identity became central to the programme of the right-wing political parties such as the Confederation of Independent Poland (*Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej*; KPN) and The Christian National Union (*Zjednoczenie Chrzescijansko-Narodowe*; ZChN). The re-education of the population, although homogenous ethnically, but ideologically heterogeneous, would require the harmonious cooperation of binding elements (such as the linguistic tradition) and institutions which carried the divergent cultural and political traditions (Micewski, *Kultura*, 1998:124-125). These elements, although based on the model constructed at the turn of the twentieth century, required re-evaluating in order to shape contemporary patriotism. Effectively, utilisation of these tools would

legitimise the post-Communist authorities and allow identification of the Polish population with the state institutions.

“It’s saddening that, the main force of resistance for a few decades of PRL, until the formation of a democratic opposition (KOR) (...), the Catholic Church unconsciously allowed to become in large part incorporated into the nationalist camp (...) unable to lead the country” (Micewski, 1998:125)

Disputes in the socio-cultural sphere became both the main ideological locomotive as well as the centre of contestation until the formation of a united front challenging the Constitution proposed in 1997 by the SdRP/SLD. Unable to present an economic programme which could challenge the post-Communist parties, post-*Solidarność* groups utilised the “we/they” dichotomy claiming the heritage of *Solidarność* (Bielasiak, 2010:44). The Church and the Polish culture as central to the preservation of the distinctive identity through the period of statelessness and limited sovereignty, were frequently employed in modern national discourse. Conflicts between the traditional-organic definition of the nation and the community founded upon the liberal and civic-territorial principles reignited the competition between “we” (the post-*Solidarność* politicians) and “they” (the ex-Communists or leftist politicians) sphere of contestation was transformed into a “we/we” conflict (Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, Tóka, 1999:392-393). Impact of the early experience with the post-Communist transition and the influence of the supranational institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Kitschelt, Mansfeldova, Markowski, Tóka, 1999:391) on shaping the Polish market economy were approached with suspicion by the right-wing parties and instilled distrust towards Western institutions and companies.

Socio-cultural competition continued through the 1990s and became essential to national self-renewal. The competition which lasted through this period was most evident in the debates surrounding the evolving ties with the European and global institutions. The 'return' to the ethno-religious traditions became essential in strengthening the national ties weakened during the Communist period. The conflict between the traditional interpretation of national identity, based on the philosophy of national egoism defined in the early twentieth century, and Western territorial nationalism continued beyond the twentieth century and remained present in the successive party programmes.

6.3 “The Western Standards” and the Polish Nation

Mazowiecki's transitional government (transformed into UD prior to the 1991 parliamentary elections) (1989-1991) was dedicated to promotion of “(...) the civic-territorial, not ethnic, citizenship” (Sanford, 2002:74). A commitment to implementation of a programme of “Western standards” (“European standards”) embraced and reformed by the first Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs Krzysztof Skubiszewski, became influential in strengthening the nucleus of the civic-territorial community through providing the mutual objective for both the successive governments and Polish nationals (Skubiszewski, *Expose*⁵⁷, 1990; Skubiszewski, *Expose*, 1991; Snyder, 2005:274). Skubiszewski in effect expressed the need for strengthening the ties among Poles and the historic ties with Western Europe while remaining loyal to the ties which crystallised in East-Central Europe, especially between Poland and its neighbours.

⁵⁷ Exposé- a speech of the Prime Minister presenting the directions of the new government

Similarly to German issue, which has its solution in the wider European framework, the position of Poland becomes safer in the European order with a high level of connections and cooperation between the states. Unified Europe will be a different world, eliminating or at the very least diminishing antagonisms (...). We set our hopes in this world and we want to work towards construction of such world. This is not utopia but rather a real contemporary opportunity. It is due to us, the Europeans, whether we will take it. The role of Poland will be substantial" (Skubiszewski, Expose, 1990:14)

The "Western standards" became the model for successive administrations. The aspiration to join the economic and political structures of the EU overpowered all other considerations and became the leading discourse of the 1990s (Antoszewki, 2000:79). The pro-Western orientation of successive governments influenced changes within Polish society, evidenced in the 1990s by the driving of nationalists' campaigns from the fringes into midstream politics (Pankowski, 2010:69). With negotiations regarding Poland's membership in NATO and the EU accession, conditions posed by the supranational institutions, regarding future membership, were used as propaganda by the right-wing campaigners of the Centre-right and Christian-conservative Electoral Action "Solidarność" (AWS) (Stadtmüller 2000:24; Wolicki, 1998:114-115).

The AWS perceived Europe and the "West" as "home" of the Poles who were denied equal opportunities in the previous two centuries. Nevertheless, the AWS remained cautious about the European future remaining determined to preservation of traditional Polish heritage rather than hasty adoption of the development from the West (*Program AWS*, Hutchinson, 2005:173-174). Although the rhetoric of AWS was linked with the heritage of "Solidarność" its programme shifted the secular message directed to the whole population with the support of "Christian values" and the social message of John Paul II (*Program AWS*, Wolicki, 1998:115). The AWS which became a

reservoir of ideas was forced to reach to ethnocultural motifs which would appeal to the largest number of the Polish people; “AWS not able to present a clear programme returns to the past, to the Christian-democratic idea and the National-democratic idea” (Micewski, Kultura, 2000:167).

The programmes of these political organisations undermined the role of the West in shaping Polish national identity. While the programme of “Western standards” promoted widening the definition of the Polish nationals the right-wing and the radical-right preserved the rigid definition of the Polish nation and strictly opposed increasing identification with non-Polish institutions (Program Partii Liga Polskich Rodzin). Aspects recognised as traditional to the Polish nation rather than Polish society and central to preservation of national identity bore resemblance with the programme of the Nationalist parties and organisations operating in interwar Poland (Micewski, Kultura, 2000:168).

6.3.1 Heterogeneous Society

“Patriotism in Poland is understandable but Poland of all countries, situated at the crossroads of European cultures, has to avoid all forms of xenophobia, aversion towards other states, and national minorities. Distancing us from all the so-called “others” in Poland is a serious political and moral mistake” (Micewski, Kultura, 2000:171)

Poland’s relationship with its neighbours, especially the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), played a fundamental role in introducing the Poles to the *modus operandi* of western societies. The relationship of Tadeusz Mazowiecki’s cabinet with Helmut Kohl’s government proved difficult in its initial stages due to the delicate

nature of the “2+4” talks and the final settlement in international law of Poland’s border with Germany (Zaborowski, 2004:92-93).

In its initial stages, the process of rapprochement was dictated both by political sobriety and requirements from the participants of the “2+4” negotiations. The participants encouraged Poland to improve relations with its western neighbour. In return, the negotiations impacted the future relationship between national and ethnic minorities inhabiting Poland. The steps towards recognition of the diversity within the Polish society were evidenced by the Polish state’s recognition of the existing minorities. Following this course, Polish citizens of German descent were granted the same rights as the rest of society. This symbolic gesture towards the German minority in Poland implied similar duties of the democratic Polish governments towards other minorities inhabiting Poland. Although in the initial stages of the transition the Polish authorities were unable to recognise all of the needs of the minorities, extension of their rights was observed in the transfer of matters related to minorities from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MSW) into the Ministry of Culture and Art (MKiSz) and the creation of the Commission of National and Ethnic Minorities (Komisja Mniejszości Narodowych i Etnicznych, MNE) (Filipiak, 2011:33).

Furthermore, compliance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Accords became an important step in support of the state’s diversity in the early stages of transition (Kancelaria Senatu, 2011; Ministerstwo Spraw Zagranicznych, 2012). Manifestation of support by the Republic of Poland towards linguistic, cultural, and religious minorities, and equally for a society based upon civic rather than ethnic principles was grounded in the preamble to the 1997 constitution

(Konstytucja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej, 1997; Zubrzycki, 2001:633). From the early 1990s the Polish government introduced acts which would allow national and ethnic minorities equal rights. In 1992, Poland signed an act which would allow ethnic and national minorities access to the media (radio and television) (*Kancelaria Senatu*, 2011:14). Furthermore, in 1999 Ministry of the Interior introduced legislation (Dz. U. z 1999, Nr 90, poz. 999 z późn. Zm) according to which, “towns with clusters of national or ethnic minorities names and texts in Polish language may be accompanied by versions in minority languages” (*Kancelaria Senatu*, 2011:14). In 1997 penal code “penalised and condemned crimes committed against people of different ethnic or national background” (Dz. U. z 1997, Nr 88, poz. 553 z późn. Zm). Moreover, in 2000 the President of Poland, Aleksander Kwaśniewski, signed the act ratifying the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities.

