BORDERLANDS OF NATIONS RELIGIONS AND CULTURES IN THE FACE OF CIVILISATIONS CHANGES

edited by
Marek Sobczyński, Krystian Heffner,
Marek Barwiński and Brygida Solga

REGION and REGIONALISM

No. 15

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University of Łódź
Department of Political and Historical Geography
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Instytut Śląski
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FOREWORD

The 15th volume of the publishing series "Region and Regionalism" entitled *Borderlands of nations, religions, and cultures in the face of civilization changes*, is also the final volume of the series, effectively concluding it. The difficult decision made by the publishers – the Department of Political and Historical Geography and Regional Studies of the University of Lodz and the Silesian Institute in Opole – to cease publishing the "Region and Regionalism" series after thirty years is the result of the scientific policy pursued over the past eight years by the government dominated by the Law and Justice party. Although the Polish people voted this anti-democratic political option out of power in the elections on 15 October 2023, the far-reaching consequences of its policies are irreversible, and under the current circumstances, the continued publication of the R&R series has become impossible.

Subsequent volumes of the "Region and Regionalism" series, from 1994 onwards, largely consisted of the materials of the International "Lodz" Conferences on Political Geography, which began in 1988, during the People's Republic of Poland, behind the Iron Curtain. The eighteenth edition of this conference took place in Święta Lipka from 14 to 16 September 2023, and the organisers have decided that it, too, will no longer continue in its previous form. The contents of the 15th volume of the "Region and Regionalism" series are partly the result of the discussions held at this conference and partly include submitted texts related to the conference's themes.

The volume is divided into three thematic sections. The first section is entitled *General considerations from a global perspective*. It opens with a paper by Slovenian geographer Jernej Zupančič from the University of Ljubljana, entitled *Symbolization of minority spaces: concepts, politics, and experience*. Border areas are often inhabited by national minorities, which makes these regions unique. Such minorities constitute a cultural asset and make significant contributions to international cooperation. The article focuses on the issue of the

symbolisation of political borders in relation to contemporary minorities within a country. Symbolisation is a planned process of transforming the material and immaterial elements of the cultural landscape to deliberately represent the region and its community. Symbolic elements are intended for understanding, research, presentation, promotion, and demonstration; hence, they possess a certain manipulative nature and significance. Symbols define space, identify it, and impart new qualities to it. The author distinguishes three groups of spatial symbolic elements: material (objects in the cultural landscape important to the community due to natural features or those with historical, religious, or ethnic significance), immaterial (such as language representation in written, spoken, electronic, or virtual forms, as well as certain traditions or broader cultural aspects, from music to cuisine), and events related to minorities. For minorities in border areas, it is crucial to be recognizable through symbolic elements.

Jan Kłos, a philosopher from the Catholic University of Lublin, presents a paper entitled *The Norman Conquest and thereafter: positive disintegration in the social context*. The author starts by introducing the concept of "positive disintegration", a term coined by Polish psychologist Kazimierz Dąbrowski. This concept refers to a stage in human development where an individual faces conflict or a traumatic situation that requires specific coping mechanisms. The author highlights the aspect of this situation that compels the person experiencing trauma to overcome it, ultimately benefiting their personal growth. The backdrop for exploring the process of positive disintegration is the Norman Conquest of Britain in 1066 and the resulting changes, which had far-reaching consequences beyond the British Isles. The decisive factor in this context was the acceptance of change as a desirable element.

The final paper in the first section of the volume entitled *Ethnic territorial autonomy: a comparative study of Panama, Nicaragua, and Bolivia* is written by Marek Sobczyński, a political geographer from Lodz, titled This study reviews the policies of three American countries, each characterized by distinct ideological foundations of their political systems and diverse national structures, in relation to national minorities and the processes of granting them territorial autonomy. The timing of these systemic changes (spanning the entire 20th century to the early 21st century) and the socio-economic conditions (with Panama having a democratic market economy and the other two countries having socialist economies) led to different political and social outcomes in the process of granting autonomy. The author compares these cases, highlighting both similarities and differences.

The second section of the volume features works discussing *Local considerations from European and Polish perspectives*. This section begins with an article by a team of Albanian geographers – Sokol Axhemi, Endrit Sallja, and Ornela

Hasrama from the University of Tirana – entitled *Effects of migratory movements and sustainable management in the urban administrative units of Albania*. The authors start by acknowledging that migration is a crucial issue for any country due to its role and impact, particularly on the development of urbanised regions. They demonstrate how migration influences the population and economic development of Albanian cities.

Opole-based geographers Krystian Heffner and Brygida Solga from the Silesian Institute explore migratory processes in their paper *Demographic and migration changes in the Opolskie Voivodeship as a challenge for development policy*. They examine these processes against the backdrop of changes in Poland's demographic structure. The authors note that Poland has transitioned from being primarily an emigration country to one that experiences both emigration and immigration. At the same time, the country's demographic structure is shifting, with a decreasing proportion of young people and an increasing share of older individuals, which will soon have significant social and economic consequences. This process is discussed in detail with the Opolskie Voivodeship as a case study, a region notable for its large minority population – Germans – and their significant migratory mobility.

Joanna Szczepankiewicz-Battek, a geographer of religion from WSB Merito University in Wrocław, addresses the religious diversity of the historical region of Masuria and the role of Evangelicalism in its civilisational development in her article *The population of Masuria and its ethnic and religious structure after the Second World War*. She also examines the migratory processes that altered the ethnic structure of the region. Szczepankiewicz-Battek demonstrates that Evangelical believers were able to remain within the sphere of Polish culture through their religion. However, after the Second World War, they were politically classified as Germans and forcibly expelled. In their place, alongside Polish settlers, Ukrainians from southeastern Poland, who were adherents of Greek Catholicism or Orthodoxy, were also forcibly relocated to Masuria.

The final text of the second part is an article entitled *Changes in the nationality structure of Poland in the first decades of the 21st century in the light of the results of the censuses (2002–2021)* by the Lodz-based geographer Marek Barwiński, in which he shows how Poland's political transformation and rapid economic development have affected the proportion of national minorities in Polish society. He also discusses the technical organization of successive censuses and the impact of this factor on the results obtained, arguing for the decreasing reliability and accuracy of census data in terms of national identity declarations.

The third part of the volume 15 of the "Region and Regionalism" series contains a *Miscellanea* section. The first study in this section is by geographers

from the Department of Political and Historical, and Regional Geography at the University of Lodz – Andrzej Rykała, Marek Barwiński, and Marek Sobczyński – entitled *The world facing the pandemic. Diffusion of the SARS-CoV-2 virus in the world and crisis management in Poland*. It presents the spread of the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic globally and in Poland, and analyzes the actions taken by local authorities in Poland in response to the epidemic and the excess mortality, particularly among the elderly population.

The next article in this section, authored by Krystyna Krawiec-Złotkowska, a philologist from the Pomeranian University in Słupsk, is a study entitled *Sub uno caelo… Religious songs performed in the churches of Pomerania (selected examples)*. The author addresses the issue of multiculturalism and multireligiousness in the discussed region. The article presents selected Evangelical, Catholic, and Orthodox songs performed in Pomeranian churches from the earliest times to the present. Through this, the cultural and religious complexity of the Kashubian-Pomeranian region is highlighted, an area characterized by multi-denominational and multicultural diversity, where representatives of various nations live and practice different religious traditions.

The penultimate article in the volume, written by Lodz-based geographer Andrzej Rykała, is titled *In the circle of political geography… On an outstanding representative of the discipline and the work dedicated to him*. It is a modified version of the introduction to a book edited by the author, published in 2023 to mark the 70th anniversary of Professor Marek Sobczyński. Against the backdrop of a brief history of the development of political geography, the author presents the profile of the Jubilarian and his academic achievements, while also discussing the structure of the commemorative volume, which includes contributions from a large number of authors.

The final article in the volume, which also serves as a recapitulation of all the efforts made by the organizers of the International ‘Lodz’ Conferences on Political Geography over more than three decades of their operation, is authored by someone who has been involved in organizing these conferences since their inception in 1988. The author is Marek Sobczyński, the former head of the Department of Political Geography and Historical Geography and Regional Studies, which initiated the organization of the first conference on political geography in socialist countries (a discipline then banned behind the Iron Curtain) in Lodz. In his work entitled *The International ‘Lodz’ Conferences on Political Geography from a thirty-six-year perspective*, the author discusses the history of organizing these conferences and summarizes their achievements.

The articles collected in volume 15 of “Region and Regionalism” are the work of authors from Albania, France, Poland, and Slovenia, and they present

various perspectives on the issue of minorities living in border regions. The Editors hope that the materials presented in this volume will serve as an inspiration for further studies and analyses on the role of the state in the life of societies.

Marek SOBCZYŃSKI
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1066-3687
University of Lodz, Poland
Faculty of Geographical Sciences
Department of Political and Historical Geography and Regional Studies

Krystian HEFFNER
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2737-6417
University of Economics in Katowice, Poland
Department of Spatial Economics

Marek BARWIŃSKI
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8059-6884
University of Lodz, Poland
Faculty of Geographical Sciences
Department of Political and Historical Geography and Regional Studies

Brygida SOLGA
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5097-9339
Silesian Institute in Opole

Section 1

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Jernej ZUPANČIČ
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4491-6761
University of Ljubljana, Slovenia
Faculty of Arts
Department of Geography

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No. 15

SYMBOLIZATION OF MINORITY SPACES CONCEPTS, POLITICS AND EXPERIENCES

PROLOGUE

Bazovica, Italy, July 13, 2020: Slovenian President Borut Pahor and Italian President Sergio Matarella jointly laid a wreath in front of the memorial to the victims of Bazovica and in front of the "Foibes" near Bazovica. Both places are close to each other, on the territory of the settlement of the Slovenian minority in Trieste, Italy. The shape of the monuments is not aesthetic and respectable. However, in order to preserve the historical memory, both memorials were visited by Slovenes (Memorial to the Victims of Bazovica) and Italians (Foibe), but separately, each in their own way. On the same day, in the presence of the two presidents, Italy undertook to return the Slovenian national home in Trieste. The three events differed radically from the political rituals that had been established for decades. Public reaction was divided. Some saw this as a new atmosphere of a conciliatory, cooperative Europe that could overcome old historical traumas. Others protested vehemently because they interpreted the act as a betrayal of national values. The discussions about the event increased interest in the topic of ethnic minorities, their settlement areas and places of particular historical significance.

INTRODUCTION

The border space is the space of symbols. Political borders are usually marked with state symbols. Border crossings are exclusive spaces for the demonstration of the country, marked with names, coats of arms, flags and necessary information in the national language (and script); the language acts as a symbol. Many

symbols are located near streets where a larger flow of people is expected. They are located in city squares, main streets and city parks. All symbols of national, regional and local significance make use of the location and represent and promote the country, region or local area. The second group of symbols is represented by places and objects where a specific cultural and historical event took place: e.g. the birthplace of a writer or poet, an important historical process or the marking of a cultural fact.

And now to our introductory story. Trieste (and its surroundings) is a city of symbols. In 1910, the most important export port of the Habsburg Monarchy and its suburbs had around 220,000 inhabitants, namely a relatively Italian majority and a large Slovenian minority (almost 30%). After the First World War, the city became part of Italy, maritime traffic declined sharply and was replaced by industry. The street names were Italianized, and today none of the city's larger streets are reminiscent of the old days of Austrian rule. in 1920, local fascists burned the symbolically most important point of the Slovenian community in Trieste. The members of the TIGR organization were the first fighters against fascism in Europe, and their modus operandi was terror. In 1930, four of them were executed near Bazovica, a village near Trieste. One of the monuments where the two presidents paid their respects together can be found there today. At the end of the Second World War, the town and its surroundings were occupied by units of the Yugoslav army, which were forced to withdraw under American and British pressure. During this political storm, the partisans executed almost 1,000 Italians and threw the bodies into karst caves – foibs. One of these foibs is the second place where Presidents Matarella and Pahor met. After the protracted crisis of Trieste in 1954, the city remained in Italy. Many Italians left Istria and Dalmatia (the territory of Yugoslavia). There are many symbols in Trieste, but only a few common ones that are important for both Italians and Slovenes. Space and society are full of traumas, both direct and intergenerational. This is also reflected on a symbolic level. It is therefore not surprising that many people saw the otherwise very "European" move by the two presidents as a contradiction to common clichés. The example described shows how closely interwoven the minority's relationships with the territory and its history are.

In this paper we focus on objects and places of symbolic significance located in areas inhabited by ethnic minorities. These are spatial symbols or spatial monuments. Spatial symbols (due to their location and content) sometimes represent points of community grouping and presentation. Presentation is essential for creating and consolidating feelings of connectedness between members of a community. We propose three hypotheses:

(1) Spatial symbols have a specific meaning in the life of the community: they are anchors of ethnic identity;
(2) The symbols of the majority and the minority differ considerably and sometimes even contradict each other;
(3) Most symbols are chosen consciously and with political motives.

METHODOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Symbols have been considered in ethnology for decades. However, they have not dealt with these phenomena in detail. Between 2013 and 2017, we dealt with symbolization processes and the phenomenon of spatial symbols or monuments in the Geography Studies Seminar at the Faculty of Philosophy of the University of Ljubljana. The research and discussion did not focus on minorities and the border area, but on symbolization processes in general. Nevertheless, the results were interesting and, with some adjustments, useful for further research on the topic of symbols in the minority context. All symbolically important elements had in common that they are visible, widely present in the consciousness (tradition, lore or heritage) and linked to the community; that they have a certain collective character and meaning. Some spatial symbols are often used as brands, but branding is a completely different area.

In 2018, we conducted a preliminary study on symbols as anchors of ethnic identity among members of minorities and the diaspora. The preliminary study served to prepare a scientific project (*The Minority and Migrants Identity in a Globalized World*, 2019). In this context, we were particularly interested in symbols that are important for minorities or more generally for the national question. The space of minorities and the diaspora proved to be specific in terms of symbols. Minorities (and the diaspora) are more sensitive to cultural and linguistic elements and their public, visible and thus spatial representation. Obscuration and sublimation are common with symbols of historical meaning or origin. The symbols that the minority defines as important are clearly different from the symbols of the majority nation, even if they all live in the same space. A minority uses some symbols of the mother nation, but in an adapted form and to a limited extent.

In the project design, in addition to the Slovenian minorities (Italy, Austria, Croatia, Hungary) and the Slovenian diaspora in several countries (Austria, Italy, Germany, Belgium, USA, Canada, Australia, Brazil, Argentina, Croatia, Serbia, Switzerland) and minorities in Slovenia (Italians, Hungarians, Roma), a comparative pilot study was also prepared, in which we wanted to examine a total of 28 ethnic minority communities in Europe and the diaspora in Europe and the

world, according to eight indicators: forms, location, phenomenological characteristics, recognition in the minority collective, visibility, attitudes of the majority society, management characteristics and interpretation. The main method of data and information collection was cartographic-photographic documentation (collection of information about the location, form, content, *etc*. of the symbols), the individual-narrative method with linked interviews and qualitative interpretation. However, the realization of this methodologically and technically quite demanding project became practically impossible due to some circumstances. The basic project was not approved and some activities were transferred to the research program "Sustainable Regional Development of Slovenia", which is based at the Institute of Geography at the College of Ljubljana. Instead of 28 minority communities, the pilot study was conducted in 11 and reduced and adapted to the circumstances; shortly after the start of the research, the Covid-19 pandemic began, which also prevented the reduced scope of fieldwork. It was only partially possible to obtain some content by analyzing information available on the internet.

THEORY: SYMBOLIC SPACE, SPATIAL SYMBOLS AND SYMBOLIZATION

Before we turn to spatial symbols and monuments in the context of minorities, it is worth making a few leaps and taking a brief look at the theoretical background.

The topic of symbolization is rarely mentioned in the geographical sciences, often underestimated and only treated sporadically and unsystematically, although it offers relatively broad application possibilities. Symbolization is the process of transforming objects in the environment so that they become recognizable and meaningful and are accepted by people as particular symbols. Symbols usually have a high emotional value. The reaction of people is reflexive (reaction to perceived objects), experiential (evokes intense experiences that people then realize) and generative (evokes certain reactions and thereby creates new phenomena). One of the most important functions of spatial symbols is the role of an anchor point in the formation and development of identity. Symbolic objects and their settings (places or squares) become sites of intense interaction between people and their environment. In this context, the emotional component of people's attitude towards symbolic objects is very important, but it has a selective character: it is important exclusively for the community that recognizes it as a kind of symbol. It may not have this value for others.