“Considering that the creation of a climate of tolerance and dialogue is necessary to enable cultural diversity to be a source and a factor, not of division, but of enrichment for each society (...)_Considering that the realisation of a tolerant and prosperous Europe does not depend solely on co-operation between States but also requires transfrontier co-operation between local and regional authorities without prejudice to the constitution and territorial integrity of each State” (Konwencja ramowa o ochronie mniejszości narodowych, Dz. U, 2002)

The Constitution became the prime example of this endorsement through the appeal to the entire body of the Polish citizens rather than a particular nation within the state (Sandford, 2002:85-86). Although passing legislation discussing the rights of non-ethnic Poles was not the primary aim of the Christian Democratic of the AWS, under the SLD government (2001-2005) the Polish parliament ratified *The Act on National and Ethnic Minorities* (2005) which regulates the relationship between the Republic of Poland and its minorities. This document officially defined national and ethnic minorities in Poland. It also named the national and ethnic minorities existing

in Poland. The act also guaranteed support for preservation of distinctive identities while at the same time forbidding any methods of forceful assimilation or attempts to change the national or ethnic balance in any region of Poland (Dz. U. z 2005, Nr 17, poz. 141 z późn. zm.).

The legal inclusion of national and ethnic minorities in the process of building a territorial rather than ethnic identity in Poland was crucial to the actual implementation of the notion of a Poland defined by territorial rather than ethno-cultural categories.

Although the 2005 Act granted equal rights and additional privileges to minorities, according to the former Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection of the Republic of Poland, Janusz Kochanowski and the advisor to the Parliamentary Commission on National and Ethnic Minorities, Sławomir Łodziński there is no one universal definition of the term “national minority”. According to Łodziński: “(...) accepting a particular definition [of national minority] in the international law was delegated to each particular state which according to the social context and internal political situation is able to make final decisions” (Łodziński, 2002:3). The role of the Act of 2005 was to provide the populations recognised as minorities within the borders of Poland to “protect minorities from the dominant role of the majority” (Kancelaria Senatu, 2011:15).

Despite the cultural traditionalism and the influential role of the Church in the 1990s, Poland in the 1990s continued to accept the Western European, territorial definition of citizenship. Although Polish cultural tradition was outlined in the 1997 constitution as essential to shaping of the contemporary Poland, identification with

Poland through the prism of the state institutions, rather than ethnicity, became officially recognised.

6.4 The Pillars of Contemporary National Identity

6.4.1 The Core of *Solidarność*: Liberal or Conservative?

Throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s the struggle for the definition of national identity within the traditional frames remained a fertile ground for disputes. In order to build up connections with the Polish underground opposition and gain legitimacy, a majority of the post-*Solidarność* parties built their own identity upon the ideological struggle against the former Communist elites (Zubrzycki, 2001:631-2).

The UW and the ZChN, among other parties, in their programmes referred to their past achievements within the anti-Communist front. Highlighting their involvement in the protests of the 1970s and the 1980s with a devotion to the moral guidance provided by the Church, post- *Solidarność* groups created a front against the secular programme of the “ex-communists” (Bielasiak, 2010:45). Post-*Solidarność* parties competing to fill the void left after the collapse of the national movement identified the need for their arguments to remain within the sphere of traditional values and sustain the competition between the “nation” and its “enemies”. In order to bolster such a cleavage and provide a definition of Polishness, conservative parties resorted to the juxtaposition of religious and national symbolism, successfully utilised by *Solidarność* in the 1980s (Pankowski, 2010:44). Christian-national such as ZChN and Christian-democratic/National-democratic AWS claimed to be the rightful

inheritors of core message of *Solidarność*. The conservatives challenged the liberal-cultural attitudes of society and the degree of the Western influence on shaping of the post-Communist Polish national identity (Micewski, 2000:168-169).

Expanding ties with international organisations also influenced further debates on the future shape of Poland. Further opening of Poland to supranational organisations such as the Council of Europe (CE), the European Union (EU), and the military partnership with the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), opened possibilities and created a new direction for Poland. At the same time these organisations were perceived as a threat to the traditional understanding of Polishness. The Church and its role in binding the nation in the Communist period gained competition in the form of secular-liberalism. In order to halt the process of liberalisation, selected historical (the nineteenth century insurrections, the Second World War, Stalinism) and cultural factors (linguistic and religious affiliation) were once again utilised by the conservatives to influence the process of framing modern Polish national identity. The ZChN became one of the leading forces in the competition for “the hearts and minds” of the Polish nation. According to two of its most influential leaders Wiesław Chrzanowski (Chairman of the ZChN between 1989 and 1994) and Ryszard Czarnecki (1994-1996), the Church provided a moral compass capable of guiding the post-Communist Polish nation as it did in the previous generations (Pankowski, 2010:79). The Episcopate together with the Christian-national ZChN and elements of AWS invoked the model of Poland based on ethno-national and even nationalist traditions. In the interwar period, Christian-democracy was unable to match the popularity of the National-democrats. Similarly in the post-Communist period the traditional national values and political

sovereignty remained central to the Poles and majority of the political parties (*figure 1.1*) (Micewski, 2000:170).

Although the ZChN described its roots as Christian Democratic, it was unlike Christian Democratic parties in Western Europe. The main difference lay in the evoking of ethno-nationalist aspects of the national heritage. An appeal to the Polish nation as an ethnic community rather than a Polish citizenry evidenced the strength of the ethno-nationalist state model in post-Communist Poland (Micewski, 2000:72). Many other political parties resorted to the Christian-national tradition in order to define their role in democratic Poland. However, the inability to challenge the Social-Democrats and the subsequent withering support, led the ZChN to become ingested by the AWS in 1996 along with twenty-two other parties (eight parties manifesting post-*Solidarność* and Christian Democratic traits) (Antoszewski, 2000:82; Kawęcki, 2010: 15-16). The political compromise and the ability to unite many ideologically different parties under the banner of *Solidarność* which continued to resemble the social consensus and anti-Communist opposition (Szczurbiak, 2005:63).

The conflict which led to deeper divisions in the left-right divide and among the post- *Solidarność* groups emerged most visibly within the debates leading to the constitutional referendum in 1997. The document which became the culmination of the competition between the post-Communist (or ex-Communist) and post-*Solidarność* groups, led to crystallisation of two distinct visions for Poland and the Poles (Pankowski, 2010:69-70). Debates over the use of terminology in the 1997 constitution appeared symbolic, however, the debate surrounding the term “citizens” rather than “nation” in reference to the Poles caused disputes surrounding the

“traditional” definition of Polishness in contrast to the civic-territorial conception (Zubrzycki, 2001:633-634; Mondry, 1997:58-59).

6.4.2 Civic-Territorial or Ethnic Identity?

The programmes of the ZChN and the AWS demonstrated the desired model of Polish national identity. AWS was led by a devotion to preservation of national heritage and distinct identity moulded through centuries and preserved by the Church. To the Polish nationalist-conservatives, it was imperative that the government should defend the traditional definition of Polish nation nurture patriotism in Polish citizens (Program Akcji Wyborczej Solidarność, 1997; Wolicki, 1998:115).

In their electoral campaign of 1996/1997 the AWS (governing with UW between 1997 and 2001) offered the Polish nation stability in their “own” country referring to the dominant socio-cultural elements and the competition between entrenched competition between the authoritarian past and the democratic future. Although they saw the future of Poland in Europe and in the supranational organisations, it was the Polish nation which was the key to the future development of the state (Pankowski, 2010:80). Following the victory of the AWS, the rhetoric of euroscepticism presented in elections became substituted with European cooperation and support for the national minorities in Poland. Prime Minister Buzek speaking in Sejm in 1997 declared his support for the European direction of future development of Poland:

“(…) the establishment of Solidarność gave the national minorities a rightful status (...). I would like to underline that in the programme of the government, (...), there

was a very important section about Germany and the Weimar Triangle, it was high on the agenda (...), We are considering this matter as extremely important” (Buzek, Sejm, 10.11.1997).

Furthermore, Buzek’s administration identified further development of Poland with the accession to the European Union. The AWS-UW coalition was aiming to expedite the adjustment of the Polish structures for introduction of the European legislation. The AWS administration recognised the potential benefits of joining the European Union for the Polish nation:

“I would like to underline that accelerating the adjustment process to the EU requirements resulting from the future obligations of the Member State of the EU is still our main priority. (...). The report prepared by the government confirms that the long term effect of the membership in the political, economic, and the social domain will prove beneficial for Poland. (...). Poland wants to be an equal member of the Union- Union able to help us realise our national interests. We believe that the central goal of the Union should be the development of the European solidarity based on the shared cultural foundations and shared interests of the nations (Buzek, Sejm, 22.12.2000).

The Law and Justice Party (PiS) claimed to assume the role of inheritor to the *Solidarność* tradition. In their rhetoric, *Solidarność* was the last authentic expression of Polish national identity and this spirit which led to the unification of the Polish nationals could only be reignited through referring to the ethnocultural traditions. These achievements included the antiquity of Poland. Similarly to Christian-national Parties PiS attached a special role to Roman Catholicism in shaping of the national identity (*Program Partii Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc*, 2005).

“In the entirety of our history- since the baptism of Mieszko, Saint Wojciech and crowning of Bolesław Chrobry until John Paul II, the priest Jerzy Popiełuszko and

Solidarność Christianity is the foundation of our lives” (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, 2005:6)

Entering the Polish parliament on the platform of Euro-scepticism, PiS promised its voters to overthrow the Third Republic, which according to them, was shaped in agreement with the Communist authorities, and establish a Fourth Republic based on a more “traditional” definition of Polishness with Christian values identified as the common currency for the majority of the Polish people. In its 2005 party programme, PiS identified ethnocultural traditions as essential to shaping modern Poland. Weakening of these traditional ties was perceived by PiS as an attack on the roots of Poland and it was the role to the contemporary Christian-democrats and the National-democrats to defend these strategic elements of Polish ethnicity:

“Another example is the crisis of polonism and patriotism. (...). The new trends will certainly not have any immediate effect on the years which saw the growing crisis of values connected with the national identity, especially with the Polish schooling system which fails to transmit the values, knowledge, and traditions shaping national identity” (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, 2005:10)

Furthermore, Prime Minister Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz in his *Expose* echoed the role of the distinctive national character in strengthening of the relationship with NATO, the Vatican, and the European Union as the priorities of the government.

“We cannot forget about the responsibility for the preservation of the national heritage, and supporting the national tradition. Minister of Culture and National Heritage will take the responsibility for these fields, which in the recent years were outside of the mainstream of cultural politics. (...). My government recognises the essential role of the Roman Catholic Church in the life of the Nation and the State. I profoundly believe that it will support us in our efforts to rejuvenate the morality in public life (...)” (Marcinkiewicz, *Expose*, 2005)

Through the attacks on liberalism following the self-discrediting of the liberal-left, the national-conservatives put more emphasis on organic national identification and the traditional definition of family (Marcinkiewicz, Expose, 2005). Open hostility towards cultural and sexual diversity was linked to the adoption of national-conservative overtones by the PiS and a set of Christian moral values as guarantors of strong Poland. Through denouncing cosmopolitanism and obscuring the achievements of the transition period, the national-conservative parties created an alternative reality. In this imagined realm, the citizens are divided into two competing camps which either perceived Poland as sovereign and democratic or as oppressed in a continuous battle for liberation (Kochanowicz, 2007).

It seems that, for many PiS activists and supporters Piłsudski is a symbol of patriotism (and of “strong hand” authoritarianism) devoid of any particular ideological content detached from the actual political cleavages that were relevant in the 1920s and the 1930s (Pankowski, 2010:160)

Subsequently the Polish population was divided by PiS into two categories: first we have those who belong to the group concerned with Polish sovereignty and belonging to “Solidaristic” Poland. The “Solidarists” who mainly belong to the National-conservative groupings were fiercely combating all expressions of Western form of development in the Polish society associated with “Liberal” Poland. Secondly, we find the “Liberal” or the “pro-Western” Poles who are not concerned about preservation of the distinctive character of the Polish nation (Bielasiak, 2010:55; Markowski, 2006:820).

6.5 “Solidaristic” Poland

6.5.1 Poland against Poland

Arguably, the transition was concluded with Poland joining the European Union in 2004. This giant leap, involving a rise in inflation and unemployment caused by the restructuring of the public sector, overwhelmed a large portion of the society, which was unable to accept the social cost of this transformation. PiS seized this moment to reclaim and redefine the course of the nation along the traditionalist trajectory. The vision of PiS was to “stand against closing of the Ministry of Culture and appreciate the role of tradition in the life of the nation, through adding once more the, removed by the SLD, *National Heritage* to its name. Our goal is protection of the national culture” (PiS, 2005:105). Reigniting patriotism and discipline would strengthen the national character and lead to national consolidation (Bielasiak, 2010: 41-49).

PiS and the LPR highlighted the role of the family unit in the preservation of national identity. In fact, the coalition used the rhetoric which re-framed the nation as a collective stemming from a primordial root. PiS and LPR through similar claims were attempting to build their legitimacy as the only authentic parties of the Polish nation (Marcinkiewicz, Expose, 2005). Repetition of nation-oriented terminology such as *re-Polonizacja* (re-Polonisation) and *Polonizm* (Polonism) characterised the nationalist turn which rejected the development according to the Western model (Pankowski, 2010:154-156). The administration of Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz identified the central role of Polish culture in shaping the successive generation. Marcinkiewicz’s Exposé, the 2005 programme of PiS, and selection of Roman Giertych of the extreme-right LPR for the position of the Minister of Education allowed to

claim that Poland returned to ethno-nationalist programme (Marcinkiewicz, *Exposé*, 2005; PiS Program Partii, 2005).

Jarosław Kaczyński, finding that conservative rhetoric was insufficient in reigniting the national spirit, eventually accepted his leap into the nationalist camp by naming Dmowski a “patriot” rather than a “nationalist” (Nałęcz, *Polityka*, 2015; Pankowski, 2010:155).

The aim of this rhetoric was to give the question of national identity a central position in the life of all citizens. Debates on modernisation and the economy were subordinated to deliberations on invigorating the national community (Kochanowicz, 2007). “Solidaristic”, right-wing politicians became vocal supporters of the organic state modelled on the imagined community of ancient Poland or the post-1926 authoritarianism. In an attempt to redefine Polish national identity and its future direction, the constitutional endeavour to create foundations for a civic-territorial community was discredited and replaced by an alternative realm (the Fourth Republic, *Czwarta Rzeczpospolita Polska*) as proposed by PiS (Markowski, 2006:819; 2008:1056). PiS remained determined to strengthen the role of “patriotic” education and a “positive” presentation of Poland and its history in the media. Such measures as “re-Polonisation of the media” and the public sphere entered the next phase in 2006 (initiated by the AWS in 1997) through coalition with the SRP and LPR (Pankowski, 2010:153). This national-conservative partnership revoked some of the symbolism inherent to the *Solidarność* project, rebranding PiS as the modern *Solidarność* pressing for further “de-communisation” and the overthrowing of liberalism imposed by the ex-Communist oligarchy (Bielasiak, 2010:50; Rae: 2007:228).

6.5.2 *Modus Operandi* of the National-Conservatives

‘As inheritance of the PRL we received the old state apparatus with the informal schemes and interest groups, which frequently grew on the influences and secret connections of the PRL secret services and their links with the criminal underworld. The result of this is the systemic hybrid which is the post-Communist state (...). We received a form of post-Communist political capitalism” (Kaczynski, PiS Program, 2005:7)

The “Solidaristic” vision took various avenues in order to strengthen its position. One familiar path was similar to that taken by National Democracy (ND) in the Second Polish Republic. After entering into government in 2005, PiS knew that in order to ensure long-term support of their state project it had to create pious and “patriotic” Poles. In its programme it claimed to have successfully defended the “good name of Poland in the world” and was strongly “against the forging of history and the attempts of revisionism of the Second World War in neighbouring countries (...)” (Prawo i Sprawiedliwosc, 2007).

Education became one of the key targets of the renewed national camp. In interwar Poland, Dmowski had been aware of the long-term impact which “patriotic” education would have on the citizens. Dmowski understood the influence which the state could have when combined with the moral values and guidance of Roman Catholicism. Similarly to the *endecja* programme, PiS, envisioned Poland as a great European power resting upon a strong Polish nation: “(...) we want Poland to become one of the most important countries of our continent. We should desire to be a great nation (...)”. Following the elections of 2005, the Church was given a crucial role in outlining a programme for re-Polonisation of the citizens which would allow it to regain control over the development of the future generations of Polish nationals (Marcinkiewicz, Exposé, 2005). PiS and its allies argued that such measures were

required in order to allow Poland to break away from the Communist past and develop new democratic mechanisms. These mechanisms could not function in the state ruled by the Social-Democrats. Kazimierz Marcinkiewicz in his 2005 Sejm Exposé argued that the previous administrations were incapable of leading the nation.

“What I previously called the political pragmatism, which will guide this administration is not an effect of political machinations but rather humility. In the last 16 years of rule the governments demonstrated that they always knew better than the voters what was good for the people and the state. They did not fulfil their promises and they did not wish to fulfil them” (Marcinkiewicz, Expose, 2005)

PiS recognised the need to move away from the *Trzecia Rzeczpospolita* project and take Polish nation to the higher level of democracy identified with the Fourth Polish Republic which would grant justice to all citizens (PiS, *IV Rzeczpospolita, Sprawiedliwosc dla Wszystkich*, 2005).

Due to the historical role that the Church has played throughout Polish history, the Episcopate maintained a paternalistic approach towards Poland and the Poles. Unlike in the Communist period, society was now able to identify with the state in a secular manner. The 1993 Concordat, between the Republic of Poland and the Holy See, was recognised by its critics as a great loss to the sovereignty of Poland and a financial burden. It was also argued that the document was a violation of the law of separation of the Church and state (*Konkordat między Stolicą Apostolską i Rzeczpospolitą Polską*, 1993). On the other hand, however, the Church authorities saw such act as necessary to redefine the relationship between Poland and the Church.⁵⁸

⁵⁸ The document was described by Minister Skubiszewski as a continuation of the thousand year-long cooperation between Polish state and the Holy See

The role of the Church in the state politics and its influence on legislature of the secular Poland came under scrutiny. The religious-secular cleavage became recognised as one of the most significant areas of competition between the political parties (Kostelecký, 2002:100).