The question of the symbolic landscape and symbolic objects belongs to the field of cultural geography, especially in academic environments with a post-

-structuralist mindset. Basically, it is about places or objects of certain human perceptions and representations (Horton and Kraftl 2014) and a certain manipulation with them (Levy 2008). Objects, areas, zones or entire landscapes with which social groups establish a certain relationship are primarily a cultural phenomenon. What is essential is a community that defines a particular object as important and behaves towards it accordingly. Every symbolic place, every object or every entire landscape complex is associated with a particular group of people or a society. De Meo believes that the establishment of a symbolic relationship to places is actually the territorialization of social groups (De Meo 2008). By establishing a permanent relationship between society and space, space becomes "social space" (Zupančič 2017). There are different interpretations of the term "social space" (Gil 2001), just as there are different understandings of the term "landscape" or "space" (Wylie 2007). People or social groups are constantly adapting their attitudes to places they consider important or to areas with which they have certain experiences and attachments. Territorialization is a dynamic process of adapting landscape to people and vice versa.

Human (social) behavior and thinking is therefore always space-related; it depends to a certain extent on which and what kind of space is available to people. This is the space (territory) of human action; it is the place where a person intervenes in order to realize one of the many activities. The symbolic landscape is a particular part of the social space in which people perform certain functions. However, people also form certain ideas about very distant places that they have only heard or read about (Jones 2009). Geographic education, mass media, maps in physical and electronic form enable certain behaviors in relation to these places and people (De Meo, Buleon 2005) and enable an independent imagination of foreign landscapes. This imaginative approach is common in the promotion of tourist flows. Potential tourists must somehow "see" the foreign landscape in order to trigger an action: to take a trip (Gregory 1994).

Social geography divides social space into three forms: Residential, functional (Freytag *et al*. 2016) and symbolic space (De Meo 2014). Residential (or living) space is defined as a place of (permanent) residence characterized by a permanent or regular presence and an established ownership or tenancy of a property/house or housing unit (Del Casino 2009). In practice, this is a neighborhood, a village or a street. Due to their constant presence, people develop very intensive and diverse interactions with their living spaces. The residential landscape is a "home" with strong practical and emotional attachments (Holloway, Hubbard 2001). As a result, they begin to intervene in their space, which changes its structure and appearance (Hubbard, Kitchin 2010) and also changes people's mentality and awareness. They idealize "their" landscape and the objects in it. Although they know it better than others (because they have more experience), their attitude towards their own space is often uncritical. Imagination and idealization have beco-

me important themes in contemporary post-structural geography (Murdoch 2006).

Another, much more comprehensive form of space is the functional space. It consists of the sum of all places that people use more or less regularly to satisfy various needs and interests, such as work, education and training, provision of goods, health care, social care, spiritual care, technical and personal services, recreation, sport, entertainment, social, cultural and political life, depending on the interests and abilities of the participants and the available choices in the environment, taking into account the habits and technical possibilities of reaching the places where these functions are performed. Functional space is location-independent (Weichhart 2009). The concept of spatial functions was introduced by the school of social geography in Munich (Ruppert *et al*. 1977) and is to a certain extent one of the classics of social geography, especially in Central Europe (Freytag *et al*. 2016). The concept experienced its peak in applied geography in the 1980s and 1990s, but still has a certain potential today (Kellner 2006).

The third form of space is symbolic space (Zupančič 2017: 45–51). Symbolic space gives the impression of a completely unique social and spatial phenomenon. Its main characteristic is representativeness: a feature of a selected place, location or object that represents either a larger environment (landscape) or a community of people, a process or other features relevant to a relatively large population. Symbols make it easier for people to identify with places. Symbolic objects and places strengthen the sense of belonging. These facilities should be public or at least open, accessible and visible. They must express a certain degree of distinctiveness or uniqueness in terms of their form, aesthetic value, cultural and historical significance and character. It is important that a community recognises, interprets and accepts an object as ‚its own' (Chivallon 2008: 23–29). Very important characteristics of symbolic places/landscapes are their geographical names (Jordan 2006).

Objects in space become symbols in a planned process of symbolization. The community consciously selects certain objects as important. Symbolization takes place in several phases: Observation, recognition, imagination, interpretation, construction, acceptance, re-creation, and in some cases mythologization and mystification. Each of the above phases of symbolization requires a certain amount of time, resources and organized effort. The process of symbolization can only be set in motion by organized communities. Those who have institutions (e.g. archives, schools, offices, ministries and various services) and thus professional potential and material resources have a better chance of enforcing certain symbols and officially proclaiming them (Zupančič 2021: 58–60). In the context of the relationship between ethnic minority and majority, it becomes clear that state-organized majority communities have much greater opportunities to enforce spatial symbols and to manipulate them much more easily due to the possession of institutions.

MINORITIES AND MINORITY SPACE

Minorities are usually less numerous communities living in the border areas of countries and peripheral regions. Minorities are often scattered and are not in the majority locally. Due to their small numbers, members of the minority have only modest opportunities to unite and present themselves publicly. Their minority status limits their opportunities for political participation. Minorities may be well organized, but they will find it difficult to form institutions that are sufficiently autonomous and adapted to their interests. The lack of minority institutions limits their public presence.

Spatial symbols and monuments are of above-average importance for ethnic minorities. Symbols are an anchor of identity, a place of association and an accelerator of collective consciousness. Material appearance, appearance, dimension, location and interpretation give spatial symbols great representative power. Space and community become more recognizable through symbols. Recognizability strengthens the collective consciousness and reinforces identity. Symbols with a higher degree of cultural content and meaning and those with historical significance are important for ethnic identification. But cultural content is also very sensitive. History, cultural phenomena in various forms and even location can be interpreted differently. Here, too, minorities are at a disadvantage, namely due to the objectively smaller number and lack of institutional support and subjectively due to the desire of minority members not to stand out too much in the environment. This is the contradiction of the symbolic phenomena of minorities: The presence of symbols supports and strengthens ethnic identity, while at the same time these symbols, and thus the minority community, become a recognizable target, especially when anti-minority sentiments prevail in society. As minorities often have bad experiences as a result of anti-minority policies, they sometimes even try to hide, which weakens their chances of symbolic presence (Klemenčič, Zupančič 2016).

For ethnic minorities, public representation is extremely important. The use of spatial symbols is often a strategy of ethnic survival for members of minorities. Visible symbolic elements have two important advantages: First, they represent certain historical and/or cultural content in a visible way, which increases the perception of the minority community, and second, they also mark (label) the geographical environment in which the minority lives. Spatial symbols are in a way the capitalization of historical tangible and intangible heritage. Therefore, minorities strive for a visible bilingual topography, the presence of ethnic symbols such as flags or coats of arms, and monuments that commemorate important figures and events, even if these are tragic in some way. It is important that they animate the members of the minority and bear witness to their presence.

The border area of countries (which is often also the settlement area of minorities) is seen by state politicians as a suitable place to symbolically present the country, its culture and history as well as various attractions. Already at the borderline they display their symbols, such as boundary stones, flags, the presence of the armed forces with their state symbols and, of course, inscriptions. Language is an extremely important, persuasive, flexible and useful symbol for a country and an ethnic community. Being at the same time a cultural element, a symbol and a medium as well as a means of information or communication, it is a very convincing and visible symbol used to mark a certain territory. Countries want to present their national or majority cultural trademark. They are generally less open to minorities and therefore also to minority symbols. Therefore, conflicts between the interests of the majority and the minority cannot be ruled out when introducing and using spatial symbols.

Something else emerged in the pilot study that could have a more theoretical character and greater significance. The role of symbols in postmodern society is increasing, which we associate with greater education and value formation, which is beginning to perceive the space around them more accurately and also with greater commitment. What is interesting, however, is that the elderly are at the forefront of this process, as there are more of them due to their longer lifespan and perhaps also their vitality, and they are also more active in the cultural sphere and make more reflections on the past (Zupančič 2023b).

DISCUSSION: SYMBOLIZATION IN MINORITY SPACE

In a short pilot study, we studied 11 minority communities. These minorities are briefly presented in the table 1.

For each minority we have considered eight categories relating to spatial symbols and their handling. These categories are as follows:

– forms of spatial symbols;
– characteristics of the symbol location;
– dominant content of the symbol;
– evaluation of the visual impact; exposure;
– evaluation of the collective consciousness of the minority in relation to the symbol;
– evaluation of the attitude of the majority and the minority towards these symbols (we-they position);
– dealing with symbols; politics towards symbols;
– interpretations of spatial symbols.

Table 1. Main characteristics of selected minorities

Minority / Country	Number of minority members (est.)	Main minority settling area characteristics	Political status of minority	Turbulent historical features in past century
Slovenes / Italy	80.000	urban concentration (Triest, Gorizia), peripheral rural in nord	protected minority; various practices, well organized community	raids trough fascist period; Triest-crisis
Italians / Slovenia	3.000	dispersed in urban & suburban area	protected minority; high formal level	the majority of Italiens forcibly emigrated
Roma / Slovenia	10.000	particular »roma« settlements; rural	particular social treatment and support	low social position
Slovenes / Austrian Styria	2.000	small rural settlements and urban (Graz)	recognized, but any real minority protection	constant hidden pressure
Slovenes / Hungary	5.000	rural and peripheral; some in small city	protected, low practical level	community in national park
Hungarians / Slovenia	10.000	rural and peripheral; small city (Lendava)	protected minority; high formal level	raids after WW2; periphery
Slovenes / Austria (Carinthia)	50.000	rural and peripheral, suburban and urban (Klagenfurt, Villach)	protected, various practices, well organized	conflicts; war and plebiscite after WW1; raids and resetling during WW2, pressures
Italians / Croatia	22.000	dispersed in urban coastal cities; Rijeka	protected, well practices	vast majority of Italians resettled after WW2
Serbs / Croatia	185.000	mainly rural and peripheral; some in cities	protected; formaly well, various practices	genocide during WW2; rebellion and civil war past 1990s; the majority of Serbs emigrees
Albanians / Montenegro	75.000	rural peripheral in nord; in cities in south (Ulcinj)	protected; in some regards community in distance	ethnic conflict during WW2; tensions
Albanians / North Macedonia	300.000	concentrated in west part, rural and urban; in the capital (Skopje)	particular regulation; in some regards distanced community	conflicts past 1990s; rebellion and ethnic war in 2001

Sources from: Zupančič 2023; Klemenčič, Žagar 2004.

For reasons of space, we can only summarize the most important results here and illustrate the relationship between concepts, policies and practices in relation to symbols using a few selected examples.

The cases of ethnic minorities studied differ greatly from one another in terms of numbers, formal (political) status, policies towards minorities and attitudes towards individual symbols. Regardless of the different historical backgrounds, the current concepts and policies towards minorities and thus also towards their (minority) spatial symbols are a decisive factor in current politics. This finding is important because it confirms the thesis that minority politics and inter-state (and also international) politics are a matter of political wisdom, diplomatic skill and persistent effort in order to shape relations between communities despite difficulties and problematic (i.e. conflictual) histories. Another basic conclusion is that the policy on minority spatial symbols is a good indicator of the relations between the minority and the majority and between the two countries that are in one way or another affected by the minority communities (the host country of the minority – where the minority lives; the mother nation country – usually the country that supports the minority. Observing the spatial symbols of the minority can reflect the position of the minority well, especially in terms of relations. It is only necessary to read and interpret the language of the symbols skillfully.

As the table shows, with the exception of the Roma, all minorities were exposed to open pressure, witnessed conflicts or were themselves involved in conflicts over space and borders at least once in the past century. In some cases, they have also been subject to very aggressive policies, including genocide and mass forced migrations. The presence of past conflicts in neighboring generations forms traumas in the collective memory and thus indirectly influences current relations. Past conflicts are also the reason for the often negative attitude towards minority symbols and monuments, which only confirms the general level of relations between the minority and the majority (Klemenčič, Zupančič 2023).

In terms of form, by far the most common sculptures erected are monuments in the form of upright figures of one or more people and round, square or pyramidal geometric figures. In some cases, they are replaced by panels with inscriptions and reliefs, mosaics or paintings. In some places, symbols of religious, ideological or ethnic affiliation are added, especially on gravestones. religious symbols (crosses, chapels) and gravestones. In more than half of the cases, they are accompanied by texts which, together with the message and the language (or languages) in which they are written, provide information about who they belong to. A special group of spatial symbols are buildings (shrines, national houses, schools, birth houses). In addition to their visual impact, buildings also have a specific function: religious ceremonies, meetings and events are held in them, or they are museums and repositories of valuable collections.

The locations of spatial symbols or ethnically significant monuments are usually based on the authenticity of historical events or the presence of people important to the minority. As they have no institutional support, it is difficult for minorities to obtain the installation of various markers in the visible public space of cities. Therefore, they often simply use the existing facilities and set them up accordingly. Gravestones are well prepared for this (fig. 1). The installation of memorials requires many compromises and perseverance.

Fig. 1. The eagles landed. Voluminous grave-monument somewhere in south Montenegro (photo by J. Zupančič)

More spatial symbols are expected in border areas and ethnically mixed areas; obviously there is a greater motive for marking space. State authorities already demonstrate their presence and power at the border. They push their own, i.e. state or majority events, places and important personalities. The states often do not want to explicitly favor the presence of the minority and even hinder the establishment of such elementary symbols as bilingual toponymy or the naming of important streets after persons and events from the life and history of the minority. Some of the symbols contradict the wishes and interests of the minority, or the minority community and the majority have different interpretations

of a particular symbol. Minorities also create their own spatial symbols, but are in a weaker position in these efforts.

In terms of content, the spatial symbols of minorities are typically oriented towards the phenomenon of culture and the phenomenon of victimhood. The broad field of culture (including language as a means of expressing cultural features) is, as expected, strongly represented among members of the minority, as culture has a direct influence on the preservation of identity, but is also accepted by members of the majority. The Hungarian minority in Slovenia has its own figure – a folk artist and creator: Dobronaki Gyorgy. As an educator, he is also accepted by the majority population, just as the popular writer Drabosnjak is established among the Slovenes, who has his own memorial house and museum in Dholca (Techelsberg), in the very north of the Slovenian national territory, where a series of events also take place. The music virtuoso Giuseppe Tartini has his own memorial in Piran (Slovenia), which the Italian minority in particular regards as their own. Almost all sacral monuments are of cultural significance. The presence of the Serbian minority in Croatia is characterized by the Orthodox churches, which by their size allow the appearance of the Serbian script (Cyrillic) in the Croatian environment, where the Latin alphabet is used. Another characteristic is the emphasized role of the sacrifice. The minority thus presents itself as a community to which something bad or even tragic has happened. Assuming the role of victim (victimization) promotes compassion and is intended to evoke solidarity. This corresponds to the (widespread) minority perception that the minority needs understanding, compassion and tolerance. Therefore, it does not present heroes, victors and victories, but the tragic consequences of conflicts. Among the Albanian community in North Macedonia, there is an almost cultic practice of erecting large gravestones, and among the Serbs in Croatia, too, the criterion was that Serbian ethnic areas were demarcated by Serbian graves (Žagar, Klemenčič 2004: 68–72).

All monuments have the task of uniting the minority collective. Cultural centers and sacred buildings are already meeting places for the people. Members gather around them, hold events and manifestations that are written about and shown in the media. Monuments enable the collective manifestation of a minority. For members of minorities, it is important that the monument is sufficiently recognizable and accepted by the community. This is easily possible in the case of sacred objects, national houses and monuments to cultural figures or, in general, objects of primarily cultural significance. The Pavel House in Potrna (Laafeld) is named after August Pavel, a versatile cultural figure. It has become a meeting place for the numerically small but active Slovenian minority in Austrian Styria, which is also joined by Austrians, Roma and Hungarians. August Pavel is interpreted as an icon of intercultural coexistence, and the memorial has become the venue for many events that go far beyond the significance of the local Slovenian minority.

However, monuments of historical significance can quickly be recognized as ideological, so that they are not accepted in the same way by everyone. In some cases, they have even become the subject of pronounced polarization not only between minority and majority, but also within minority collectives. The memorial at the Peršman farm in the Karawanken (Austria) is a typical example of a victim memorial. For the minority, the Carinthian Slovenes, it is a reminder of the hard times before and during the Second World War, when the minority was actually subjected to Nazi torture and even genocide. Not all Slovenes like The shape of the memorial with its striking red star, a communist symbol. Some have equally difficult memories of the communist violence after the Second World War, when the communist authorities in Slovenia (then Yugoslavia) committed genocide against their own people. Some refugees from Slovenia live in Austria and belong to a minority. The sacrifice is generally recognized, but the symbols on the monument are not! On the contrary, the "village victims" in Zell (Zell parish), an almost exclusively Slovenian community in Carinthia, are accepted by the minority without any problems.

Finally, we come to the last three categories: Evaluation of the relationship between majority and minority, interpretation of symbols and their administration. A perfect example of the intertwining of these categories can be found in the area where the Slovenes have settled in Italy, namely Trieste. The city of Trieste in Italy, together with its nearby hinterland, is certainly one of the most symbolically exposed areas. The characteristics of the city are described in the introduction.

The most elite and at the same time one of the most famous squares in the city is Piazza d Unita, a large square with buildings dating from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, the height of the city's economic power and fame. The name of the square bears witness to the unification of Italy (or the Unity of Italy), an event that coincides with the destruction of the Slovenian National House and the renaming of the city's main streets after famous icons of Italian national history, particularly generals. Some streets are also dedicated to the refugees from Istria and Dalmatia, and some hotels are named after the lost homeland: Pola, Zara, Fiume, Istria. A church was built in 1966 on a beautiful vantage point above Trieste, officially called Tempio nazionale a Maria Madre e Regina. The Slovenians call it Marija na Vejna (Vejna is the Slovenian name of the hill on which the sanctuary stands). The concrete structure faces the entire Gulf of Trieste and overlooks both Venice and Istria. The official (Italian) interpretation is that the construction of the shrine goes back to the bishop's vow, and the luxurious view of the city and the sea is supposed to reflect the refuge in Mary's protection. The majority of Slovenians see it as an architectural foreign body in the Slovenian environment. They see it as an Italian view of Istria; basically as part of the Italian irredentist aspirations. Many Italians interpreted the monument to the victims of Bazovica as a veneration of Slovenian terrorists and nationalists, while for the

Slovenes it was a typical commemoration of the minority community as victims of Italian fascism. The Italians had a similar monument to the victims in the Karst caves – Foibes. The monuments of the majority and minority communities in the same place thus marked the space of the community, in this way strengthening the identity of the respective community, promoting ethnic emotions with the figure of the victim and sharing indirectly along ethnic lines. For this reason, the joint tribute to the victims by the two presidents was symbolically a very powerful act; for some it was an act of encouragement, for others of rejection and disgust.

Skopje, the capital of North Macedonia, is characterized by the clear marking of space and the ethnic capitalization of history. Due to the large number of monuments dedicated to Macedonian national iconography, some other monuments may be less noticeable. The city has experienced a true monumentalization of space. However, one memorial cannot be overlooked. It is a large mural mosaic of the Albanians in Macedonia as part of the Ohrid Agreement. This was practically forced on Macedonia, mainly by American diplomacy. The agreement ended a short inter-ethnic war between Albanians and Macedonians, in which both refugees from Kosovo, who were received quite hospitably by Macedonia after the 1998 conflict, and Albanian guerrilla units from Kosovo were involved. The huge wall monument is a tribute to Albanian national history in general and its content is reminiscent of a similar monument on the wall of the opera house in Tirana, Albania (fig. 2). The location of the monument is near the bridge over the river Vardar at the point where the old town (Kale) from the Ottoman period separates. The Macedonians naturally do not like this monument because they see it as an exposed, indeed exclusive, symbol of the ethnic division of the capital (the monument totally ignore the place, where located, indeed). The monument acts as a unifier of the Albanian community and at the same time is an instrument of division, at least in the current political atmosphere (Zupančič 2023).

All symbolic objects must be cared for, maintained and restored. This might be demanding trough time. However, minorities must make a great effort to ensure that such monuments retain their collective character, are not damaged or destroyed and retain an appropriate place in the collective memory. Symbolization is not a one-sided and final process. Symbolic objects are objects of collective reflection that can be significantly altered by politics. Since the majority nations and their state policies are usually not particularly well-disposed towards the monuments of minorities, they prevent their erection and enforcement, cover them up and replace them with their own. In some places, this leads to a battle between spatial symbols and their interpretations.

Fig. 2. Our brave national history. Huge albanian wall-mosaic in north-macedonian capital, Skopje (photo by J. Zupančič)

CONCLUSIONS

We confirm all three hypotheses: spatial symbols and monuments are of great importance in the lives of minorities; the symbols of the minority and the majority differ considerably in terms of content and interpretation, and most symbols were created by design; they are therefore the result of certain concepts and an indicator of political measures.

Having outlined the practices of dealing with symbolic objects and monuments, we return to the issues of concepts and policies and define the place and meaning of symbols in the context of ethnic minorities. Symbolic objects are important because they mark space and communities. Symbolization is a planned process and therefore necessarily a matter of particular concepts by which spatial symbols are formed and on the basis of which communities claim, maintain and dispose of them. Thus, symbols become an instrument of shaping relationships, i.e. a means of non-verbal communication within the community and between the minority and other actors. Symbols occupy a special place in the politics of relations with minorities. The minority community manifests itself through symbolic buildings and monuments. In this way, it can – at least indirectly – improve or worsen its position.

The management of symbols and symbolic objects, including their location, is actually a kind of management of the marking of space and thus indirectly also the management of ethnic history, culture and collective memory. In extremely rare cases, such symbols can become the subject of "branding" and thus the economic use of certain symbols. The conspicuous concentration of symbols in areas of ethnic contact and in border areas (which are usually covered by ethnic minority settlements) not only testifies to the political significance of symbolic objects, but also reveals their manipulative character. Symbols can also be misused, leading to an intensification of contradictions and even conflicts.

Symbolic places and spatial symbols generally require symbolic actions. We can also call them symbolic politics. One such act was performed by the presidents of Italy and Slovenia by jointly honouring two memorials to the victims of past historical trials. In doing so, they symbolically overcame the previous clichés and the concept of distanced relations and opened the way for a perhaps somewhat different minority policy in both countries and beyond.

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Jan KŁOS
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-8043-3820
The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin
Faculty of Philosophy
Department of Social and Political Ethics

REGION and REGIONALISM
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THE NORMAN CONQUEST AND THEREAFTER POSITIVE DISINTEGRATION IN THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

For I have lit on a great truth:
to wit, that all men dwell,
and life's meaning changes for them
with the meaning of the home.

A. de Saint-Exupéry

INTRODUCTION

The well-known Polish psychologist, psychiatrist and philosopher of the twentieth-century, Kazimierz Dąbrowski, coined the term *positive disintegration*. This expression denotes a stage in human development in which the individual is confronted with some kind of conflict or traumatic situation that calls for special remedies. We also know well that disruptions and conflicts often lead to various dysfunctions. However, they do not have to mean tragedy or mental disorders, as long as attempts are made to overcome them. In this case, conflicts can represent an opportunity that contributes to personal development.

In this article I would like to use the category of positive disintegration to analyse the socio-political processes triggered by the Norman invasion of 1066. This invasion initiated important changes in Britain, the consequences of which reached far beyond the borders of Albion. This resulted in changes in many spheres: language, culture, economy and religion. In regard to language, one need only mention that in the 14th century seventy per cent of the English vocabulary was of French origin. If French, then of course Latin, which was the lingua franca of educated Europe at that time.

The time factor is particularly relevant. Invasions in themselves are naturally seen as something negative and unexpected and there is no point in defending them here. Nevertheless, when one does occur, it would be equally futile to despair and give up, as it may turn out to be merely a step towards unknown progress. Of course, it is easier to assess this ex post. Similarly, scientific or technological revolutions are often initially met with fear and even opposition. Then, over time, the new theories are understood and adapted to the current status quo. A prerequisite is that change be accepted as a desirable component, if it cannot be avoided. The important element is freedom, respect, and attempts made not with a view to elimination, but accommodation. Freedom is the right context for self--determination, which in turn is a precondition of development. Note that this analogy between invasion and scientific development is admittedly somewhat vague, but at the level of intellectual and emotional response we face what is new and often unwelcome with the same suspicion or rebellion. This sudden intrusion into the existing system is met with opposition or adaptation. And it is out of this clash between what comes up and the efforts to adapt that some positive results emerge.

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPTION

Dąbrowski defines his conception as follows: "the chances of developmental crises and their positive or negative outcomes depend on the character of the developmental potential, on the character of social influence, and on the activity (if present) of the third factor (autonomous dynamisms of self-directed development). One also has to keep in mind that a developmental solution to a crisis means not a reintegration but an integration at a higher level of functioning"[1].

For our purposes, the suggestion of "integration at a higher level of functioning" is particularly important. Then the author further explains his theory, writing that it is "not concerned with specific conflicts at various developmental stages. [...] Crises, in our view, are brought about through thousands of different internal and external conflicts, resulting from collisions of the developing personality with negative elements of the inner and external milieus. [...] By way of comparison, the theory of positive disintegration recognizes the importance of both the inner psychic milieu and of the external environment in the development of a crisis"[2].

Dąbrowski postulates the presence of three factors that determine the development of personality: "developmental potential, external environment and autonomous factors" and he stresses that "the course of development depends on the

[1] Dąbrowski K. 1972. *Psychoneurosis is not an Illness*. London: Gryf Publications, Ltd.: 245.

[2] Ibid.: 245, 246.

strength and character of the developmental potential, on the strength and character of environmental influence, and on the strength and range of activity of the third factor which stand for the autonomous dynamisms of self-determination"[3]. Of course, all these elements pertain to the individual in Dabrowski's theory, but I would argue that they can be equally applied to social groups. The Anglo-Saxons developed their own virtues to cope with the difficulties of the world around them, so they had their own "developmental potential". In that case, the Norman invasion could only provide the impetus for their further development or modification of what was found. The invasion fell on the fertile soil of a strong identity.

THE CONTEXT OF THE INVASION

Obviously, the invasion created certain external circumstances to which the invaded responded with their internal resources. It is not only individuals who respond with their resources, but also nations. Moreover, nations can respond because individuals have these resources. The Anglo-Saxons, for example, were able to develop some specific values which, with the advent of Christianity, could be incorporated into the new system. Therefore, the emergence of the new religion did not function primarily as a force of elimination, but rather of transformation and adaptation. This is interesting because it demonstrates the Aristotelian approach of acting on what is found. This is what we call the difference between nature and nurture. The latter is not the enemy of the former. Indeed, the social principle of the ancient philosopher was constantly at work in the history of the Anglo--Saxons. Thus, starting from their primitive forms, they managed to develop the seeds of the first political institutions.

The British historian John Oakland stresses that "Britain's growth was conditioned by two major events: first, a series of agricultural changes, and second, a number of later industrial revolutions. Agricultural expansion started with the Saxons who cleared the forests, cultivated crops and introduced inventions and equipment which remained in use for centuries. [...] Britain was expanding as an agricultural and commercial nation from the eleventh century, as well as developing a manufacturing basis. Immigration was characterized by agricultural, financial and commercial skills. Jewish money-lenders entered Britain with the Norman Conquest, and their financial talents later passed to Lombard bankers from northern Italy"[4].

British society was characterised by the adaptability of incoming members. The nineteenth century, for example, saw a dynamic transition from an agricultural to an industrial structure as a result of the preceding industrial revolution.

[3] Ibid.: 247, 249.

[4] Oakland J. 1995. *British Civilization*. London and New York: Routledge: 45.

Oakland writes of this adaptability as an important factor. In this period, some immigrants left, while others "remained and adapted themselves to British society, while preserving their own cultural and ethnic identities. Newcomers were often encouraged to settle in Britain, and the policy of using immigrant expertise continued in later centuries. But foreign workers had no legal rights, and early immigrants, such as Jews and the Hansa merchants, could be frequently and summarily expelled from the country"[5].

REVITALIZATION OF SOME INSTITUTIONS

If we were to name the most important resources, we should first consider the Witan (or Witenagemot), a forerunner of the future parliamentary system.

Bishop William Stubbs (the great nineteenth-century Oxford medievalist) "believed that the Anglo-Saxon witan[6], surviving as folk memory, was reborn as Parliament, and that Magna Carta showed that the nation 'becomes one and realizes its oneness'"[7]. The Norman Conquest (1066) brought various benefits for the Anglo-Saxons, as another prominent British historian suggests, in the form of the Normans' "instinct for political unity and administrative consolidation", which "was the most valuable of the conqueror's many gifts to England"[8]. The Norman Conquest perfectly illustrates how certain events, originally disruptive, often initiate future beneficial transformations.

Thomas Carlyle, for example, in his own critical and literary style, argued that the Normans had forced "a gluttonous race of Jutes and Angles... lumbering about in potbellied equanimity" to undertake "heroic toil and silence and endurance, such as leads to the high places of this Universe, and the golden mountain-tops where dwells the Spirit of the Dawn"[9]. Carlyle's opinion should come as no surprise to the reader, especially given this nineteenth-century writer's historiosophy and his admiration for strong individuals and heroes. This fuelled British imperialism: the conquest, although inevitably painful, could be interpreted as beneficial because it evolved into certain positive processes. Especially if we consider the subsequent course of events and assess its long-term consequences. Stubbs also argued that the conquest protected England from the pan-European tendency to

[5] Ibid.: 46.

[6] The Witan (literally wise men), sometimes called Witenagemot, was a royal council in the Anglo-Saxon government of England (from before the seventh to eleventh centuries).

[7] Quoted after Tombs R. 2015. *The English and their History*. Penguin Books: 58.

[8] Trevelyan G.M. 1941. *History of England*. London: Longmans, Green and Co.: 101–102.

[9] Tombs R. *The English and their History*: 58.

feudal fragmentation, which reduced France and Germany into warring statelets – a not implausible view, though it underestimates the cohesion of pre-Conquest England. Of course, it is not our intention to follow Carlyle's historiosophic argument, since our aim is to establish facts that would confirm positive disintegration as the resultant of subsequent events. Positive disintegration has nothing to do with a deterministic interpretation of the Hegelian type. Therefore, we do not intend to argue that the invasion was a necessary factor. Rather, we want to acknowledge that it took place, fell on the right ground and produced certain interesting results.

INDIVIDUAL VIRTUES VERSUS THE SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY

Let us note that the aforementioned Witan was not only a prototype of parliament, but also a model of community life. Those who gathered in the Witan around their leader learnt the spirit of community and the importance of kinship. The presence of an assembly of elders means that the Anglo-Saxons had a conception of something more important than the individual. What was this community based on? They would listen to heroic tales of the virtues of valour, sacrifice, confidence and trustworthiness. As we read in a well-known Anglo-Saxon epic, Beowulf, having learned of the complaints of his fellow-kinsmen, rose up and declared vengeance on their enemy Grendel. Why did he do this? Because he remembered his own oath to defend his people and was true to his words. This story is evidence of the importance of kinship relationships and a feature of pre-modern societies in which reliance on the individual occupied a central position. Another interesting thing we can observe is the paradigmatic model of strong individuals on whose valour, commitment and selflessness their comrades can rely. This paradigmatic model is still present in our culture, for example in film productions. As we read in Beowulf:

The hardy hero, Hygelac's kinsman,
Remembered the boast he had made at the banquet [...][10].

Obviously, with the advent of modern philosophy, this reliance on indomitable warriors who were called upon to solve social problems waned. It was gradually replaced by well-organised institutions when it was assumed that social contracts could provide a better solution. Following the belief that the natural should be identified with the rational, people sought to apply the scientific method to the organisation of societies.

[10] Beowulf, trans. by Kennedy C.W. in: Pooley R.C. (ed.), 1963. *England in Literature*, Palo Alto: 26.

Returning now to our moment in British history, we must remember that we are talking here about a history of *conflict* and *reconciliation*. Was England subjugated or not? The rupture of conquest was traumatic but not complete. The principal governing institutions and the unity of the Anglo-Saxon kingdom survived, and were even strengthened by a powerful monarchy. The Witan tradition and the national community may have survived or at least reappeared to strengthen claims to rights and representation in Magna Carta and parliaments – although Roman law and the influence of the Church were also important. Let it be noted that although King Richard was Norman he "somehow acquired Saxon virtues", writes Tombs, and when he secretly returned from captivity, he was "acclaimed by the loyal Saxons"[11].

Tombs describes examples of other areas where the English had maintained their traditions despite the sudden onslaught of invasion: "The English were politically, economically and culturally subjugated, but their spoken and written language continued, as did their religious traditions. Though the conquerors soon began to pride themselves on being 'English', lapping up patriotic English history and assimilating the few surviving English landowners, the majority of the 'natives' long remained culturally distinct and politically unrepresented"[12].

What are other results? Obviously, we can always find such that were not particularly positive, which should not invalidate our thesis. The conquest itself *was* a disintegration. And just as in individual life we have disintegration in the form of problems to overcome, in social life we have similar situations. In the aftermath, historians weigh up arguments and counter-arguments, considering what would have been better and what would have been worse, but in the whirlwind of actual circumstances, societies face concrete challenges. Tombs writes that the Conquest subsequently contributed to a more radical concentration of "royal power [...]. But it could not provide stable kingship". What followed afterwards was a history of "disputed succession [...]". The situation was further complicated by the fact that England and Normandy were regarded as two separate inheritances, with kings on both sides of the Channel claiming their territories. This coincidence caused family rivalries and rebellions, a fact that eventually led to a clash with the barons, who sought to bring King John under the law and forced him to sign the Magna Carta. English kings of Norman origin who settled in England drew the English into continental politics and took advantage of "England as an endless source of money for wars", an event that caused violent opposition and became "the greatest single reason why kings had to seek the consent of their subjects through parliaments"[13]. It should be noted that the latter had obviously facilitated democratic procedures in the long term.