However, the role of the Church as the bearer of national identity continued to weaken through the 1990s as its preservation of national identity in democratic Poland was no longer required as the population increasingly identified with the secular national institutions. The defiant elements of the Roman Catholic clergy became entangled in symbolic mobilisations of the citizenry following the constitutional debate. In 1998 and in 2000-2001 the debates on national identity and recent Polish history addressed some of the issues which had remained buried throughout the Communist period. The “Auschwitz cross affair”⁵⁹ and the Jedwabne controversy⁶⁰ divided society with regard to dubious aspects of recent history. Hostilities which frequently involved anti-Semitism and xenophobia remained marginal but they not only further fractured the fragile civic community but equally divided opinion within the Episcopate (Pankowski, 2010:104-108; Zubrzycki, 2006: 215-218). Both these incidents, which took place in the transition period, demonstrated that society was unable to cope with any attack on a national identity which was built upon safeguarding of Christian traditions in Europe (Porter-Szucs, 2011:356-359).

(<http://www.polskieradio.pl/39/156/Artykul/896991,20-lat-temu-Polska-zawarla-konkordat-ze-Stolica-Apostolska>)

⁵⁹ Erection of crosses outside of Auschwitz without the permission of the Church or the state authorities led to opposition and wide protests sparking a controversy among the Roman Catholics and the Jewish community. The protest lasted until 1999 dividing the public opinion.

⁶⁰ Apology issued by the Polish President Aleksander Kwasniewski in 2001 for the 1944 massacre in a small town of Jedwabne where ethnic Poles incited by the Nazi regime murdered hundreds of Jewish inhabitants from the area. The controversy continued for the following few years dividing the public opinion over the issues of nationality and responsibility for crimes committed during the Second World War.

The Church as the guardian of morality in Poland was granted a special role by the AWS and later PiS-led governments. Following the death of Pope John Paul II in 2005, PiS combined the message of *Solidarność* and selected teachings of Pope John Paul II, in order to frame its programme as that of the only legitimate political option dedicated to defending the “fatherland” and the national interest (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, 2005:42).

“It is our duty to stay true to His [John Paul II] mission: duty to rejuvenate Europe with the spirit of Christian solidarity, expressed in the laws of a human being, family rights, and the rights of the nations. Christian traditions are deeply embedded in our experiences: democratic traditions of the polyethnic *First Rzeczpospolita*, patriotic traditions of the national uprisings. Moreover, traditions of the campaign against Communism (...)” (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, 2005:42)

Through the juxtaposition of national and religious symbols, PiS used organic definitions of the Polish nation and in its campaigns continued to avoid discussing the cultural exchange which had a significant impact on shaping of the modern Poland. PiS used Polish history to legitimise its programme and gain popular support for the proposed Christian-national trajectory of their politics exemplified by the party programmes and the Parliamentary speeches. Furthermore, the leader of PiS called for intensifying the *re-Polonisation* campaign aiming at strengthening of the core of the Polish nation (Porter-Szucs, 2011: 358-359; Vermeersch, 2012:136). The only solution perceived by national-conservative politicians was the ultimate construction of a Poland and Polishness opposed to that introduced by the liberals in the constitution of 1997. The defiant PiS, in opposition to the pro-Western civic-territorial model of Poland envisioned the next stage of the national evolution. The proposed Fourth Polish Republic with its nation-oriented constitution would provide

the traditionalist community with an envisioned state (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, 2009:32-33).

Through concentrating on issues of national identity the ruling PiS/LPR/SRP coalition was aiming to create an environment of distrust. The role of PiS was to undermine the liberal-left through “revealing the links between SLD, and its predecessor SdRP, in opposing Poland’s membership in the NATO” (PiS, 2005:17). Furthermore, utilisation of Catholicism by the coalition and vice-versa served both sides in the renewed battle for the survival of the distinctive Polish character. The role of *Radio Maryja* and its founder Father Tadeusz Rydzyk⁶¹ served as a tool for mobilisation of the Poles disenchanted with the liberal-left governments which according to the national-conservatives were effectively crypto-communist (Rae, 2007:230). In order to reach the core of Polish national identity, Roman Giertych, the charismatic leader of the LPR (Minister of Education in PiS/LPR/SRP coalition in 2006) followed in the steps of the pioneers of national thought by introducing radical values, such as the role of familial ties in the life of the state, patriotic history and greater emphasis on religious education, in schools (Kochanowicz, 2007, Pankowski, 2010:181-184). The programme of PiS, although critical of the liberal cultural attitudes of the SLD, remained devoted to economic etatism supporting a central role of the state in shaping the national character.

“The idea of liberal Poland, which we continue to criticise, is a post-Communist form of social darwinism, masks with slogans about the individual freedoms and the integrity of the state (...). Role of the state, according to this concept, is limited and passive- in reality it is the guarantor of the inequality characteristic to the post-Communist society. (...) The liberal vision disintegrates the society in different dimensions (...). The opposing vision is that of solidaristic Poland- where the

⁶¹ Radio Maryja is the voice of the ultra-Catholics in Poland (Radio, Television and Community). The organisation is involved in Polish politics endorsing the nationalist and national-conservative parties.

overriding goal is to support the community (...) at the core of the competition between these two vision is the question of moral quality of the state” (PiS, 2009:12)

In their attempt to create a new model of the Polish citizen, the national-conservatives became involved in cultural/historical projects whose main role was to extend the programme of “historical politics” (Rae, 2007:230). Formation of a nation state would be achieved through the use of national institutions such as the Institute of National Remembrance (established under the AWS-UW coalition), changing the name of the Ministry of Culture (under which name it functioned until 2005) into the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage with new departments dedicated to nurturing in the patriotic spirit (PiS, 2009:12; Pankowski, 2010:153-154). Measures of combating globalisation, presented in the campaigns of PiS, represented their move further to the right of the political spectrum and fitted a description of extreme-nationalist rather than a conservative party (*figure 1.1*) (Pankowski, 2010:161-162; Vermeersch: 2012:130).

“The Coalition SLD-UP was clearly against family. (...). It is important to remember that the coalition SLD-UP began drafting the project on legalisation of the homosexual partnerships, not denying the possibility of adoption in such relationships (PiS, 2005:119)

Through the 2010s right wing politicians continued their campaign against diversity within Polish society. In its 2000s programmes, PiS took a sense of pride in combating the “demoralisation of the Polish society” through promotion of traditional families and protection of women and children (PiS, 2005:91). The return to the envisioned model of the Polish family became, according to PiS, central to strengthening the core national values. The family, identified with the core of the nation, was under threat and it required support of the national authorities: “Polish family is in crisis. It is unable to perform its key duties. It is not the place where we

are brought up, become members of the society, and become morally sensitive” (PiS, 2009:126).

The envisioned Poland of the “Solidaristic” camp was characterised by “zero tolerance for those who break the law (...)” leaving little room for people who did not fit within the traditional frames of the Polish nation. Although according to PiS there was no connection between nationalism and xenophobia in Poland, it had not broken ties with the radical and extreme right organisations which it recognised as “patriotic” with “national interest at heart.”⁶² Anti-globalisation was utilised as a powerful tool in the battle for the soul of Poland which, according to PiS lay in the rural roots of the Polish population. In their campaigns, PiS professed that that without appropriate policies dedicated to the preservation of the national heritage the distinctive national identity was destined to disappear (PiS, 2009:12-13). To many PiS voters, reluctance to identify with supranational institutions or the legitimate national authorities, presented by the nationalist right as “alien”, defending the traditional values in fact resembled defence of the Christian civilisation in Poland. References to the pre-1795 realm, the Second Rzeczpospolita, the nineteenth century uprisings, and the Second World War, interwoven with the teachings of the Church and especially John Paul II, in PiS programme evidenced the aim to build a great Polish nation upon ethnocultural traditions (PiS, 2005; PiS, 2009:12).

“As the supporters of the solidaristic Poland we are appealing for the rejection of the negative Communist traditions, also in the socio-cultural dimension, and referring to the best traditions of Rzeczpospolita- tradition of love for the “Fatherland” (PiS, 2009:12)

⁶² Karpiuk, D. *Żołnierze niepodległości* <http://polska.newsweek.pl/zolnierze-nie>

6.6 “Liberal” Poland

In the post-Communist Poland the liberal parties identified the future of Poland Polish citizens with the European integration. President Kwasniewski and the SLD-UP coalition similarly to the Conservative politicians recognised the economic future of Poland within the structures of the European Union. Unlike politicians of the Right, who negated the influence of the Western values on shaping Polish nation, politicians of the Left identified the supranational institutions as central to strengthening identity among East-Central European and Western European communities. Furthermore, politicians of the liberal parties recognised the need to strengthen the societal ties and social trust rather than Polish nation founded upon ethnocultural traditions. SLD became predominantly focused on international cooperation and construction of the polyethnic framework in East-Central Europe (SLD-UP, 2001; SLD, 2009:49-50). Moreover, the liberals supported separation of the Church from the state appealing strengthening the role of the state institution in shaping modern Polish citizenry.