[11] Tombs R. *The English and their Histor*y: 59.

[12] Ibid.: 59.

[13] See ibid.: 59–60.

On the whole the outcome was positive for England, therefore Tombs concludes that "paradoxically, post-Conquest England as a whole, below the level of its rulers, was in general more peaceful than its neighbours, less ravaged by war between great nobles, by foreign invasion, or by general lawlessness"[14].

ENCULTURATION

We must remember that Normans were culturally superior to the Anglo-Saxons. Some historians claim that they were former Vikings who had previously invaded Normandy, had undergone a process of enculturation and could go on to provide models for their culture. The origin of the invaders is not as certain as it might seem. Rather, they were inhabitants of various parts of France, with some Norman elements[15].

As we can see, this process of enculturation and growth, despite the fact of invasion, must be based on certain resources if it is to bear positive fruit. The late British philosopher, Roger Scruton, focused on this fundamental element in his writings. The Normans had something to offer the Vikings, so the latter took advantage of their culture. It does not have to be merely the so-called material culture or technological development, but more importantly a strong sense of identity.

There are certain imponderables that make a culture sustainable or not. Let us mention several of them: we should the right to judge cultures, i.e. to be judgmental both with regard to our private and to social lives, being judgmental is vital to moral development; the precondition of our culture's health is that we can never our right to evaluate or even criticize it[16].

If we want our culture and its democratic institutions to survive, we must recognise them as important and worth defending, with a clear criterion for judging what is good and what is bad. Maybe not even in some universal sense, but at least in their genetic value, i.e. in the sense that without this heritage we would be different, we would not be ourselves.

Every system, including the social system, is bound by the forces of cohesion. If we conceive of the social structure as a more or less stable configuration, we must identify some important centripetal centres and resist centrifugal forces. Without these centres, the stability of the system is jeopardised and the whole may disintegrate. In general, there are two structures at work here: kinship and politics. Kinship is based on vital traditional institutions, while politics is more transcen-

[14] Ibid.: 60.

[15] See Hills C. 1986. *Blood of the British. From Ice Age to Norman Age*. London: George Philip: 215.

[16] Cf. Scruton R. 2007. *Culture Counts. Faith and Feeling in a World Besieged*. New York: Encounter Books: X.

dental in nature. I am using the term "transcendental" in the sense of Immanuel Kant.

The English people braved succeeding invasions. The French-Norman invasion was the last successful invasion. The Anglo-Saxon were defeated at the Battle of Hastings (AD 1066) and subjected to Norman Rule. Oakland writes about this Norman Conquest as "an important watershed in English history; greatly influence the English people and their language; marked the last successful foreign military invasion of the country; and initiated many of the social and institutional frameworks, like a feudal system, which were to characterize future British society. However, Celtic civilizations continued in Wales, Scotland and Ireland"[17].

Not all invasions occasioned such positive effects. Perhaps we could venture to say that Normans' invasion brought about such welcome developments because they were at a higher level of civilization. Not only did they introduce or impose new solutions, but also adopted some elements of Anglo-Saxon culture. This intermixture resulted in racial and national diversity[18]. They "substantially affected the developing fabric of British life, and formed the first foundations of the modern state. [...] They also profoundly influenced social, legal, economic, political, agricultural and administrative institutions, and contributed to the evolving language"[19]. In other words, the invasion was not designed to destroy and exploit, as is the usual outcome of invasions, but to modify and adapt. First of all, it was not the case of elimination.

The creation of elites helped to define the fundamental components of social cohesion. It is only on a certain more universal level that we are stimulated to ask some basic questions concerning our indentity: who we are, what is our destiny, *etc*. Elites are usually concerned with the creation of culture, and culture constitutes the essential framework of social life. As Scruton notes: "Culture [...] is the creation and creator of elites"[20]. Is it only through conflict that societies achieve self-awareness? Certainly not, but conflicts accelerate this process when there are dangers of disruption which in turn stimulate the search for sources of survival. And such sources seem to come from culture rather than material wealth. To be on the safe side, we can venture a negative answer to the above question, adding that conflicts and the danger of disturbances prompt the search for some sources of survival. And it seems that such sources come from culture rather than from material wealth.

Scruton calls culture "the accumulation of art, literature, and humane reflection that has stood the 'test of time' and established a continuing tradition of reference

[17] Oakland J. *British Civilization*: 43.

[18] See ibid.: 44.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Scruton R. *Culture Counts*: 1.

and allusion among educated people"[21]. Let us emphasize the phrase "a continuing tradition of reference and allusion". It is like returning to an interminable source and enlivening power. In the oral tradition of Beowulf, the tradition of *witenagemot*, a prototype of parliament, as it has already been mentioned, the tradition of feasting that provided an opportunity to be together and share stories of valour and virtuous deeds, such references and allusions were of fundamental significance. It is important to note how this oral tradition valued the cohesive power of shared tradition, which resided in character traits, i.e. in culture, rather than in the ephemeral foundation of possession.

History is the result of a process of sedimentation and appeasement. Conflicts arise, then they are variously resolved, some solutions are proposed, and the history of a nation begins anew, or follows a new course. All these elements form a tradition, which is – as Scruton puts it "the residue of critical conflicts, that which remains when the sound and fury has dwindled to a schoolroom murmur"[22]. Conflicts dwindle 'to a schoolroom murmur' when they are eventually incorporated into existing structures or those that have been designed. These conflicts involve a struggle against the canon. Naturally, new elements are accepted, if not with suspicion, then at least with hesitation. This is followed by a period of expectation, which lasts longer or shorter, until the adaptation process is complete.

Every society, primitive or developed, has its canons. Conflicts put them to the test. We can see similar cases of adoption and adaptation in earlier eras. For example, the Dananians, whom the Egyptians called Sea Peoples, adopted the Phoenician script and their god Baal. They also took ideas from more ancient civilisations. Posterity can find traces of various borrowings on works of art, such as reliefs. Such was the history of Tarsus whose most famous son, the Saul of Tarsus, set out on a journey through Asia Minor and other parts of the ancient world.

The Vikings had brought about important changes. With their "coming [...] a new period may be said to have begun in the history of the British Isles, one which marked a sharp breach with the past"[23]. In general, they had implemented various modifications in the Anglo-Saxon structure, although there are attempts made in historical books to underplay their role. Marc Bloch "argued that the viking invasions induced responses which led to revolutionary changes in social and political structures"[24]. We are accustomed to thinking about English history as a process of evolution, but in the case of the Vikings we have every reason to call it revolution. They introduced radical changes just as revolutions do. Kearney notes: "Both directly in their own actions, and indirectly in the responses which

[21] Ibid.: 2.

[22] Ibid.: 4.

[23] Kearney H. 1995. T*he British Isles: A History of Four Nations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 48.

[24] Ibid.: 50.

they evoked, the vikings may be seen as agents of revolution rather than as the cause of a minor break in a general process of political evolution"[25].

The Vikings expanded market activity and added to the proportion of freemen, especially in the eastern parts of England. They also lessened the feudal ties of lord and vassal. The typical Viking was "a farmer in arms, not a warrior seeking to control unfree labour"[26]. They also encouraged active participation at regular meetings. The Vikings had sown the seeds of free action, therefore "viking society was less authoritarian than the rest of England"[27]. West Saxon monarchs had to respect the autonomy of the eastern areas of England, those territories north of the Humber. The Danelaw began to dominate under the Normans. Kearney notes: "The Scandinavian invasion of the east coast of Britain brought about the fall of the Old Order and the creation of a new society in its place"[28]. This is the greatest paradox, namely that in the period of 'liberation' the Anglo-Saxon peasantry declined towards servitude. The Danish threat created the need for specialized warriors, which in turn brought a feudal society into existence, that is, the holding of land in return for military service. In this seigniorial society, kinship ties gave way to feudal duties.

The process of the country's unification was set under way, and law imposed from above gradually replaced customary law based upon mutual interaction between groups. In the reign of Edgar we witness Episcopal power dominating over local interests. We can see how royal power mingled with that of the Church. Monasticism developed, and monastic bishops were royal bishops.

The Normans created an entirely new system throughout the British Isles, for instance, a French-speaking ascendancy, so that "by the end of the twelfth century the various kingdoms and provinces which had been independent entities were ruled by an aristocracy, which in its turn was linked by ties of vassalage to a single monarch"[29]. They were incorporated within the system which later brought forth feudal interdependencies. And "French culture was a symbol of belonging to the political and ecclesiastical elite. The result was to downgrade the status of the various languages and cultures of the North Sea and Irish Sea provinces"[30]. The Norman archbishop Lanfranc called them 'barbarous peoples'. The Normans contributed to the unification of the Anglo-Saxon world with the continental Europe. The Normans regarded themselves reformers in religion. They ignored local saints with 'uncouth' names and encouraged believers to venerate the saints of the universal Church. They introduced numerous loanwords from the French language.

[25] Ibid.
[26] Ibid.: 52.
[27] Ibid.
[28] Ibid.: 53.
[29] Ibid.: 80.
[30] Ibid.: 81.

Three centres of power came to the fore: the castle, the Church and the borough. The Normans introduced spectacular buildings into the architectural landscape of England. The imposing cathedrals at Durham and Ely provided the message of dominance. They were built in a monumental Romanesque style. The Norman Conquest did not promote much movement of peoples, yet in some regions we witnessed attempts at colonisation. Hence Kearney states: "Throughout the British Isles the borough was a sign of effective Normanisation"[31]. They offered borough tenure and thus encouraged migration at the time of land-hunger (especially to Scotland and Ireland).

In Wessex, though, the Normans did not change much the social structure because they had inherited it from an existing system. In numerous places, the Normans superimposed their own culture. There was still a division between the "command" society (Wessex) and the "market" society (in the east), but – as Kearney notes – the Normans sped up the process of modernisation. They carried it "forward in a revolutionary manner"[32]. The Conquest created a two-class society. For a long time the conquerors and the conquered remained separate. The Normans were profoundly aware of the fact that they were victorious long after 1066. Intermarriages took place at the level of aristocracy; at a lower level they were only exceptions. Kearney highlights this elite contribution: "The Becket tragedy, Magna Carta, the baronial wars of the mid-thirteenth century were all essentially matters relating to the French-speaking elite"[33]. Indeed it was a group of barons who opposed King John Lackland at Runnymede in 1215; it was also noteworthy that one of their leaders was Archbishop Stephen Langton.

The French became the language of written law (under Henry III) and the language of the courts of law (under Edward I). The Normans promoted their own tenants, so the English society had a colonial nature. The Anglo-Saxons occupied second-class status. The Normans belonged to the first-class society with their castles as the symbol of their dominating power. They advocated their military ideal with tournaments, the cult of chivalry, and the Crusades.

The increase in economic activity that took place at the time mainly benefited the great magnates and thus contributed to the disproportionate development of society. Changes were also evident in the Church. Most of the bishoprics were foreign and, like the Monastic houses, were founded with a French affiliation. This Normanised episcopate was additionally backed by the Crown. The situation was typical of colonisation. It can be said that the positive effect of colonisation was the emergence of a counter-active response, for the activation of society is generally good.

[31] Ibid.: 82.
[32] Ibid.: 83.
[33] Ibid.: 84.

Another important result of the Conquest was the rise of new towns. The growth of towns contributed to the ascendancy of the colonial power, a process that collapsed in the second half of the fourteenth century. Kearney notes: "Towns which had existed before the Conquest lost whatever autonomy they had possessed earlier"[34]. In like manner they lost their independence. "After the Conquest, ownership was vested with the Norman bishop or with the local Normanised monastery"[35]. Consequently, "castle, monastery and borough formed a network of institutions supporting the colonial ascendancy"[36].

THE MANOR

Demographic increase in 13th and 14th century English society helped the Norman colonisation of Wales. English tenant farmers helped to colonise Wales. The Norman system of control focused on castles, boroughs and the Church. The manorial system was an essential part of medieval feudalism, but its origins can be traced back to the Roman villa system of the Late Roman Empire. Its main element was the manor, whose lord owned vast territories of land and employed tenants who worked his land. The manorial system was later gradually replaced by a market economy.

Manors existed before the Conquest, so the Normans did not invent the manorial estate. We may draw their origins to the villas of late Roman Britain. What the Normans did, "was to develop the economic potentialities of the manor"[37]. It became more oriented towards the market economy. It is true that perhaps we should speak about "Norman law" rather than "English law" in those days, but regional dialects survived and local loyalties were still strong. Additionally, the south of England was more Normanised than the north. The east became more commercialised, hence the language of London became dominant. Kearney writes: "With the coming of the Normans, however, a new period began, marked by limitary control and large-scale colonisation"[38].

Perhaps all these positive elements of the Norman conquest can be compared to missions. The missionaries who went abroad knew well that it was better to rely on natural resources, on local values and heroes, if they could be adapted to Christianity. And those that could not be adapted should be gradually persuaded, not forcibly suppressed. Indeed, there are qualities and virtues that have universal value, so there is no point in eliminating them. It is better to draw on their positi-

[34] Ibid.: 89.
[35] Ibid.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.: 90.
[38] Ibid.: 92.

vely human message. Such was the story of Beowulf, the epitome of courage, selflessness, loyalty and sacrifice. Positive disintegration has every chance of success wherever local customs are respected and adapted rather than eliminated by force.

Of course, this is the most difficult element, for what we are saying here somehow goes against the logic of invasion. It is true that the very idea of invasion is to subject another nation. Therefore if freedom is granted, the conquered nation may choose some solutions contrary to the intentions of the invader.

Kearney mentions "the *de facto* independence which the Crown permitted the lordships to enjoy"[39]. Some boroughs developed into towns. "The Norman Conquest had a particularly marked effect upon the Welsh Church"[40]. Here we have a considerable role of kinship groups as against a system based upon government by bishops. They showed attachment to a local saint. It is interested that attempts at centralisation reached into the Church, and they were counteracted by decentralization with the same weapon, that is, local saints. Action drew counteraction similar in kind. The kinship group was an enduring institution.

The Normans sought to reform this system, that is, to reduce its importance. In England land was held in return for reciprocal services, not by virtue of a kinship group. The English could feel superior to the Welsh thanks to the backing of their lords, and they enjoyed better land.

The English managed to retain their culture, especially in Wales. Traditional institutions of kinship remained there. They opposed the brunt of imperial attempts. Therefore, Kearney notes: "Beneath the Norman ascendancy, distinctive cultures still existed"[41].

With regard to Scotland, there were also kinship institutions which made the influx of colonisation difficult. "It is difficult to be certain about the political and social arrangements of the Gaelic-speaking lordships but it would seem that a kinship system still survived, modified by feudal ties between lord and vassal. The Vikings who colonised Argyll and the Isles became gaelicised, and took over Gaelic forms of legitimation"[42]. The Norman kings supported many processes. Their ascendancy, for example, contributed to the rise of Edinburgh to political importance. And the instrument of Normanisation was the same: castle, borough and reformed Church.

"As elsewhere in the British Isles, the Norman borough played a crucial role in the working of the Norman ascendancy. The aim was to establish local trading monopolies which could levy tolls and hence raise cash for their owners, whether king of local baron"[43]. We can observe that borough were part of a system

[39] Ibid.: 93.
[40] Ibid.: 94.
[41] Ibid.: 96.
[42] Ibid.: 97.
[43] Ibid.: 99.

regulation imposed from above. The Church also introduced some principles of centralisation, as against the influence of kinship institutions. "This new centralised structure of Church government brought a new bureaucracy into existence, together with a system of Church courts, to replace the loosely organised system of local churches in which kinship groups had been dominant"[44]. New monasteries were created, staffed by foreigners from Normandy, procedures which excellently fulfilled the purposes of the ascendancy.

The power of kinship and attachment to one's own land is perfectly illustrated by the story of William Wallace, who fought against King Edward I. This story was filmed by Mel Gibson as *Braveheart*. It shows the valour of local heroes and can be interpreted as another example of positive disintegration. Faced with the cruelty of the English invaders, Wallace chose to confront them by appealing to his fellow citizens' sense of dignity. Disintegration, when accepted, transforms into integration at a higher level.

Norman ascendancy in turn gave rise to various linguistic changes. Kearney notes that "the five sub-cultures of Scotland had given way to three, English in the east, Gaelic in the west and Scandinavian in Shetland and Orkney"[45].

"The Norman conquistadores always felt that they were independent of royal control. Indeed it was not until the reign of Henry VIII that the title 'king of Ireland' was officially adopted by the Crown. Throughout the medieval period the kings of England were merely 'lords' of Ireland. Nonetheless, royal authority, at least in the thirteenth century, was very much a reality"[46].