“We support creation of the European Charter for integration of immigrants, founded in equal laws and responsibilities as well as mutual respect. (...). We want the politics of integration which will allow building of an open society, defending the laws of all citizens (...). We support linguistic and cultural integration programmes for immigrants” (SLD, 2009:50)

The discussion which divided Poland in the twenty-first century was reminiscent of the conflict between the Socialists and the National Democrats in the interwar Poland. This discussion continued to evolve as the socio-economic environment became heavily influenced by various European and global organisations. Unlike in the previous century, Poland’s security was guaranteed by

both military (NATO) and economic (EU) partnerships. Such developments influenced the changes across the political spectrum and although the National Democracy and the Polish Socialist Party were not reformed, the political mainstream of the post-Communist Poland, the discussion on national identity and the future of Poland became intrinsic to the programme of parties in democratic Poland (Sanford, 2002: 75-76).

Although the competition between “Solidaristic” and “Liberal” Poland was played down by the Civic Platform, the programme of PiS continued to appeal to the traditional Christian values and national identity divisive to heterogeneous Polish citizenry (Kordzińska, 2013). It was argued that through the official and clandestine support for the movements aiming to break social trust and the support for authorities, Jarosław Kaczyński’s party applied conspiracy theories⁶³ in order to diminish support for the PO-PSL government (Bielasiak, 2010:51; Rae, 2007:231).

On the other hand, support for the Social-Democrats which diminished through the first decade of the twenty-first century had an impact on the introduction of the conservative programme aiming to reverse the progress of the “destructive” liberal secularism. Western and traditional definitions were incorporated into the agendas of parties such as the centre right Civic Platform (PO) who would dominate the Polish political stage following the disappearance of the left-right axis of competition (Bielasiak, 2010:51-52).

⁶³ The 2010 crash of presidential plane in Smolensk was presented by the national-conservative and nationalist parties as an assassination sponsored by the President of the Russian Federation Vladimir Putin and Polish Prime Minister Tusk <http://www.newsweek.pl/zdjecie-tuska-i-putina-po-katastrofie-w-smolensku-na-newsweek-pl,artykuly,274478,1.html>

6.6.1 Liberalism Following the Transition

In 2004, Poland joined the EU. The process of rapid restructuring and privatisation of the state sector required by Brussels as part of the negotiations between the Republic of Poland and the EU allowed the state to align its market with other European and global economies. However, this rapid process lacked transparency, thus fostering corruption. The ruling SLD (2001-2005) was discredited (Żakowski, 2012) and the anticipated EU accession received an apathetic welcome from Polish society (Kochanowicz, 2007; Pankowski, 2010). The traditional left-right cleavage of the 1990s was replaced by the dominance of the conservatives who adopted the “globalisation/traditionalism” dichotomy as the sphere of competition. The dominant political forces in Poland presented contrasting programme for the socio-cultural development of Poland following expansion of the EU. In the programmes of PO and SLD deepening of the relationship with Europe became a priority for the socio-economic development of Poland. Furthermore, the liberal left opposed the programme proposed by the PiS while defining the role of the state and the Church in Poland. SLD also undermined the tradition and family-oriented policies of PiS

“Our response to the contemporary problems is: MORE DEMOCRACY, more civic rights, more European democratic and social standards! Our goal is a tolerant state, secular, with a neutral world-view. (...). One of our central aims is returning the state to the citizens. We will strengthen the autonomous decision-making and construction of civic society” (SLD, Sprawiedliwosc Spoleczna, Section I and II, 2005)

Membership in the European institutions offered expansion of national identity. The exclusive national character and the national egoism defined by the National Democracy, dominating the Polish landscape during the period of authoritarianism, were challenged by the Western model of nationalism. The spread

of the European values which included modernisation, secularisation, and shifting away from the nation-state became evident in the programmes of parties competing for the dominant position in Poland. Anthony D. Smith (1991) argues that although *ethnic cores* collected and preserved ethnocultural traditions there are also events which could impact the direction and the future goals of the national community:

Collective cultural identity refers not to a uniformity of elements over generations but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population, to shared memories of earlier events and periods in the history of that unit and to notions entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture (Smith, 1991:35)

Accession to the EU was a historical moment which led to expansion of the narrow definition of the national character. . Accession to the EU became the symbolic end of old post-Communist Poland and the beginning of the new, European Poland. The cultural exchange, necessary for rejuvenation of the national which became possible after the collapse of authoritarianism, introduced a novel form of cultural identification. Opposition of the supporters of the organic definition of Poland became a necessary reaction, which allowed regeneration of Polish population after the painful period of transition.

“Revivalism gained wider resonance when traditional societies, faced with external challenges, had to innovate by cultural borrowing. It used two strategies to overcome ethnic traditionalism. One was internal moral transformation by employing an alternative (dynamic) past to redefine what is authentic tradition. The other was ‘mythic overlaying’: the creation of a counter tradition of heroic activism based on a cult of national sacrifice that legitimised political revolution when traditional elites seemed powerless. However, this overlaid and did not eradicate older, often religiously-based ethnic identities, and divisions between secularists and religious bedevil many nations” (Hutchinson, 2005:6)

While PiS described Poland in traditionalist/organic terms, PO, although accepting of the traditional moral values and the impact of Polish history, used civic

rather than ethnic frameworks to describe modern Polish society. References to Poland under the Jagiellons rather than the Piasts, used by the PO leadership, created an impression of unity in society and of the interpersonal trust required to aid the fragile civic society. Polishness, according to PO, was not constrained by historical factors. The PO also refused to introduce stringent moral codes upon the population (Bielasiak, 2010:51). The liberal option was a promise of a pro-European course, pluralism, and defence against nationalism and a confessional state (Sokołowski, 2012:469-472; Szczerbiak, 2013:6-7).

PO praised the role of the EU as binding element which would strengthen interpersonal trust among Polish citizens and towards the European institutions. PO was able to redefine patriotism using Europe as its framework. Through the appeal to western morality, PO did not resort to juxtaposition of Catholicism and ethno symbolism, instead referring to the Biblical *Decalogue* (Ten Commandments) as a widely accepted set of ethical and moral norms in Western Europe. In their programmes PiS appealed to Poles as a collective of citizens dedicated to the state through common history and familial ties, PO, on the other hand, presented its model citizen as a “free individual responsible for his/her fate and that of their family” (Platforma Obywatelska, 2007).

The liberal forces within the Civic Platform and SLD perceived Poland as an integral element of the European Union. Following the costly transition period Polish society remained divided about the future direction of the state.

“We know that the democracy and laws of citizens in the EU and a guarantee of justice for people. The idea of citizenship should be open, based on liberties and responsibilities. It should be an element of building shared future in Europe. We want everyone who lives in Europe to have a right to take decision about its future. (...). We believe in active social debates and the idea of civic

community. For us, mixture of cultures, languages, and religions is one of the greatest European treasures” (SLD, 2009:30-31).

Poland following the accession to the European Union has experienced the most successful period in its history (Baczynski, Paradowska, 2014). Since joining the European Union Poland developed a more inclusive model of citizenship which could be evidenced by the support for the ethnic and national minorities officially accepted by the state authorities. According to the state authorities, Poland was no longer facing threats to state integrity. Although politicians of PiS and the radical-right fear that the traditional national values are becoming less influential in the post-national Europe, ethnocultural traditions remain influential. PO opposed the national programme proposed by PiS. According to the ruling party, the EU allowed Polish people to become a more organised society, developing interpersonal trust, necessary for strengthening the democratic process. PO argued that the government’s impact on culture, rather than strengthening ethnic ties, should “strengthen the social capital, through supporting creativity, interpersonal ties, and bolstering the sense of community, and self-worth among Polish women and men” (PO, 2011:57).

Furthermore, since joining the EU Polish nation became less of an ethnic definition and rather a territorial identification (Galla, interview, 2012; Hutsch, interview, 2012). According to Ryszard Galla (German Minority Electoral Committee and Polish Sejm), following the accession to the supranational institutions Polish national identity became widely perceived as inclusive and more accepting of alternative definitions of Polishness (Galla, interview, 2012). Tomasz Szyszlak, lecturer at Wroclaw University analysing the situation of ethnic and national minorities in Poland, claims that positive campaigns presenting Polish people as

more than a linguistic or religious group were increasingly widening the confines of Polish nation. In his research *Kwestia romska w polityce państw Europy Środkowej i Wschodniej* (2012), Szyszlak outlines the progress of the local and regional institutions in widening identification of the Polish minorities with the state institutions (Szyszlak ed., 2012). Although both Szyszlak and Galla agree that in the field of education Polish authorities have been supportive, more work was required in order to strengthen the civic-territorial model in Poland. Through outlining common goals for the entire society and the programmes promoting the cultural exchange and heterogeneity, expanding in the contemporary Poland, the state authorities became involved in widening the appeal of the state institutions among the entire body of Polish citizens (Muzeum Historii Polski, 2012).

6.7 Conclusion

Liberal-democracy influenced the creation of a wide range of political forces pursuing their idealised Poland and models for Polish citizens. The persisting divisions within Poland identified by the Nationalists and the Socialists in the interwar Poland resurfaced in the modern Polish society: the “Liberals” and the “Solidarists”. Although the cleavages on the two-dimensional political spectrum did not resemble the economic or social issues⁶⁴ present in interwar Poland, competition between the state constructed along the civic-territorial/ Western model of nation clashed with the organic definition of Polish nation which identified ethnic roots of the Polish nation as central to construction of a modern national identity in the post-Communist Poland.

⁶⁴ Ethnic Poles following the collapse of Communism constituted 97.6 per cent (1992) of the population inhabiting Poland (Eberhardt, 1996:146)

Throughout the transition period and following accession to the EU, the competition concerning the nature of modern national identity was shaped both in the present and on the historical platform. The right-wing parties supported the construction of a Poland “pure” in character with elements identified as “traditional” underpinning the definition of the national community. Accusations aimed at the domestic liberal competition and supranational organisations bolstered concerns within the population over the sovereignty of their state. The national-conservatives identified secularisation and the strengthening of ties with the European Union as detrimental to a particular view of the nature of Polish national identity described in through the prism of *primordialism*. In the rhetoric of the right-wing parties the increasing globalisation resembles the situation of Poland during periods of limited sovereignty. PiS politicians remained defiant in their support of Roman Catholic values and the preservation of the organic national community similarly to the National Democrats at the turn of the twentieth century. The national-conservatives and the nationalist organisations to their own degree became involved in shaping national identity in Poland in opposition to the international community. In order to achieve this goal the elements derived from different periods of Polish history created a platform for contemporary competition in Poland. Furthermore, through the *ethnacist* lens this chapter demonstrated the relevance of elements existing in different periods of history in shaping the modern national identity.

(...) we find hierarchical and covenantal elements often intertwined with republican nationalism to this day. This is not only true in Britain and Japan, Israel and the United States but also seen in national states ranging from Ireland and Poland (...), where the Church retains a strong following. Here, the covenantal elements of ethnic election and mission continue to animate segments of their population, and thereby to offer alternatives to the secular national destinies charted by liberal and socialist elites (...) (Smith, 2008:181)

Although the frontiers of Poland remained unchanged since the Second World War, similarly to the struggle of the nineteenth century national agitators, the competition for widening the definition of Polishness remained one of the leading concerns shared by the political parties in the Third Republic. Even though the ethnic structure of Poland changed dramatically the models national models proposed by *ethnosymbolism* were absorbed by the Polish society after 1989. The constitution of 1997 and the Act on National Minorities of 2005 were ground-breaking for Poland and the Polish people. Although the population and the territory of Poland were altered greatly under the authoritarian regime leading to the formation of a nation state it was the heterogeneity of the ideas which effectively led to the shaping of a state where the community could identify with a wide variety of organisations and institutions rather than through kinship.

“Nationalists might claim that although currently backward, their nation had once been a teacher of the nations, so that borrowing from the advanced was no more than reclaiming their patrimony. This undermined an ethnocentric resistance to change and enormously expanded the repertoire of options available to modernising elites. At the same time, it rejected an uncritical adoption of external models: such borrowing must work to enhance nations, not to efface them within a single conception of development” (Hutchinson, 2005:50)

The European Union also influenced the strengthening of civic ties between Poles but the low level of interpersonal trust required to form a civic society remained an obstacle in contemporary Poland. The political parties which presented the benefits of a civic community were discredited and they are still to regain trust of the voters. The Civic Platform (PO) supported the strengthening of interpersonal ties and the wider association of the Polish citizenry with the institutions of the state.

The two competing visions of national identity remained essential to the political parties in the post-Communist and post-transition periods of Poland's

history. These strands presenting Poland as either exclusive or inclusive continued to play a crucial role. Despite the growing ties with the international community and progressing secularisation, the linguistic, religious and cultural affiliations remained important for the definition of the Polish society and this is evidenced by the party programmes of the organisations which have played a decisive role in the Polish parliament since the elections of 1991. The constitution of 1997 and the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities (2005) are among some of the main achievements of the liberalism in Poland.

European integration was perceived by the liberal parties in Poland as an opportunity for strengthening of the core values in Poland. The leading parties identified the EU with regeneration of Polish culture and strengthening of the territorial model national community. Membership in the European and global institutions launched the process of overcoming the ethnic traditionalism supported by the Christian-national and National-democratic parties following the collapse of Communism. Through the 1990s and the 2000s, the competition between the traditional definition of the national community and the identification beyond the confines of a nation-state remained an important element in the leading parties' political programmes.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

Following the collapse of Communism in Poland a wide range of political parties proposed programmes for the future development of Poland and revitalisation of the national community. Although the majority of the post-Solidarity parties formed a firm opposition to the ex-Communists their programmes for the direction of Poland varied. The minor differences and personal animosities disallowed forging alliances which would expedite the process of transformation into a free-market economy.

Despite the competition in the socio-cultural sphere, which on numerous occasions overshadowed all other considerations, European integration and unification with other supranational institution remained an overriding goal of the successive administrations. The divisions between parties, presented by the two-dimensional spectrum (*figure 1.1*), continued to deepen through the 1990s and the 2000s. Although Europe remained, in the rhetoric of PiS, PO, SLD, crucial to strengthening Poland in East-Central Europe, parties could not agree on the cultural direction of the national community. Expansion of the EU guided Poland in strengthening of the

The process of expansion of the national identity continued through the twentieth century and remained an essential element of every successive administration in post-Communist Poland. After 1989 political parties sourced heavily from Polish history to legitimise their particular political programme. Political programmes and the rhetoric of the politicians demonstrate two main currents in shaping post-Communist Poland. Although both these currents occasionally used elements of the opposition's rhetoric, the first camp predominantly focused on the ethnocultural history of Poland, predominantly concentrating on the

primordialism in shaping modern Poland. The second camp identified modern Poland with the cultural heterogeneity.

“Conceptually, the nation has come to blend two sets of dimensions, the one civic and territorial, the other ethnic genealogical, in varying proportions in particular cases. It is this very multidimensionality that has made national identity that has made national identity such a flexible and persistent force in modern life and politics; and allowed it to combine effectively with other powerful ideologies and movements, without losing its character” (Smith, 1991:15)

The divisions’ observable on the political spectrum in the post-Communist Poland mirrored the main socio-cultural trends existing in modern Polish history. The competition between the organic definition and the polyethnic model of Poland persisted since the late nineteenth century. Anthony D. Smith (2008) argued that nationalisms equip “each generation of the community with alternative ethno-histories and national destinies” (2008:15). Furthermore, according to Smith, the durability of the distinctive character of a nation requires cultivation through the rejuvenation of the ethnocultural elements which played a central role in the process of shaping modern nation-states in East-Central Europe. The “revival” of Poland in 1918 and preservation of the particular national identity required “a number of interrelated components- ethnic, cultural, territorial, economic, and legal political (Smith, 1991:15).

This research makes it apparent that the history of border shifts (*Maps I, II, and III*), migrations and expulsions has put a burden on the perception of the peoples inhabiting the region studied. The lack of clear-cut geographical frontiers and the process of cultural exchange shaped a wide range of divergent communities in East-Central Europe. Communities with multi-layered identities rarely shared the programmes of the nationalist agitators recognising them as detrimental to the shape

of their communities. The distinctive ethnic and cultural affiliations of the local populations were also recognised as obstacles to achieving the utopian homogeneity of the national community (Hutchinson, 2008:50).

In order to understand the process of shaping the modern national identity in Poland, this study posed questions which were both chapter specific and comprehensive. Each of the chapters analysed: Firstly, whether the national identity in Poland was an effect of *la longue duree* or whether it was the product of the nineteenth century. Secondly, the study analysed, whether the successive governments and political parties in different periods, defined the nation as organic or territorial. And finally, the study inquired about the role of the *ethnic cores* in shaping modern Poland.

This research posed three central questions which would allow the process of construction and the shaping of national identity in successive generations to be broken down and analysed.

7.1 Theoretical Implications

The aim of this study was to demonstrate the process of shaping modern national identity in Poland. Through the application of *ethnosymbolism* and locating ethnic cores in modern Polish history, it became possible to determine which pre-modern and early modern elements influenced shaping of the modern national character. The application of *ethnosymbolism*, as the conceptual framework of this research exposed the role of national institutions, social groups, and ethnic symbols in the safeguarding of the national character Through the analysis of the role of cultural

borrowing, religious reform, and popular participation, identified by Smith (1991) as central in shaping ethnic cores and effectively formation of modern nations, this study was able to demonstrate the dynamic leading to formulation of competing interpretations of national identity and citizenship in Poland (Smith, 1991:37). Through the location of *ethnic cores* in the history of Polish ethnics it became possible to analyse the political programmes proposed by the competing political strands in post-1918 Poland. Following the theoretical framework this research analysed the process of shaping modern Poland from the perspective of the perspective of the dominant, Polish ethnics.