Of course the position on the Norman invasion differs. The Irish historians, for example, treat it as a "negative episode"[47]. There are others who claim that the contribution of the Normans was positive, like, for example, parliamentary institutions. All in all, the Norman invasion put an end to the old order. As Kearney notes, "communities of the British Isles were brought together at the aristocratic level, in Church and state, within a single cultural and political ascendancy which looked toward France"[48]. The Normans introduced a new style of social and political functioning, "cultural norms, with the castle, the borough, the reformed Church and new-style episcopal government as their mainstays"[49]. A new society was introduced, that of command society replaced the older kinship and market society. The "new" society was divided into a hierarchical structure: warriors, priests, and peasants. Lord and master, tournaments came to the fore, not merchants or the kinship group. Kearney makes an interesting remark about the

[44] Ibid.
[45] Ibid.: 102.
[46] Ibid.: 103
[47] Ibid.: 104.
[48] Ibid.: 114.
[49] Ibid.

changes in religion, namely "a shift, from a concern with offences against one's neighbour or kindred to a preoccupation with sin against divine authority", the fact stressed even by the buildings, such as cathedrals[50].

Long before the Norman invasion Britain was visited by the Roman legions. This was the direction whose historical impact was especially important and long--standing. It was through Roman that "England was to be drawn into a Christian orbit, a point of major importance in subsequent social and cultural, as well as political, history"[51]. In his rendition of the British, Tacitus noted that they were warring factions, they loved freedom, but there was no spirit of union. This observation was made with regard to the moment when Caesar landed. The Celts in general were regarded as barbarians. In his classic work, Edward Gibbon wrote that "Spain, Gaul, and Britain were peopled by the same hardy race of savages" who "often disputed the field, and often renewed the contest"[52]. Invasion is a violent intrusion and a necessity to redefine priorities or remodel activities. The Roman invasion had some beneficial consequences, and "the same freedom of intercourse which extended the vices, diffused likewise the improvements of social life"[53]. Gibbon stresses especially the improvements in agricultures.

It can be said that conflicts usually trigger a certain series of problems, which then end up being resolved. In the case of Magna Carta it was taxation, to be precise: enforced taxation. King John was compelled to seal the document, and thus taxation was linked to consent in the relationship between rulers and their subjects. As Briggs noted: "Pressure on the pocket [...] is more quickly felt than pressure on the mind"[54]. For this reason, the people were all the more willing to oppose the despotic king. It should also be noted that the feudal barons had already imposed fines on those who sought to evade military service. The Magna Carta was therefore not a democratic document, but rather a settlement between the king and the upper classes. Then we have to say that, although the process started with Norman barons, nevertheless "the claims for privileges set out in its clauses could in time be translated into a universal language of freedom and justice"[55]. Something that began with the awareness of lost privileges, turned into a more universal benefit. Briggs notes also that there was "a link between economics and politics, since in order to secure necessary assent the king was forced to turn increasingly to 'parliaments'"[56]. Thus, yet another disintegrative event gave rise to a reintegration

[50] Ibid.

[51] Briggs A. 1999. *A Social History of England*. London: Penguin Books: 22.

[52] Gibbon E. 1907. *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*. London: Oxford University Press, vol. I: 22.

[53] Ibid.: 58.

[54] Briggs A. *A Social History of England*: 63.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

at a higher level, for it initiated the need for a debate rather than an arbitrary decision. The ruler's decision should result from a broader discussion.

We have to add that the English in the eleventh century were not primitive peoples. There were poets (Bede, Alcuin) and missionaries there, but "they lacked", as White emphasizes, "the genius of government and administration, and they fell ready victims to the hard-headed managerial superiority of the Normans". Consequently, we have yet another positive aspect of invasion, another confirmation of positive integration that may take place. White continues: "Saxon genius and Norman talent together were to produce a miracle of cross-fertilization in the Anglo-Norman state of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries"[57].

Obviously, as in the case of every invasion, the Norman Conquest left marks of destruction and barbarities. Many villages were literally wiped out. White does not hesitate to call it "the terrorism of conquest"[58]. I do not intend to suggest any historical determinism that might accompany revolutions. The only thing we have tried to emphasise in this article is the positive results that the invasion brought about in the restructuring of the English nation. And I do not intend to decide, or even suggest, whether it was necessary, or whether such disintegrating events in general are necessary.

The Normans changed the English into a military nation. As White notes, "they left upon the face of England the typical marks of a military aristocracy and a militant Church"[59]. We may presume that this was the moment that later gave rise to the Magna Carta. Not only were the barons ready to stand up to the king and force him to sign the document, but also the Church hierarchs. One of the most active participants of the Magna Carta procedures, as already mentioned, was Archbishop Langton.

Langton's role in getting this fundamental document signed was crucial. Trevelyan rightly emphasizes: "The Barons in arms who extorted it from King John at Runnymede were none of them, so far as we know, remarkable men, but their ally, the Archbishop Stephen Langton, had both moral and intellectual greatness"[60]. His position is particularly praiseworthy because, in his support for Magna Carta, the bishop opposed Pope Innocent III, the pope who supported John's policy. Let us emphasise this point. Langton was backed by the Pope in the election to Canterbury, yet when he realised that the cause of the barons was right, he did not hesitate to stand up to the Pope and defy his mentor. He did this despite the fact that Innocent III "declared Magna Carta null and void"[61].

[57] White R.J. 1981. *A Short History of England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 42.

[58] Ibid.: 45.

[59] Ibid.: 46.

[60] Trevelyan G.M. *History of England*: 169.

[61] Ibid.: 169.

The Barons sought to limit the power of the king, which ultimately led to the claim that citizens should never be subject to the will of one man. In general, the Barons did not oppose feudalism per se, thus agreeing with Henry II's reforms, but at the same time saw the need for some common control. The total effect of Magna Carta can be summarised as follows: "The new English baronial policy, enshrined in Magna Carta, is designed to obtain public 'liberties' and to control the King through the Common Law, baronial assemblies, and alliance with other classes"[62]. As we can see, although feudalism was considered indestructible, it had to be modified in England. We must remember that all these modifications were in no way democratic by our modern standards, and that this common council was a purely feudal assembly, but they did initiate important changes. It was therefore a decisive step towards the principle of parliaments[63]. All in all, the Great Charter benefited all classes, although not to the same extent, which is why it can be called a national document. The important principle of *habeas corpus*, which amounted to a fair and lawful trial, was restricted to all free people only. In later history, all Englishmen became free. This was something that was readily echoed in the American Declaration of Independence, that no one should be granted unchecked power. Trevelyan rightly emphasises the document's "profound and lasting [...] influence on the imagination – in every sense of the word – of succeeding ages"[64].

Feudalism is defined as "a personal relationship between lord and man, based on land", but we can also note that feudalism was a natural social state in England[65]. He claims that feudalism, the hierarchical structure of the British society, was a natural outgrowth of many centuries prior to the Norman Conquest. Therefore what took place at the moment of the invasion "was after all a perfectly natural order of society and social relationships at a certain stage of social evolution"[66]. If such is the case, feudalism was just a natural stage of human development which took place at a certain time and place. There were of course other processes under way during the Norman reign. The Saxon burghs were transformed into cities because the Norman were great town-builders. During the Norman times the Church and State relationship was defined and established. As White notes, "William I set the pattern of English kingship in its relations with Rome for centuries to come. It was the relationship of a loyal son to a respectful father. While he would have no nonsense, he welcomed a good working relation, as between gentlemen"[67]. William set "on the separation of the temporal and spi-

[62] Ibid.: 170.

[63] Such a principle reads "no taxation without representation".

[64] Trevelyan G.M. *History of England*: 171.

[65] White R.J. 1981. *A Short History of England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 47.

[66] Ibid.: 48.

[67] Ibid.: 56.

ritual jurisdictions"[68]. This development is indeed interesting because it shows that the processes set in motion in Henry VIII's time were already working in William's time.

Eventually, we can conclude that the Normans brought with them their own culture of feudalism, minstrels and chivalry. We must remember that Normandy was ruled by strong princes and not by weak kings, as was the case in Paris. The Norman power structure was well defined and determined. The result was armed cavalry and private castles. Eventually England became a fully developed feudal society. The Normans did not bring to England freedom but stability and efficient organization. And this strict and permanent social structure was imposed on England, as Trevelyan stresses, the Normans "re-enforce the English Kingship and developed it into that great mediaeval monarchy which had no parallel in France, Germany and Spain"[69].

The Duke in Normandy was powerful. He could mint money and he had an excellent financial system. Therefore England was attacked in 1066 not by a band of adventurers, but "by the most highly organized continental state of the day, which possessed peculiar institutions capable of rapid development in the free field of a vast and inchoate conquered territory"[70]. They brought discipline and a respect for obedience.

CONCLUSION

The starting thesis of this article was the well-known concept coined by Kazimierz Dąbrowski, namely positive disintegration. Admittedly, at first reading this phrase reads as a contradiction because we naturally feel that which is positive cannot go together with disintegration. But both in Dąbrowski's view and in this text disintegration may be regarded as positive.

Another important point is that Dąbrowski, as a psychologist and psychiatrist, used disintegration in the context of the individual. Here I thought it appropriate to use it in a social context. So I have applied the term 'positive disintegration', borrowed from psychology and psychiatry, to social development. Every disruption is a disintegration that opens the gate to new development.

In this article we have tried to show the Norman Conquest as the kind of disruption that further led to many positive results, the most important of which was the Magna Carta signed in 1215. Furthermore, the Normans introduced protectionism into merchants relations, a procedure which helped towns grow

[68] Ibid.

[69] Trevelyan G.M. *History of England*: 104.

[70] Ibid.: 105.

prosperous. They created commercial centres ready to compete with other parts of the world. They sought to introduce political unity and administrative consolidation. We can therefore conclude that the Norman contribution to England was a positive disintegration.

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Marek SOBCZYŃSKI
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1066-3687
University of Lodz, Poland
Faculty of Geographical Sciences
Department of Political and Historical Geography
and Regional Studies

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ETHNIC TERRITORIAL AUTONOMY A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF PANAMA NICARAGUA AND BOLIVIA

INTRODUCTION

Among the several types of existing forms of state territorial system in the world, it is quite common to find states defined as diverse. In principle, their territorial system has features of unitarism, but such a state is not homogenous, as it contains at least one territorial unit that is organically linked to it. Such a territory is referred to as a "state fragment" and is usually characterised by a certain degree of systemic distinctiveness (autonomy) (Sobczyński 2006: 144).

Two types of territorial autonomous units can be distinguished: units with a territorial shape determined by a long historical process taking into account internal economic and social links (historical autonomous regions); and units whose territorial scope is determined by the spatial extent of residence of one or several related ethnic groups (ethnic autonomous regions). The former type has developed in Western Europe, among others, and even where autonomous units are ethnically diverse (e.g. in Switzerland), it is not this diversity that was the reason for their demarcation. The second type of national unit was elevated to an absolute in the Soviet system, where the ethnic distinctiveness of an autonomous unit's population was the sole basis for its demarcation (in some cases, such a distinction was also made by religious diversity, a rather curious fact given the anti-religious nature of the Soviet system). As history has proven, the type of historical territorial autonomy has proved to be much more durable, while the demarcation of ethnic units ultimately led to the complete disintegration of several states. However, the system of ethnic territorial autonomy sanctioned under the communist regime spread beyond the Soviet bloc, also to the highly developed countries of the West (Belgium, the United Kingdom, Spain, Italy, Canada) and to the so-called Third World countries.

The autonomy of ethnic territorial units has thus become one form of shaping the territorial systems of states. The aim of this article is to provide a comparative analysis of such autonomies with different histories, characterised by different origins, a different socio-cultural environment and functioning under different socio-political regimes. Ethnic territorial autonomies in Latin America, located in both Central America (Panama, Nicaragua) and South America (Bolivia), were selected for comparison.

ETHNIC AUTONOMY IN PANAMA

Among the countries analysed, Panama is the youngest. It was created as a result of the political rivalry of the states involved in the construction of the transoceanic canal, which significantly shortened maritime transport between the east and west coasts of the United States, and between Europe and the Far East.

During the period of Spanish colonisation, the territory of Panama, from 1717, was part of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, with its capital in Bogotá. After the overthrow of Spanish rule in 1819, the Colombian Federal Republic (known as Greater Colombia) was established. Panama threw off Spanish rule in 1821 with the proclamation of independence (Leonard 2015: XXX), but then joined the state of Simon Bolivar (Greater Colombia), in which the Isthmus of Panama was one of many provinces (Łepkowski 1977: 197). After the collapse of this state in November 1831, when the successive republics of Venezuela and Ecuador broke away from it, Panama continued to be part of the Republic of New Granada, later renamed Colombia, despite a civil war ravaging the state for almost a decade (Gonionskij 1976: 17). It was granted autonomy within it in 1855, which was linked to the construction of a railway line connecting the Caribbean Sea to the Pacific Ocean at that time (Wienin 1953: 19). Increasing separatist tendencies in the province caused it to lose this status in 1866.

The construction of a sea canal across Lake Gatun in Panama was started in 1881 by French capital through Ferdinand Lesseps, but funds to continue the investment soon ran out and work was halted (Wienin 1953: 21). It was then that, inspired by the United States, an independence movement developed in Panama under the leadership of Manuel Amador Guerrero. The Americans were ready to resume investment, but demanded political guarantees for the canal zone. The US and Colombian governments eventually signed on 22 January 1903 the so--called Hay-Herrán Treaty, but on such unfavourable terms that the Colombian parliament did not ratify the agreement (Gonionskij 1976: 17). In this situation, Panamanian politicians declared the secession of their province from Colombia and its independence on 3 November 1903 (Haskin 1918: 16). Panama as a state has therefore only existed for 120 years.

The government of the new country concluded the Hay-Bunau-Varilla Treaty with the United States on 18 November 1903, in which the US obtained a lease of a strip of approximately 16 km wide between the two coasts, on which the Panama Canal was dug by 1914 (Gonionskij 1976: 20). The United States invaded Panama several times to maintain its influence there, and another treaty was signed in 1936 for the United States to lease the Canal Zone, excluded from Panamanian jurisdiction, which lasted until 14 December 1999.

The majority of Panama's population was Creole and Mestizo, with a small proportion of black people, mainly of Antillean origin. By the time Columbus arrived, the local indigenous population consisted of three ethnic groups: Guna, Chocó (Katio, Emberá) and Guaymí, each of which was divided into numerous small tribes. On the border with Colombia, on the Isthmus of Darien, small groups of Caribbean indigenous people lived. At the time of the arrival of the Spanish colonists, the indigenous population was still at the level of development of primitive communities, while the colonists were already in the economy of declining feudalism and entering capitalism (Gonionskij 1976: 29). The relationship of the various ethnic groups with the colonists varied. The Chocó were easily assimilated, but the Guna left their territories around Uraba Bay and took refuge on the northern coast of the Darien Isthmus, settling down along the rivers. In the mid-19th century, they migrated further to the San Blas Archipelago in the Caribbean Sea, where they defended their position (Wickstrom 2003: 47). In contrast, the Guaymí fiercely defended their tribal territories in the west of the country. The division of the country by a strip of canal, around which almost all economic activity was concentrated on both the American and Panamanian sides of the border, meant that both to the west of the canal and especially to the east, economic life was limited to spot farming.

Nowadays (according to the 2010 census), Panama's population has a different structure. Whites, or Creoles, make up only less than 7% of the population and are the country's political and economic elite. They were joined by the main mass of the population, a mix of Spanish colonists and indigenous populations, or the Mestizos, who now make up as much as 65% of the population. Today, Indians make up just over 12% (418 000 people)[1], with slightly fewer black people, but mainly of African origin (over 9%) and mulattoes (almost 7%).

The 2010 census singled out indigenous ethnic groups differently than before. The largest population is that of the Ngäbe (hitherto classified as Guaymí), who number more than 260,000 and represent more than 62% of the total indigenous population. There are also almost 25,000 Buglé (also hitherto counted as

[1] The results of the 2020 census in terms of ethnic structure have not yet been published beyond the information that the indigenous population represents 12.8% of Panama's total population, or 438.6 thousand people.

Guaymí). There are 80,500 Guna, 31,300 Emberá and 7,200 Wounaan people (both groups are former Chocó). The other groups revealed in the census are: Naso/Teribe 4 000, Bokota just under 2 000, and Bri-Bri just over a thousand people (Institution Nacional de Estadística y Censo 2010).

The idea of the Republic of Panama granting territorial autonomy to ethnic groups refers exclusively to the original population, the Indians. The beginning of the process was linked to the outbreak of the Guna uprising when, starting in 1904, the Panamanian government began to introduce its administration in the San Blas Islands. The location of the archipelago on the border with Colombia was strategically important, and some Indian settlements remained loyal to Colombia until 1919 (Howe 1986). In the wake of the state administration, Protestantism also entered the area from 1907 onwards, prompting the first armed indigenous rebellions. Even then, the Guna had the most highly developed social system of all Latin American tribes. Their settlements were densely populated. They had a well-developed local market, money, specialised crafts and created artistic works. They cultivated the land using simple machinery and metal tools. They were able to write, revered sacred texts and had educated clergy (Marks 2012: 14).

From 1919 onwards, Panamanian President Belisario Porras took action to subjugate the Guna and assimilate them by legally forcing the abandonment of women's national dress and traditional adornments. In acts of resistance, even assimilated women were reverting to the traditional costume known as *mola*.

Desperate Guna leaders, backed by US General Richard Marsh, staged an armed uprising on 12 February 1925 on the islands of Ustupu and Ailigandi in Tulenga County, part of which had been incorporated into Panama in 1903 (Leonard 2015: 170). The uprising was led by island chiefs Nele Kantule and Simral Colman. At Marsh's instigation, independence was proclaimed for the Republic of Tule, with Ailigandí as its capital. The insurgents attempted to attack the main islands of the San Blas archipelago, which were already pursuing a policy of panamisation. The Guna state survived until Panamanian government troops intervened on 27 February, a fortnight, and the fighting claimed around 30 lives. It is interesting to note that the Tule flag was similar to the Spanish flag, but with an inverted swastika in the centre (Price 2007: 7).

Following the pacification of the republic by government troops, Marsh made an appeal to the United States, suggesting that it had supported the secession of Panama in 1903 and that the situation was now analogous. The United States mediated, sent a ship to San Blas with minister John South and led to an agreement on 4 March 1925, under which the Guna remained separate from Panama and had the right to govern themselves. Panama pledged to protect the cultural heritage of Guna. The Guna people promised to lay down their arms and give up the political independence of Tule.

The first act of implementation of the agreement was the creation of the autonomous comarca of Kuna de Madugandi on 12 December 1926 in the district of Chepo, in the province of Panama, with municipal rights, with its capital in Akua Yala. For the island portion of the Guna, such an act was the creation of the Guna tribe's semi-autonomous reserve on 12 December 1930 (*Guna indigenous*... 2014: 18).

Other tribes in Panama soon claimed similar rights. A semi-autonomous Guaymí reserve was established on the demarcated wasteland in the provinces of Bocas del Torro and Panama (west to the Canal Zone) on 8 November 1934.

The fully autonomous statute of the San Blas Islands was proclaimed on 16 September 1938. After the Second World War, this status was confirmed by an act of 18 December 1945. Further changes to Guna autonomy occurred in the 1950s, when the reserve was transformed into the autonomous comarca of San Blas (19 February 1953), establishing the Guna General Congress, a type of local parliament (Valiente 2002: 69). A further extension of autonomy took place on 31 January 1957, and then in 1972. The comarca, previously only located in the islands, was extended to include a section of the Caribbean coast of mainland Panama (Leonard 2015: 171).

Further indigenous tribes in Panama have had to fight longer for their right to autonomy (Ortiz, Chirif 2010: 45). It was not until 29 October 1976 that the Guna de Madugandí and Embera (Chocó) were granted exclusive rights to the 1619 km^2 area of the Alto Bayano National Park, but at the same time a campaign to displace them from the mountainous area where the Bayano Dam was built in November 1992 began (Wickstrom 2003: 49). This triggered, in April 1993, an armed rebellion by the Guna and Chocó people in the national park area, resulting in the rejection by the Panamanian parliament of the already completed act granting autonomy.

Full autonomy for the Emberá and Wounaan people (formerly known as Chocó) in the form of a comarca separated from the Chepigan and Pinogan districts under provincial rights was declared on 8 November 1983 (Leonard 2015: 114). The comarca of Emberá, with its capital in Unión Chocó, consisted of the department of Sambú in the province of Darien in the south and the department of Cémaco located on the border with Colombia and the comarca of San Blas, i.e. two separate territories (Valiente 2002: 83).

The Guaymí, who had already obtained their first reserve before the war by an act of 11 March 1997, were granted an autonomous comarca with provincial rights, separated from the area of the provinces of Bocas del Toro, Chiriquí and Veraguas. This comarca was named Ngöbe-Buglé and has its capital in Buabïti (Llano Tugrí) (Leonard 215: 203). It was therefore a comarca formally shared by the two tribes into which the government had separated the Guaymí people.

At the same time, the authorities intensified copper mining activities in the territory and began the construction of two hydroelectric dams and a power plant for the mining operation (Wickstrom 2003: 49).

Further changes to the autonomy of indigenous tribes in Panama mainly concerned naming, or expanding the scope of self-government. An organic statute (a type of constitution) was granted to the Kuna de Madugandí comarca on 12 January 1996, and to the Ngöbe-Buglé comarca on 25 August 1999 (Valiente 2002: 121, 149). On 23 December 1998, the San Blas comarca was renamed Kuna Yala (Leonard 2015: 171). In an effort to highlight the sharing of the Emberá comarca by two different tribes, it was renamed the Emberá-Wounaan on 9 April 1999.

Another autonomous comarca with municipal rights for the Guna was created on 25 July 2000 under the name Kuna de Wargandí, in the Pinogana district of Darien province, with Nurra proclaimed as the capital (Valiente 2002: 195). After a few years, however, its boundaries were revised in 2006 and the status of autonomy was raised by an organic statute granted on 22 October 2008.

The last cycle of change, which concerned the autonomy of indigenous people of Panama, was another series of naming changes. On 13 August 2010, the comarca of Kuna Yala was renamed Guna Yala, and on 22 November Ngöbe-Buglé became Ngäbe-Buglé, Kuna de Madugandí became Guna de Madungandí and Kuna de Wargandí became Guna de Wargandí (table 1, fig. 1).

Table 1. Autonomous units (comarcas) of Indian tribes in Panama

Comarca	Autonomy from	Area in km^2	Capital
On the Province level			
Emberá-Wounaan	8.11.1983	4 394	Unión Chocó
Guna Yala	16.09.1938	2 358	El Porvenir
Ngäbe-Buglé	11.03.1997	6 814	Buabïti
On the comune level			
Guna de Madungandí	12.01.1996	2 076	Akua Yala
Guna de Wargandí	25.07.2000	957	Nurra

Source: author's elaboration based on Panama's censuses.

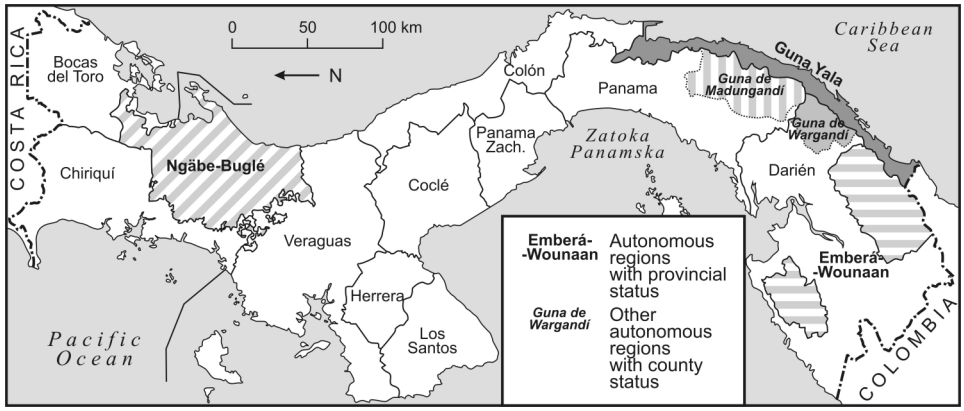

Fig. 1. Autonomous nationality units in Panama
Source: author's elaboration

ETHNIC AUTONOMY IN NICARAGUA

The Mosquito Coast, the Atlantic (Caribbean) coast of Nicaragua, has a slightly different history from the rest of the country, with a tradition of autonomy embedded in its genesis. Initially during the period of colonial conquest, the whole of Nicaragua, as well as other areas of Central America, came under Spanish rule between 1520 and 1522 and became part of the Viceroyalty of New Spain, belonging to its audiencia of Guatemala (Kaczorowski 2008: 825).

Even then, there was a difference between the Mosquito Coast, which was settled by the Caribbean Mískito people (Ayón 1882: 5), and the rest of the country inhabited by the Nahua group of indigenous peoples. Spanish latifundia producing cocoa, tobacco and indigo were established in the western part of Nicaragua, while the Atlantic coast, after several attempts in the second half of the 16th century, remained virtually undeveloped. The Franciscans also failed to establish their reductions here in the 17th century. This was exploited by multinational pirate bands (predominantly British-Dutch) operating in the Caribbean Sea (Gabbert 2016: 80), who established the Mosquito Kingdom here in 1661 (Dolores Gamez 1939: 67–73; Dennis, Olien 1984: 720). According to a member of the Sandinista government of Nicaragua of Mískito nationality, this was an act of struggle against Spanish colonialism, in which the indigenous people's ally was to be another colonist (Law Blanco 1987: 613).

The reason for the weak interest of Spanish colonists in lowland La Mosquitia was the malarial-tropical climate, very non-inviting for newcomers, and not conducive to plantation cultivation or prolonged stay by Europeans, and the swampy,

but heavily forested, terrain (Bancroft 1887: 560; Baracco 2017: 1). They have also not found any raw materials important to the economics of the time.

Among the local indigenous peoples, whose population, as in other parts of Latin America, had declined by 90 per cent due to disease (Gritzner 2010: 39), escaped black slaves brought from Africa who had made their way here via the Antilles, mainly from Jamaica, settled on the coast (Lepkowski 1977: 55). It was this mixed indigenous and black population that inhabited the Mosquito Kingdom, which included, in addition to today's Atlantic coast of Nicaragua, also a large section of the Honduran coast (Bancroft 1883: 596–598; Kaczorowski 2008: 747). The state formally remained independent, but in fact became a British protectorate, as in 1638, the son of Mosquito's king arrived, at the initiative of the Providence Island Company, in England and signed the relevant treaty (formalised in 1687) (Ayón 1887: 191; Thornton 2017: 23).

The Mosquito Coast was customarily divided into two regions: Taguzgalpa (New Cartago) (Ayón 1882: 33) in the north and Tologalpa (Ayón 1887: 191) in the south and listed 30 tribal groups inhabiting the area. Under the kings, La Mosquitia was divided into 5 departments stretching from the Río Platano River in the north to Pearl Lagoon in the south. The district was headed by a commissioner, and this position was inherited by the Mískito tribal chiefs, who remained sovereign, although they formally recognised the supremacy of the king (Offen 2007: 267)

The kingdom strongly resisted the Spanish invasion, but welcomed merchants and pirates from other countries willingly. The kings of La Mosquitia, supported by the British, based their power on the Mískito tribe and the Creoles, while the groups dominated by them were the Indigenous tribes of Sumu-Mayangna, Tawira, Rama and the community of Garifuna, a group made up of descendants of Afro-Carribean former slaves and Indigenous peoples (Baracco 2017: 7). Kings, as well as governors, admirals and generals exclusively from the Mískito tribe, obeyed the orders of the British, antagonising the other ethnic groups (Olien 1983: 209–210, 1998: 278–279; Offen 2002: 342).

Dependence on Britain was exacerbated by subsequent treaties concluded on 25 June 1720 for an alliance, and on 16 March 1740 for a protectorate, under the rule of the Superintendent of British Honduras (Bancroft 1883: 601; Ayón 1887: 375).

On 14 July 1786, the Anglo-Spanish London Convention was concluded, whereby the British agreed to withdraw from La Mosquitia in exchange for the recognition of their rights to British Honduras (now Belize) (Ayón 1889: 132). Despite the resistance of 537 British settlers, they had to leave the Mosquito Coast, also taking 1,677 Black slaves with them.

The Spanish administration formally took possession of the area on 29 August 1787 (Sorsby 1969: 321; Williams 2013: 237). However, within three years of the British departure, the coast was taken over by a wave of fighting between Mískito chiefs and zambo leaders. King George II (a zambo) emerged victorious from this battle, eliminating two indigenous rivals, Governor Colville Briton and Admiral Alparis Dilson, and forced his brother Major Hewlett to flee to Panama. The conflict in Mosquitia had features of civil war and a struggle for domination between indigenous tribes and the *zambo* community, in which the descendants of the slaves prevailed (Williams 2013: 238).

The Spanish then made three unsuccessful attempts at settlement on Río Tinto (in Honduras), on Cabo Gracias a Dios and in Boca de Río San Juan (on the northern and southern borders of present-day Nicaragua), all completed by 1800 (Bancroft 1883: 607).

In 1821, colonial ties with Spain were severed and Nicaragua became independent on 15 September (Gritzner 2010: 43).

The failure of the Spanish settlement campaign meant that the Mosquito Coast was left out of effective jurisdiction, a fact which was again exploited by Britain restoring, as of 9 April 1844, its protectorate over Mosquitia, with the Governor of Jamaica serving as British representative. The Germans also attempted to conquer the coast at the same time, establishing the Carlsuhe colony near Bluefields in 1844, but abandoned it as early as 1849 having lost ⅔ of its settlers (Bancroft 1887: 249). On 8 February 1848, the British garrisoned the town of San Juan del Norte (renamed Greytown), on the border with Costa Rica, and incorporated it into Mosquitia (Bancroft 1887: 251). After retaking control of the Mosquito Kingdom, the British established a more formal structure of government that led to the weakening of local Mískito chiefs, with the exception of the king. British colonists and German missionaries from Moravia began to play a greater political and social role (Baracco 2017: 7).

Under the British-Honduras Treaty of Comayagua, signed on 28 November 1859 at the insistence of the United States, the northern part of the former Mosquito Kingdom was annexed by the Republic of Honduras along with Cabo Gracias a Dios (Bancroft 1887: 320; Łepkowski 1977: 311). A few months later, on 28 January 1860, by a treaty with Nicaragua concluded in Managua, Britain relinquished its protectorate over the southern part of Mosquitia. This agreement was made without consulting the king of Mosquito, although it marked the end of his rule (Baracco 2107: 7). Undoubtedly, the kingdom period contributed to the antagonisation of Mosquito indigenous communities and the formation of a Creole elite.

Nicaragua assumed jurisdiction over the Mosquito Coast on 12 September 1861, at the same time enacting a statute for the Mískito Reserve, a theoretically separate political entity of a municipal character, with its capital in Bluefields.

Thus ended the reign of the last king of Misquito, George Augustus Frederic II. The hereditary chiefs, also serving as the heads of the Executive Council (government), assumed power over Mosquitia (Barocco 2016: 296). The basis of the economy, as the operation of pirates waned, became forest exploitation (Łepkowski 1977: 309). During the period of the reserve's operation, social conflict between the Indigenous and Creole populations deepened, as the Mískito no longer identified with the Creole-dominated Mosquito authority and fought against the domination of the hereditary tribal chief. The Mískito were only reminded of their sovereignty in the 1970s, when they claimed their right to self-determination (Baracco 2017: 7).

For almost a century, Nicaragua has undergone a sequence of dramatic events. Just less than a year after the withdrawal of US troops from Moquitia, British troops appeared in the Pacific port of Corinto, followed by another wave of American troops (1895–1896). In 1896, the republic was overthrown with the proclamation of the Nicaraguan State, and in 1898–1899, US troops again garrisoned the most important centres of Mosquitia, at which time the republican system was restored in Nicaragua on 1 December 1898 (Staten 2010: 32–38). During the war with Honduras in 1906, Nicaragua occupied approximately 30,000 km^2 of Honduran Mosquitia (Mroziewicz, Stemplowski 1979: 102).

From 1909 to 1916, Nicaragua was a *de facto* US protectorate, only to become a political entity in formal subordination to the United States from 19 June 1916 until 2 January 1933. During this period of severe curtailment of sovereignty, in 1910, the Americans again occupied Bluefields for four months, as well as the port of Corinto and the city of León in 1912–1913.

In 1914. Nicaragua had to lease the Corn Islands, located in the Caribbean Sea off the Mosquito Coast, to the United States (until 1971). Between 1922 and 1925, US troops were stationed in the capital Managua, controlling the political processes. In 1926, the US again occupied the Atlantic port of Bluefields and the Pacific port of Corinto, and then all of Nicaragua until early 1933 (Sollis 1989: 489).

Under the government of General José Santos Zelaya, it was possible the Mosquito communities managed to obtain a resolution demanding a merger with Nicaragua (Mroziewicz, Stemplowski 1979: 100; Staten 2010: 32). After 33 years of Mosquitia's separate existence, Nicaraguan troops entered Bluefields on 12 February 1894, dismantling its autonomy (Baracco 2016: 295), but as a result of the intervention of US troops, they had to secede as early as 6 July that year. The Americans occupied Bluefields for only a month and on 7 August 1894 the Mískito Reserve was abolished. This was ratified on 28 February 1895, when the Executive Council of Mosquitia was dissolved and the territory was formally annexed to the Republic of Nicaragua. The UK only recognised this condition in 1905 (Mroziewicz, Stemplowski 1979: 100).