Furthermore, through acknowledging of the role of antiquity and the notion of *la longue durée* allowed this study to argue that the memory of independent statehood preserved by the elites and the Church, described by Smith as “ethnic cores” influenced the “revival” of Poland. Ethnic cores preserved the republican and religious traditions allowing populations enfranchised following The Spring of Nations (1848) to enter the body of citizens. Anderson (1983) argued that modern nations were formed through vernacular mobilisation and print language had a central role in the construction of modern national identity. This argument, however, does not fully explain the lingering appeal of pre-modern and early modern elements of national identity.

Hans Kohn (1965) suggested two types of nationalism. The first category defined nation as construct formed upon common ancestry or as a “super-family” inherently tied through mystical blood ties. The second category described as civic nationalism saw the nation as heterogeneous in an ethnic sense while bound by shared territory and common culture (1965:40; 1991:11). The application of

ethnosymbolism to this study allowed discussion of the aspects of identity which existed prior to “national revival” (Hroch, 1985). Miroslav Hroch (1985, 2007) argued that the construction of nations in East-Central Europe required certain social preconditions or specific ethnic elements in order to successfully gain popular support among the population. Ethnic groups which were unable to create a coherent message became dispersed and effectively incorporated into other nation states. Through their critique of *modernism* and *ethnosymbolism* Hroch’s theories offered a novel approach to historical research. Comparative analysis examined the essential elements of national identity as defined by the ethnicists. These methodological approaches confirmed the applicability of this theoretical underpinning to the case-study.

7.2 Empirical Findings

Analysis of the findings is chapter specific. Each of these chapters offers answers to the research questions both individually and in connection with other sections. **The Shaping of National Identity** (Chapter 4), **Nation and nationality post-1918 Poland** (Chapter 5) and **National Identity in Post-communist Poland** (Chapter 6) discussed the role of ethnic-genealogical and civic-territorial elements in the construction and moulding of national identity (Smith, 1991:123). Empirical findings demonstrate the role which the early-modern political and socio-cultural traditions played in shaping the national character in modern Poland. Each of the contextual chapters analysed the evidence for the persistence of the distinctive national character and discussed it in detail.

The Shaping of National Identity (Chapter 4) located elements central to national identity and discussed the role of these “ethnic cores” in shaping the character of the envisioned nation. Identification of the corresponding elements, linking the national community with the pre-modern and early modern realms led to exposure of what was described as *la longue durée* in Polish history. Determining the foundations of the modern nation required analysis of the preconditions of the population which became involved in the construction of Poland. The polyethnic past of the Commonwealth was identified as a mean of cementing the post-1918 communities across the Second Republic of Poland. The polyethnic patchwork of communities which was developed through the cultural exchange in Poland-Lithuania became perceived by the Socialists as the strength of Poland rather than its weakness. Poland in the Socialist rhetoric of the PPS ideologues became an identity in a political rather than ethno-cultural sense. Although this inclusive model of patriotism did not take root the tradition of heterogeneity became preserved in Polish history and culture.

The destruction of the infrastructure and economies of the territories which would become incorporated into the Second Republic between 1918 and 1921 had an impact on the lengthy process of recovery and consolidation of the divergent territories and communities. The failed reconstruction of the Commonwealth and the construction of a diluted version of the polyethnic programme following a disappointing Treaty of Riga led to further polarisation of ethnic and religious communities inhabiting Poland.

The levels of development across Poland in the interwar years varied greatly and the largely rural and illiterate population in critical areas such as Galicia,

formerly part of the Austrian Empire (Prazmowska, 2010:34) and areas of the former Russian Empire (Prazmowska, 2010:47) was unable to comprehend the idea of “national revival” and frequently unwilling to conform to the programmes initiated from Warsaw. The Polish government was aiming to change these inequalities after the end of the First World War, however two main factors stood in the way. First, the three partitions were developing (for 123 years) according to programmes initiated by the foreign powers and secondly, the Republic established in 1918 was unable to provide a programme both in the socio-cultural and economic sphere which would satisfy the divergent populations across Poland. Such was the case of the Ukrainian-speaking population which became openly hostile to education in the Polish language.

The role of this chapter was to identify the *ethnic cores*, essential to the distinctive national character. This section analysed impact of the Church, *szlachta*, and the literary tradition to safeguarding the national identity through the period of statelessness. It argued that in the early-modern era the Church remained the only salient indicator of identity and connection with the early-modern realm. It also analysed the impact of the ethnic cores on elevation of the lower strata to the status of Polish citizenry. This symbolic expansion of citizenship required dissemination of the ethnocultural elements, previously exclusive to the nobility. This popular participation in the envisioned nation was partially achieved through the juxtaposition of religious and national elements in order to revitalise the national project. Furthermore, the nationalist elites, stemming predominantly from the large aristocratic strata (*szlachta*), preserved the polyethnic character of Poland-Lithuania, political tradition, and the reforms brought in by the 1791 constitution.

Evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the competing visions regarding citizenship in the envisioned Poland divided the nationalist agitators. The two strands, ethnic/exclusive and civic/inclusive, envisioning Poland as a state of all inhabitants rather than particular social classes were outlined at the end of the nineteenth century by the National Democrats. The nobility which was considered as the body of citizens in the former Commonwealth remained defiant until the pacification of the January Insurrection of 1863. The vision of the nation ruled by the upper strata as outlined by the former *émigré* intelligentsia in Paris proved unsustainable. The political programme of the Commonwealth and the social model became potent to the Socialists at the turn of the century. Expansion of Poland through the construction of the federal model was dedicated to building of a polyethnic state within the borders of Poland-Lithuania.

Ethnic symbols played a crucial role for both of the inclusive and exclusive visions of Poland and were incorporated into the programmes of the leading political currents. For the nationalists, utilisation of *primordialism* was the main path to be followed in the creation of a dominant and potent national model. It created a reality in which “true” Poles were under constant threat from the competing nationalisms in Ukraine or Lithuania while at the same time it offered a programme of national rejuvenation through education and cooperation among ethnic Poles.

Finally, this chapter demonstrated that although following the independence in 1918, the Socialists recognised the role of the Church in preservation of the distinctive national character and unification of ethnic Poles; more than 30 per cent of the population which constituted the independent Poland were of other than Roman Catholic religious affiliation. The construction of nation through the prism of

religion would (according to the PPS) led to alienation of divergent communities across the state. Instead, the Socialist authorities found it necessary to reframe the early modern past (1569-1795) and refer to the symbols which would allow various ethnic groups to identify with the state institutions.

Nation and nationality in post-1918 Poland (Chapter 5) discussed the period between 1918 and 1989. The role of this particular section of the study was to demonstrate the role of the two leading models of Poland: organic and territorial. This lengthy chapter included the role of the early experience with democracy (1919-1926), followed by the successive weakening of the parliamentary rule, and the subsequent authoritarian period. The evidence presented in this chapter suggests that authoritarianism in Poland predated the outbreak of the Second World War.

Furthermore, this section of the study analysed two distinctive currents in Polish politics as proposed by the Socialists and the National Democrats. Although territorial patriotism and the ethnic-organic visions of Poland continued to compete for the dominant role in shaping contemporary national identity, with the deterioration of the economic situation and worsening relations with Poland's neighbours, national egoism became seized the dominant position in Poland. The Socialist programme, built upon the early-modern traditions did not lead to consolidation and anticipated reconstruction of polyethnic Poland. Animosity between ethnic groups and the growing distrust towards the government in Warsaw isolated more than a quarter of the state's population.

The Second World War, which led to further decay of societal ties in East-Central Europe, compounded the inherent inability to form a civic community and

caused an acceleration of the destruction of social ties and an escalation of inter-ethnic animosities. These conflicts further inflamed the contestation between regional nationalisms. Implementation of programmes which would create a civic identity failed as evidenced by ethnic conflict between Polish and Ukrainian populations continuing until 1948.

This *de facto* civil war gave the Soviet sponsored regime an opportunity to construct an ethnically homogenous Poland. Through the rhetoric promoting ethnic superiority and the idea of the return to the “original” Polish frontiers, the border shifts and expulsions across East-Central Europe were justified by the authoritarian regime. Furthermore, such shifts and movements were supported by the works of organisations such as the Western Institute. Through the pseudo-research of anthropology, linguistics and folk culture in the lands attached to Poland, the researchers were able to further support the rhetoric of “return” to the traditional shape of Poland. Moreover, measures such as initial cooperation with the Church were applied in order to maintain the appearance of continuity and the consent of the population to the construction of an ethnically homogeneous state.