To a certain extent, the role of colonist was assumed by the United States, whose interests on the Mosquito Coast were protected by successive Nicaraguan governments, as sanctioned by the Harrison-Altamirano Treaty of 1905 (Law Blanco 1987: 614). Under it, sizable areas were excluded from the rule of local tribes and American latifundia were created on them, between 1920 and 1930, including rubber plantations, the exploitation of forests and gold mining (Baracco 2017: 8). This sparked revolts by the Mískito and Sumu people, whose insurgents gained the support of the Moravian Brethren (Everingham, Taylor 2009: 49–52). The Moquito uprisings were part of the nationwide anti-American uprising of 1927–1932, led by Augusto Sandino, a figure who became the patron of the contemporary pro-communist Sandinista movement (Staten 2010: 40).

During the dictatorial rule of Anastasio Somoza (1936–1956), the main instruments for the expropriation of indigenous peoples from their land and natural resources were the special institutions established for this purpose, the National Institute of Development (INFONAC) and the National Agricultural Institute (IAN) (Law Blanco 1987: 614; Staten 2010: 48). Mískito and Sumu were not allowed to use their languages in public life, including in schools. The authorities tried to integrate the Mískito community into the social life of the region by facilitating access to education, but only in Spanish, while local Creole elites continued to speak English (Baracco 2017: 8).

In 1973, the Mískito and Sumu founded the Alliance for the Progress of the Mískito and Sumu (Alpromisu), with the aim of gaining indigenous peoples' title to communal land, and acceptance of their languages in education (Baracco 2017: 8).

The 19 July 1979 revolution led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FLSN) did not find understanding among the broad masses of Mosquito society (Staten 2010: 109). As assessed by the Sandinistas themselves, they lacked knowledge of the history and social aspirations of the Mosquito Creole population (most of the Sandinista movement's activists were Mestizos), hostility between the two parts of Nicaragua was entrenched, interpersonal ties between representatives of the two parts of the country were weak, as they spoke different languages and never led a common struggle. In addition, the reason for the popularity of the anti-government guerrillas of the so-called *contras* among the peoples of Mosquitia was the bad social policy pursued by the Sandinistas, which did not satisfy the aspirations of the indigenous population. The methods of political struggle that secured the FLSN's support in the pacific part of Nicaragua did not work in Mosquitia (Law Blanco 1987: 615–616).

The transformation of Alpromisu on 11 November 1979 into a new organisation Misurasata (an acronym for Miskitu, Sumu, Rama and Sandinista All Together) was to change this situation (Barocco 2017: 8). The organisation succeeded in getting its representative into the Council of State, consolidating women's and student organisations around the aspirations of indigenous peoples, obtaining

funding from the Ministry of Education for the educational crusade of the Mískito and Sumu peoples, and led to the introduction of the languages of these peoples, as well as English, in education (originally the Sandinistas had declared a Spanish-language crusade in education[2]). An agreement was also successfully reached in May 1980 with the government and the Nicaraguan Institute of the Atlantic Coast (INNICA) for 80% indigenous participation in forest exploitation, as well as access to communications and government support for local arts and crafts.

However, in 1981, the Sandinist government's relations with Misurasata deteriorated significantly when a small group of educated Mískito activists demanded the right to teach in their language and the return of communal land seized by the government. The communist authorities, fearing the exploitation of indigenous discontent by CIA agents, arrested Misurasata's leaders, which sparked riots in the town of Prinzapolka and the flight to Honduras of the movement's remaining activists, where they in fact entered the circle of US-sponsored Nicaraguan opposition organisations (Barocco 2017: 8).

Nicaragua's ethnic structure, according to the last census conducted, in 2005, was as follows: Mestizos made up 69% of the country's population, Creoles 17%, Garifuna 9% and Indigenous only 5% (*Nicaragua national*... 2023). At the time autonomy was granted, it therefore affected a population of approximately 100,000 Mískito (including those who had fled to Honduras), 30,000 Creoles, 10,000 Sumu-Mayangna, 1,500 Garifuna and approximately 800 Rama (Ortega Hegg 1987: 605).

Having lost the battle for Mosquitia to the anti-Sandinista guerilla, supported by the administration of President R. Reagan (Smith 1988: 70), the Sandinistas decided to enter into negotiations with the indigenous peoples of the Atlantic Coast, representing only 5% of Nicaragua's population but inhabiting an area of 60,266 km^2, or 46.6% of the country's surface. After almost 100 years of the Mosquito Coast being part of Nicaragua, the issue of the region's autonomy has once again become a subject of political debate. The issue of restoring the autonomy of the Mosquito Coast (to the indigenous population) was raised by the pro-communist dictatorship of José Daniel Ortega Saavedra, ruling Nicaragua since the 1979 Marxist revolution, as the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The preparation of the autonomy statutes was also the work of the Sandinistas. However, the realisation of this project had already taken place during the government of the conservative anti-Sandinista National Opposition Union (UNO) and President Violeta Barrios Torres de Chamorro, who won the 1990 democratic elections. The real reason for the return to the idea of autonomy for the country's Atlantic coast was the anti-Sandinista rebellion that took over Nicaragua

[2] By the mid-twentieth century, among the Creole community of the Bluefield area, Spanish was practically unused; English was still the language of communication (Baracco 2017: 7).

between 1981 and 1988, with its main territorial gains taking place precisely in the Mosquitia area, rather than the Sandinistas' willingness to satisfy the claims of the indigenous peoples (Dennis 2000: 199).

Negotiations to improve relations between the Sandinista government and the indigenous peoples of Mosquito Coast began with an amnesty for some 300 indigenous political prisoners in December 1983, as well as for political refugees who had fled the country. They proceeded to elect an indigenous representative to be part of the authorities of the Special Zone 1 region. The authorities allowed the residents of Sangni-Laya and Tasba Pri settlements displaced during the guerrilla war to return to their villages. From 1984 on, bilingual education was introduced for Mískito and Sumu (Frost 1995: 62), and from October of that year, negotiations were undertaken with Misurasata's indigenous activists (but without the participation of its director general, Steadman Fagoth Müller, identified as a CIA agent[3]) (Bouvellen 1989: 124, 1990: 105; Barocco 2017: 8). The indigenous people of Mosquitia were included in the government's election campaign. In December 1984, the government set up a Commission for Ethnic Autonomy (Law Blanco 1987: 618).

The starting point was the recognition of the Nicaraguan people as a multiethnic and multilingual community. To preserve the unity of the state, the right to autonomy had to be introduced into the constitution. The autonomy project took into account the cultural, economic, social and political rights of the indigenous peoples and communities of Nicaragua's Atlantic coast. It preserved tribal social relations, parentage, production relations and work organisation, enriching a multi-ethnic and multi-lingual national culture. It affirmed the right to collective and individual ownership of land traditionally occupied by local communities. Autonomy was to realise the political rights of the Mískito, Sumu and Rama peoples, as well as the Garifuna (Black Caribbean), Creole and Mestizo communities. The principle of equality of rights for all indigenous peoples and communities, regardless of their size and level of development, was affirmed, and the rights of autonomy were not to limit or diminish their obligations as Nicaraguan citizens (Law Blanco 1987: 619).

The preparation for the establishment of Nicaragua's new territorial regime was the signing, in May 1985, of an armistice between government forces and insurgents from Misurasata and Misura in the municipality of Yalu. The following month, an assembly of Mosquito insurgent leaders approved the proposed *Principles and Policies for the Exercise of the Rights of Autonomy for Indigenous Peoples and Ethnic Communities of the Atlantic Coast of Nicaragua*. A National Executive Committee of three committees was set up: a national one and two regional ones.

[3] Misurasata was represented in the negotiations by Brooklyn Rivera.

In August 1985, the freely elected Mískito and Sumu Assembly set up a Peace and Autonomy Commission with the primary political objective of reuniting indigenous families separated by war. In May 1986, another Land Ownership Commission was established and, at the same time, the principles of autonomy were piloted in the so-called Peace Zone around Puerto Cabezas. A constitutional forum with indigenous peoples and churches (religious groups) was organised in June 1986, and the following month an international group of experts evaluated the draft constitution (Jurie 1990: 404). In 1987, the first territorial initiative emerged when groups of Mískito, Mestizo and Creole representatives proposed the creation of an autonomous unit in the northern part of Zelaya province, which gained the approval of the National Assembly (Law Blanco 1987: 620).

The act of autonomy of the former Department of Zelaya (Mosquito Coast), divided into two separate regions, was passed on 30 October 1987, establishing the North Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAN), with its capital in Puerto Cabezas, and the South Atlantic Autonomous Region (RAAS), with its seat of government in Bluefields (table 2, fig. 2).

Table 2. Autonomous units in Nicaragua

Region	Created	Area in km^2	Capital
North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region[4]	30.10.1987	33 106	Bilwi
South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region	30.10.1987	27 260	Bluefields

Source: autor's elaboration.

The Autonomy Statutes were modelled on similar acts of autonomy for Spanish regions established after 1978. The resolution took official effect on 4 May 1990. The positions of Regional Government Coordinators (governors) of the two autonomous regions were taken up by UNO politicians, but were later held by representatives of other political forces. The use of the term "Atlantic" in the names of the regions has proved unfortunate, as they are in fact the coast of an inland body of this ocean – the Caribbean Sea. A resolution of 31 March 2016 revised the name of the two regions renaming them the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (*Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Norte*), with its capital in Bilwi (Puerto Cabezas was renamed in 1996) and the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region (*Región Autónoma de la Costa Caribe Sur*), with its capital in Bluefields (table 2, fig. 2). Each autonomous region was given an elected Regional Council of 45 deputies elected from among all the ethnic groups of the autonomy (González 2016: 308).

[4] Previous names: Autonomous Region of the North/South Atlantic, current nomenclature as of March 31, 2016.

Fig. 2. Autonomous nationality units in Nicaragua
Source: autor's elaboration

The ethnic structure in the administrative regions is completely different. In the North Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region, the Mestizos dominate (56.7 per cent), but there is a very high proportion of Mískito (36.2 per cent), while Sumu-Mayangna account for 5.9 per cent and Creoles for only 1.2 per cent (González 2016: 309). In total, therefore, the indigenes make up more than 42% of the population here, compared to only 5% nationwide. In contrast, the ethnic structure of the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region is markedly different. Here, Mestizos make up as much as 88.6% of the population, Creoles 6.1% which is not significantly different from the ethnic structure of Nicaragua as a whole. The Mískito account for only 3.7%, and the Sumu-Mayangna and Rama barely 0.3% each. The Black (Garifuna) population is larger at 1% (González 2016: 310). Overall, the indigenous population in the south autonomy represents only 4.3%,

even less than the average for the country as a whole. Even together with the similarly indigenous Garifuna, this represents only 5.3% of the region's population, which is dedicated to them. This makes the southern region similar to the Soviet ethnic autonomies, where very often the titular nation (or nations) were a minority in relation to the Russians.

The geographical distribution of the indigenous peoples within the two regions is also different, with the western parts of both regions generally being inhabited by Mestizos, while the indigenous peoples in the southern region are concentrated in strip of a dozen or so kilometres wide towards the Caribbean Sea, which reaches deeper inland only in Bluefield. In the northern region, on the other hand, the habitation belt of indigenous peoples is much wider, and they also populate the river valleys, the Río Coco – bordering Honduras, and the Wawa and Río Grande de Matagalpa, reaching deep into the interior (Dunbar, Ortiz, 1987: 44).

The process of arriving at the 1987 accord took fifteen years. It was only in 2002, and at the insistence of non-governmental indigenous international organisations, that the Law of the Communal Property Regime of the Indigenous Peoples was enacted (Finely-Brook 2016: 338). However, it took another five years to implement this law. It was not until 2007 that tribal ownership was restored to 21 local governments, over an area of 36,439 km^2 of Nicaraguan territory, or 28.14% of the country's territory (Baracco 2016: 301; Barocco 2017: 10). However, this did not end the conflicts, as the law only covered the lands of the Mískito and Sumu-Mayangna tribes, while the smaller native tribes, Creoles and Garifuna are still deprived of their lands.

After the transformation of Misurasata, in early 1988, into the Yatama organisation (Yapti Tasba Masraka Nanih Aslatakanka – Children of Mother Earth), the visions of autonomy favoured by the Sandinistas, who returned to power by winning the elections of 5 November 2006, and the Mískito activists differ significantly. The state prefers regional administrative autonomy, while Yatama activists prefer communal territorial autonomy, more reflective of traditional forms of indigenous social structures (Gabriel 1996: 179; Barocco 2017: 8). The imposition of formalised party-state rules for the selection of candidates in the 2000 local elections meant that in both autonomous regions, 80% of the scattered and isolated Mosquito Coast municipalities failed to elect candidates, with voter absenteeism reaching 60%. A formal complaint was heard by the court in 2005, which ruled that the electoral rules had to be brought into line with traditional social structures in Mosquitia in order to preserve native access to elections. To date, however, the government has not taken any action in this direction.

As a result of electoral manipulation, the Sandinistas won a majority in the regional assemblies of both autonomous units in 2014, defeating Yatama. This meant a *de facto* rupture of the political pact made between the indigenous po-

pulation and the Sandinistas (Barocco 2017: 10). One important reason for this was the government's issuing, without consultation with indigenous peoples, of concessions for oil and gas exploration and production in the autonomies and the awarding, in June 2013, of a 50-year concession for the construction by Chinese investor Wang Jing of the transoceanic canal (from Punta Gorda to Brito), leading through the South Caribbean Coast Autonomous Region and Lake Nicaragua (Baracco 2016: 301). The fact that the investor went bankrupt, in February 2018, and the investment was suspended, has not changed the public mood among the indigenous peoples.

The Yatama Party, working with the Marxists, also lost the trust of the local communities and in 2009, the Mískito Council of Elders established a new representation, the Communitarian Nation of Mosquitia (Nacion Comunitaria Moskitia) (Baracco 2016: 301; Baracco 2017: 12). The political objectives set for this organisation did not exclude the independence of the region, and involved boycotting successive elections (from 2010 onwards) and fighting to regain the land that had been seized and to gain influence over the mining licences granted and the construction of the Nicaraguan Canal. A national government of Mosquitia was set up, effectively controlling some tribal territories, and a communitarian police force, a type of armed force. In the context of eventual independence, it is not insignificant that the Mískito tribal area extends beyond Nicaraguan territory, starting from the Awan River in Honduras and extending all the way to San Blas in Panama, thus also including Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama (Ohland, Schneider 1983: 49).

ETHNIC AUTONOMY IN BOLIVIA

The formation of the anti-Spanish Creole government of Upper Peru in Chuquisaca in the spring of 1809 and, in July, of an analogous junta (Junta Tuitiva) in La Paz, led by Pedro Domingo Murillo, marked the proclamation of the region as an independent state (Łepkowski 1977: 202). However, Spanish loyalists ruling in Lima and Buenos Aires quickly suppressed the independence movement and José Fernando de Abascal incorporated the rebellious lands into the Viceroyalty of Peru, which remained a Spanish colony for the longest time. In 1810, subsequent uprisings in Chuquisaca and Potosí proclaimed the will to annex these lands to La Plata, but again Peruvian troops re-established the rule of Lima (Łepkowski 1977: 210). In 1814, a large part of present-day Bolivia was covered by the uprising of the brothers José, Vicente and Mariano Angulo and Mateo Pumacahua of Cusco. The fate of these areas was shaped by events in Peru and La Plata, but in Bolivia, the Republican (anti-Royalists) faction was relatively strong.

The decisive war for the independence from Spain of Peru and its highland province, Bolivia (Upper Peru), took place between 1820 and 1828 (Łepkowski 1977: 219).

Peru, which remained under the administration of royal Spain, was attacked from the south by the La Plata liberation forces, led by José de San Martin, who had previously liberated central Chile. In Bolivia, support for Abascal was strong, particularly among Indigenes and Mestizos who feared the revolted but wealthy local Creoles. The Royalists, defeated on the coast when Peru's independence was declared there in May 1821, fled to the mountains and highlands. The further process of liberation of Bolivian lands is linked to the expeditions of Simon Bolivar from Greater Colombia. His troops cleared Peru of loyalists in 1824 and, under Marshal Antonio José de Sucre, also entered Upper Peru. The Royalists were surprised here by an uprising by one of their factions, led by General Pedro de Olañeta, and in this situation La Paz was occupied on 8 January 1825 by Republican guerrillas. The rest of the country was conquered by the armies of Sucre and General Juan Antonio Arenales in February and March 1825. The fate of the country was decided in negotiations with its neighbours. First, La Plata gave up its claim to the province of Charcas, but the new leaders of the Republic of Peru did not want to surrender the highlands. Eventually, at the urging of the local Creole elite and partly also of the Mestizos, Bolivar and Sucre decided to carve out a separate state here. A congress meeting in Chuquisaca (today the constitutional capital of Bolivia, Sucre) proclaimed on 6 August 1825 the independence of the Republic of Bolivar (Republica de Bolivar), soon renamed Bolivia (Łepkowski 1977: 225). *El Libertador* himself became the first president and wrote a very progressive constitution for the two republics of Bolivia and Peru in 1826. Twenty-five per cent of adult men were given the right to vote in the election. This constitution, however, was never and nowhere fully implemented, and Bolivar installed Marshal Sucre as president and returned to Bogotá.