This attempt to forge the nation through the utilisation of the primordial past was recognised as fraudulent and proved ineffective. Endeavours seeking to undermine and effectively eradicate the memory of the struggle for sovereignty preserved by the Church and the Polish culture proved unsustainable. The cultural past was preserved by the domestic and the *émigré* intellectual circles, especially *Kultura*. The distinctive political and literary tradition remained central to the reconstruction of modern Poland and the shaping of the Polish population. The Church, and to a lesser extent cultural organisations, retained the role of pillars of

national identity through formation of a platform for the unification of the social groups dispersed by the authoritarian regime. *Solidarność* became the largest such movement across Communist Europe and its role was to provide the entire population including the previously disjoined strata with a platform of debate and protest against the alienated regime. The nucleus of the civic-territorial nationalism stood in stark contrast to the ethnic nationalism implemented in by the Communist authorities following the Second World War. Through the widening of the network of associations, and the spiritual support of the Church, the nation was able to confront the dominant role of the PZPR and outline the new Polish society as a community which was shaped using the foundations of various cultural institutions and elements of national identity which were shaped in different periods of Polish history.

National Identity in Post-Communist Poland (Chapter 6) discussed Poland following the Communist period. The central argument of this section further refers to the role of the two leading currents in shaping post-Communist Poland. The ethnic-organic programme clashed with the civic-territorial state model. Although the leading political parties identified accession to European and global institutions as the only viable direction of development, contestation in the socio-cultural dimension remained evident in the rhetoric of the political parties.

The continuing debate regarding the modern shape of Poland and the definition of Polish citizens became central on numerous occasions. Some of the more controversial events which led to heated discussion included the constitutional debate of 1997, the Jedwabne controversy of 2001 and the presidential plane crash of 2010. The character of the nation was also challenged by the national-conservatives with the introduction of the National Minorities Act (2005) and accession to the

European Union (2004). These milestones and other controversies crystallised in events such as the *Auschwitz Cross Affair* and the Pope's (John Paul II) death in 2005 and became a platform of competition between the liberals and the solidarists. These forces (discussed further in chapter 6) assumed some of the main characteristics of interwar political currents and defined national identity. National identity in contemporary Poland was shaped through both the prism of the modern and ancient elements. Although the relationship with supranational institutions was reinforced over the course of the twenty-first century there are elements of ethnic identity which remain central to the identification of a significant proportion of the Polish population. This was evidenced by the surge of parties defending the traditional definition of the Polish population through the vehicle of Roman Catholicism or familial ties rather than polyethnic traditions and identification with official state institutions. National history was identified by contemporary by the Right-wing parties exclusively as an essential element in patriotic education, necessary for rejuvenating the Polish nation. In the rhetoric of PiS the nation was presented as either a martyr or a victor in order to preserve the ethnocultural foundations of Poland.

The liberals remained defiant in shaping of the contemporary Polish citizens through strengthening ties with Western Europe and Poland's neighbours. Cultural exchange and borrowing identified by the proponents of *ethnosymbolism* as essential in shaping modern nations remained, in the rhetoric of the liberal parties, crucial to rejuvenating Polish citizens. Identification with the institutions of the state, European institutions, strengthening interpersonal trust were identified as crucial in the process of developing Polish democracy. The liberals propagated shaping of modern

Poland upon the platform of polyethnic traditions derived from the early-modern and interwar periods.

The continuity of the two currents shaping the distinctive perceptions of Poland and its citizens could be viewed as a template of democratisation in East-Central Europe. It also furthers an understanding of the competition for national identity in other post-Communist communities. Broadening relations with the international community in cultural, economic and the military spheres in the region rekindled the discussion on national identity and sovereignty.

7.3 Contestation of National Identity in Poland and East-Central Europe

Ideas pertaining to the contemporary national community in Poland remains divided between two main ideological blocs. There is the territorial model outlined by the liberals and the organic-traditional model outlined by the politicians of the Right. These two opposing visions strive for the dominant role in shaping contemporary national identity in Poland. Political parties supporting liberal cultural attitudes continue to source from Polish history and ethnocultural traditions in order to clarify the direction of the state in the twenty-first century.

Modern Poland appears as a progressive European society which could be portrayed as a model for other post-Communist states. Internally, however, Poland remains a heterogeneous society divided into conflicting camps pulling the state in different directions, despite the state's ethnic homogeneity. The crises which Poland faced following the collapse of Communism were echoed across East-Central Europe. Countries within the European Union such as Lithuania and Slovakia faced similar

issues of identity struggling between pro-Western orientations and the protection of the traditions which allowed these nation-states to mobilize the populations around shared traits and win independence. With regards to the post-Soviet Ukraine the crisis of identity and the lack of a single ethnocultural past continued to tear the state between the east and the west. The culture codified by the *ethnic cores* in the pre-modern and early modern past allowing the states to create an encompassing programme of national reinvigoration disallowed further development of Ukraine.

Although the national forces in Poland continued compete for shaping Poland along the territorial and the organic trajectory, existence of a single Poland remained crucial to the authorities. After 1989 European model of development became a model for the mainstream political forces in Poland. Varying visions of Poland's history and the trajectory of development remained interwoven with similar national myths and the heroes who emancipated the population or led to national liberation. These myths and histories which were preserved in the political traditions preserved a sense of one, independent state. The EU, aside from economic development, led Poland to socio-cultural advancement. This evolution, associated by the politicians of the Right with the negative trends of destruction of the family, weakening of the nation-state, or state-sponsored secularisation is fiercely opposed by the Church and the Conservative politicians. On the other hand, the liberals remain hopeful that closer ties with the EU will allow the Polish society to become stronger and more unified on the European platform.

The Civic Platform (PO) has proven to be the most successful party since the collapse of Communism. Since coming to power in 2009, PO focused predominantly on the economic development of Poland. There are issues with the interpretation

concerning recent Polish history and the opposition continues to reopen some of its chapters, including the Second World War or the post-Communist transition, the ruling party was able to avoid lengthy conflicts with both PiS and SLD. Although Independence Day, celebrating reconstruction of Poland in 1918 (11 November), presents a picture of a society divided between organic definition of Poland and the polyethnic and supranational European community. Nationalist circles which for decades praised Dmowski's achievements whilst undermining Piłsudski were able to create a synergy between these two contradicting figures. This consolidation further presents the durability and adaptability of nationalism in Poland. The adoption of Dmowski by the liberal Poland as a great Polish statesman is also an evidence of the role of national egoism in shaping Poland in successive generations and preservation of the national character.

Contemporary identity in Poland is suffused with elements which support the idea of continuity aiding the legitimacy of the official state institutions. Twenty-five years of democratic rule in Poland have changed the face of the Polish society. The expanding ties with the international community and cooperation with Poland's neighbours allowed, undisturbed by external forces, process of shaping national identity, undisturbed by external forces. The friction between the traditional and European form of socio-cultural development existing in Poland is necessary to ensure ideological heterogeneity in Poland. The long period of authoritarianism which corrupted one of the interpretations of national identity did the opposite by abolishing pluralism, necessary for revitalisation of the national values. The competition must include the widest body of citizens possible to allow legitimate process of shaping of national identity in the successive generation.

There are pressing matters such as further development of the relationship between wider ethnocultural history and the history of Polish peoples. Debates on complicated aspects of the most recent national past, including the relationship with other ethnic communities in interwar Poland and immediately after the Second World War require addressing in order to strengthen the core of Polish citizenship. *Ethnosymbolism* could be further applied to research pre-modern and early-modern identities in other nation-states in East-Central Europe. Research by Serhii Plokhy (2006) into the origins of modern Ukraine, Lithuania, and Belarus offers an insight into shaping of identities. Plokhy who has also adopted elements of *ethnosymbolism* claims “that the origins of modern nations are to be found in premodern national communities, or ethnicities, which I often call “nationalities” (in the tradition of East Slavic historiography) and to which Smith refers as ethnies” (Plokhy, 2006:2). This research and that of Serhii Plokhy argues that application of *ethnosymbolist* framework could offer a novel insight to the prevalence of ethno-nationalism in East-Central Europe and Eastern Europe. Analysis of the pre-modern realms through the methods applied by the *ethnosymbolists* and the research into the construction of modern nations, proposed by *modernists*, could offer a novel approach to understanding the socio-political development across the region. Identification of *ethnic cores*, which led to the construction of independent states and preservation of distinctive character of the community, could offer insight into their contemporary structure. Myths and memories of nations played a great role in the preservation of the distinctive character of Poland and its population. A thorough analysis of the pre-modern foundations of contemporary Poland, discussed by Karol Modzelewski (2004), could offer further explanations of the role of East-Central European antiquity in shaping modern Poland (Modzelewski, 2004:5). Similarly the analysis of

the pre-modern and early-modern identities in East-Central, Eastern, and South-East European national and regional identities could offer a wider understanding of the contemporary socio-political conflicts. Inquiry into the connections between the *ethnies* and their particular *ethnic cores* which were shaped prior to the French Revolution could offer a more detailed understanding of why particular ethnic groups prevailed, forming modern nations, while others remained either stateless or chose a path of nation building as in the case of Poland. Furthermore, such detailed research of ethnic cores could offer some additional information about the extent and durability of national identity in countries such as Ukraine where the competition between the opposing ethnocultural centres and *ethnic cores* continued to surface since the state's independence in 1991. Research of the ethnic foundations of modern nation-states in the region remains controversial and even in the 2010s leads to international disputes between Poland, Lithuania, and Ukraine.

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