The country's first constitution, and several subsequent ones, failed to recognise the problem of racial diversity and the fact that the majority of the population is made up of Mestizos and Indigenes. All power was handed over to wealthy citizens, almost exclusively to White Creoles. As Sucre also left for Peru after two years, the first local president was Andrés Santa Cruz (previously president of Peru) in 1829, who abolished the Bolivarian constitution. In 1836, Bolivia conquered Peru and the Peruvian-Bolivian Confederation was established for three years, under Santa Cruz. In revenge, Peru, independent since 1839, invaded La Paz in 1841, but suffered defeat at the Battle of Ingavi. In subsequent wars, Bolivia lost further territories. In 1867, it ceded sizable chunks of the Amazon and Mato Grosso to Brazil. In the Nitrate War of 1879–1884, fought in alliance with Peru against Chile, Bolivia lost access to the Pacific (Litoral province) and its only port of Antofagasta. Argentina took the Pampa area from it in 1893.

In 1903, in a war with Brazil, Bolivia lost the rubber-growing province of Acre, and between 1932 and 1935, in a war with Paraguay over the oil-bearing Chaco, it lost three-quarters of the disputed area and 57,000 soldiers. After this war, the country was in ruins and became a military socialist dictatorship. It was not until 1943 that another putsch established a nationalist dictatorship.

Before the arrival of the Spanish colonisers, Bolivia was inhabited by some 800,000 Andean peoples. Colonisation brought an initial reduction in population to 735,000 in 1570 (with Indigenes accounting for 700,000, Spaniards for 50,000, with 30,000 slaves of unspecified nations and races). From 1650 until the struggle for independence, the size of the population grew to 1.5 million in 1810 (approximately 1 million Indigenes, 350,000 Mestizos and 150,000 Creoles). The wars of independence brought the depopulation of Bolivia to 1.1 million citizens in 1828.

At the time of the proclamation of independence, the Indigenes made up half of the overall population, with 30% Mestizos, 18% Creoles and 2% Black. Bolivia entered the 20th century with only 1.5 million inhabitants. The last census that included the category of Mestizo in 2001 showed that they made up 27%, with Indigenous at 62%, Creoles and other Whites at 8%, the rest at 3%.

Currently (2012 census), Bolivia's population of 10.4 million is primarily made up of two main Andean nations, the Quechua and the Aymara, almost equal in numbers, which together make up as much as 88% of the country's population. Other significant groups include Whites, essentially mainly Creoles (5%), Guaraní (0.6%), and 37 smaller native tribes, which together make up just 0.3% of the country's population.

The racial structure of the census is no longer captured in such detail. Pure-blooded Indigenous make up only 20% of the country's population, almost 70% are therefore Mestizos, and 2% are so-called Cholo, essentially also Mestizos (descendants of Creoles and Indigenes). Occasionally, one encounters in Bolivia descendants of African slaves (Afroboliviano), who make up about 1% of the country's population (which is, however, three times more than the 37 tribes of the so-called indigenous peoples) (*Bolivia carasterísticas*... 2012: 31).

Among the White population, dominated by the descendants of Spanish colonists, about 2.7 per cent are European immigrants, living mainly in the cities of the eastern lowland part of Bolivia. They are mainly Germans, Austrians, Italians, Argentinians (Creoles), English and Irish, and of the Slavic peoples, Croats, Serbs and Russians (including a large group of Old Believers). A religious group made up of immigrants from Canada, Mexico and Paraguay are the Mennonites (as many as 100 000 people in total). There is also an Arab colony (Syrian-Lebanese) and a Jewish colony both of which arrived while still in the Ottoman Empire, as well as Asian population groups: Japanese, Chinese and Koreans.

Significant differences exist in the spatial distribution of the different ethnic groups. Although the Aymara and Quechua inhabit the entire country, they are

clearly concentrated. The Aymara people live in the departments of La Paz and Oruro. The Quechua also occupy the highland departments of Potosí, Cochabamba, western Chiquisaca and central La Paz. Indigenous tribes also live in areas of Quechua and Aymara dominance, but their greatest concentration is in the rest of the country, i.e. the north, east and south-east (departments of Pando, Beni, Santa Cruz, eastern Chiquisaca and Tarija). The Creole population is also concentrated in the same area, with isolated groups also living in the large cities of the Alto Boliviano highlands. Afrobolivians, some 28,000 people, live in the department of La Paz (mainly the Los Yungas region), in the towns of Tocaña, Mururata, Chicaloma and Koripata.

The process of granting autonomy to national minorities in Bolivia is relatively recent. It involves the assumption of power, through elections, by the Movement for Socialism (the party's original name is *Movimiento al Socialismo – Instrumento Político por la Soberanía de los Pueblos*, MAS-IPSP), led by Aymaran Juan Evo Morales Ayma. The movement was formed as the left wing of the Bolivian Socialist Falange in 1995 and took power in the country after the elections of 18 December 2005, in which it won almost 54% of the vote, completely dominating the Chamber of Deputies. In the upper house, the Senate, Jorge Quiroga Ramírez's Social Democratic Power (Podemos) party gained a one-seat advantage. Morales became the first president of Indigenous origin in the history of Bolivia. However, he only won in the highland Indigenous departments, while the Creole departments of Pondo, Beni, Santa Cruz and Tarija supported Podemos. A division of the country therefore took place between the territorially smaller West supporting the *masistas* (from the abbreviation MAS) and the territorially larger, but less populous East dominated by Podemos supporters. This accurately reflected spatially the Indegenous-Creole racial cleavage.

The outcome of the election was the result of the social impact of President Gonzalo de Sánchez Lozada's earlier shock economic reform of 1985 (later modelled by Leszek Balcerowicz in Poland, among others), which collapsed in the face of the so-called First Gas War of October 2003, i.e. the revolt of the native population against the policy of privatising resource extraction. The next president, Carlos Mesa, held a referendum on 18 July 2004 on the nationalisation of gas and oil production, the result of which, due to the ambiguity of the questions, allowed both sides to claim it as their victory. In the background of these events was the question of an export route for oil and gas to a Pacific seaport. The site was owned by Bolivia in the 19th century, lost in the war with Chile, and the public did not accept its commercial use by foreign companies. Renegotiations with neighbours for the return of these lands were demanded.

Raising taxes to foreign mining companies to only 32% resulted, in May 2005, in the outbreak of the so-called Second Gas War, spearheaded by trade unions dissatisfied with the slight reduction in foreign ownership. The reaction to the suc-

cessive upheavals in the capital was the announcement of a referendum in August 2005 on the secession of the gas-rich eastern Creole departments of Pondo, Beni, Santa Cruz and Tarija.

The trade unions at the time were led by Evo Morales organising massive blockades of the country. In June 2005, Bolivia's parliament moved its deliberations to Sucre, because La Paz was occupied by the revolted Indigenous opposition, which accepted the militant policy and gave massive support to MAS in the December elections. The socialist Evo Morales introduced state capitalism, carried out nationalisation, but his most important decisions related to the influence of the Indigenous population on the social life of the country. For the first time, the Indigenes gained a dominant position over the rich Creole east of the country. With the decision of 5 March 2006, Morales agreed to hold a referendum on local autonomy for nine departments of the country.

As the elections failed to give Morales full power and the Creole opposition sought to boycott his policies, the president in December 2007 moved his deputies to the mining hub of Oruro, in an Indigenous-dominated area, where he promulgated a left-wing Bolivian constitution drafted by them, increasing presidential powers and granting autonomy to the native population.

In response to Morales' and MAS' political actions, referendums were held in department after department to reject the new constitution, on 4 May 2008 in Santa Cruz, on 1 June in Beni and Pondo and on 22 June in Tarija. In all these votes, Podemos supporters won by a majority of around 80%, announcing the secession of these departments from Bolivia, in the event of the Morales constitution being passed. Despite this, the authorities put the draft constitution to a national referendum on 26 January 2009, gaining 58% support for it, but mainly with the votes of the Indigenous population of the western part of the country, as 5 departments in the east rejected the draft. The new constitution came into force on 18 March 2009. It proclaimed the creation of the Plurinational State of Bolivia (Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia), as a unitary multiethnic state, and granted territorial autonomy to the native population, the majority of the country's population (Lacroix 2012: 2, 11).

This autonomy applies to the three levels of administrative division, at departmental level, all departments, not just the eastern (Creole) ones, have been granted autonomy (table 3, fig. 3). Autonomy of ethnic provinces, municipalities or comunnes, as well as areas outside the administrative division structure of the country defined as "indigenous peoples and peasant peoples" (*naciones y pueblos indígena originario campesino*, *NyP IOC*) is also possible (Albó, Romero 2009: 8). The idea referred to the traditional Inca tribal territorial communities, the *ayllu* (Lacroix 2012: 3).

Autonomous units are not subordinate to each other and have the same constitutional rank. This means the superiority of departmental legislation over national

legislation, and the resolutions of national communes and areas of indigenous or peasant peoples are not subject to repeal by district, departmental and national authorities. There is, however, a review of the constitutionality of these resolutions by the Plurinational Constitutional Court (Albó, Romero 2009: 10). The Constitution defines autonomy as "self-government of indigenous nations and peasant peoples whose populations share territory, culture, history, languages and their own legal, political, social and economic organisations or institutions" (*Bolivia Constitution* 2009, article 289).

Table 3. Autonomous units of Bolivia at the national and supra-local level

Department	Created	Area in km^2	Capital
Beni	18.11.1842	213 564	Trinidad
Chuquisaca	23.01.1826	51 524	Sucre
Chochabamba	23.01.1826	55 631	Cochabamba
La Paz	23.01.1826	133 985	La Paz
Oruro	5.09.1826	53 588	Oruro
Pando	24.09.1938	63 827	Cobija
Potosí	23.01.1826	118 218	Potosí
Santa Cruz	23.07.1826	370 621	Santa Cruz de la Sierra
Tarija	24.09.1831	37 623	Tarija
On Supra-local level			
Charagua Iyambae			
(Santa Cruz)	8.01.2017	74 424	Charagua
Gran Chaco (Tarija)	6.12.2009	17 594	Yacuíba
San Pedro de Totora (Oruro)	9.05.1980	1 487	San Pedro

Source: author's elaboration based on Bolivian censuses

The Autonomy and Decentralisation Law (LMAD) was passed in 2010 (Lacroix 2012: 12). Entities were established under the name of the Native Indigenous Peasant Territory (Territorio indígena originario campesino, TIOC), populated by the native and peasant population, in which they exercise their self-government and self-determination (Albó, Romero 2009: 12). It can therefore be a commune, municipality or even an urban district and an indigenous district.

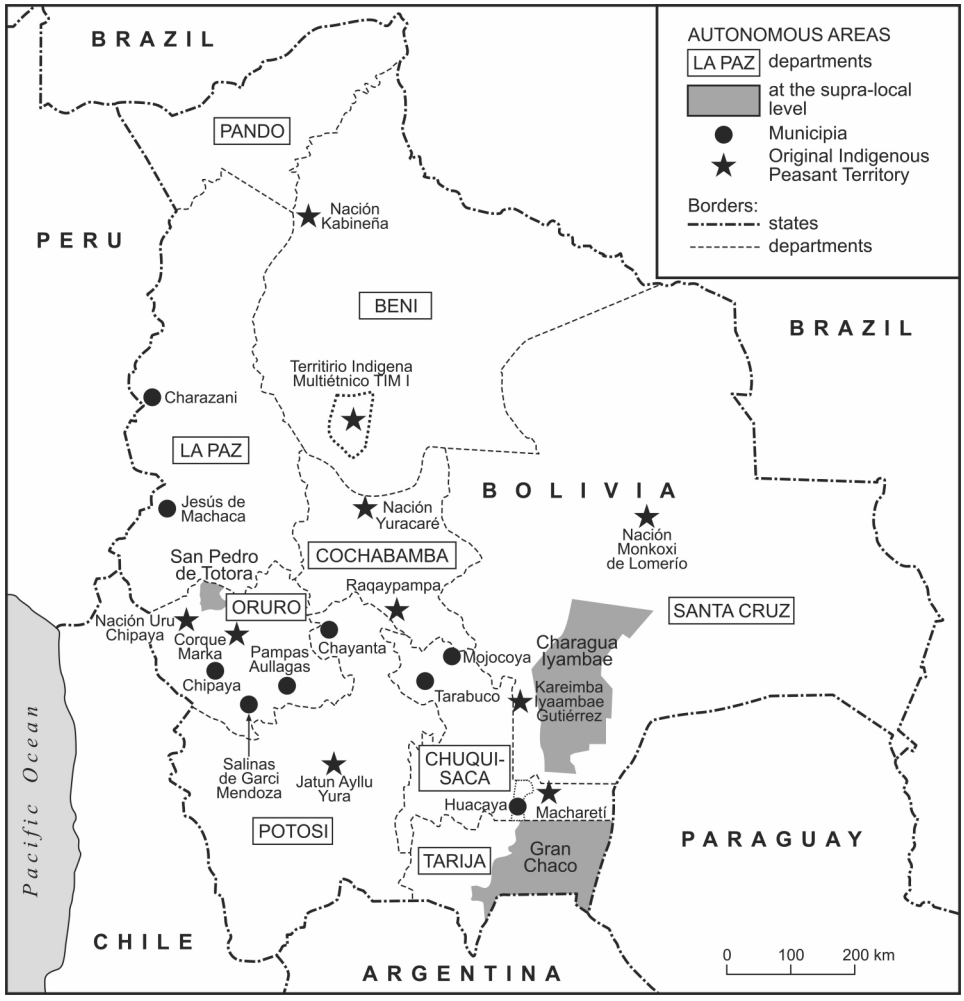

Fig. 3. Autonomous territorial units in Bolivia

Source: author'e elaboration based on Bolivian governmental sources

The first indigenous peoples' organisations were formed in the eastern lowland part of Bolivia in the early 1980s. As early as 1982, the Confederation of Indigenous Peoples of Bolivia (Confederación de los Pueblos Indígenas de Bolivia, CIDOB) was established for the Oriente, Chaco and Amazon areas. In 1997, the National Council of Ayllus and Markas of Qullasuyu (Consejo Nacional de Ayllus y Markas del Qullasuyu, CONAMAQ) was established, described as the representation of the indigenous nations and peoples of the Altiplano (Cholewińska 2014: 78). The organisation grouped Aymara, Quechua and Uru peoples, from the departments of La Paz, Oruro, Potosí, Chochabamba, Chuquisaca and Tarija.

Its aim was to reconstruct the pre-Columbian traditional territorial forms of the *ayllu*, *markas* and *suyus* and to fight for the right to collective land ownership, autonomy and representation of these peoples in state bodies (Lacroix 2012: 4). The first indigenous party was the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement (Movimiento Indígena Pachakuti, MIP), established in 2000 by Felipe Quispe of the Aymara. The words *kuti* and *pacha* come from the Quechua language and mean return of land (Cholewińska 2014: 81).

On 6 December 2009, a referendum was held in 12 indigenous area concerning their conversion into autonomous units. In the department of Oruro, the vote took place in the lands of the indigenous community: Chipaya, Curahuara de Carangoes, Pampas Aullagas, San Pedro de Totora and Salinas de Garci Mendoza; in the department of Chuquisaca in the lands of Tarabuco, Mojocoya and Huancaya; in the department of La Paz in the lands of Charazani and Jesús de Machakal in the department of Santa Cruz in the land of Charagua; and in the department of Potosí in the land of Chayanta (table 3, fig. 3). Only in the two referenda of the Aymara in Curahuara de Caranogues and Totora Marka, in the department of Oruro, was the idea of autonomy not accepted.

At supra-local level, on 6 December 2009, a referendum was held among the Guaraní on the creation of the autonomous territory of Charagua on the border with Paraguay. Only 55.7% of voters supported the project. The statute of the new grouping unit of traditional *capitanias* was approved on 17 June 2012, but 21 articles of the document were contested. Another referendum in September 2015 was won by the supporters of autonomy by a mere 53.3% of the vote. The new Charagua Iyambae Autonomous Authority was established on 8 January 2017 (Postero, Tockman 2020: 5).

Between 2012 and 2023, referendums were held in a number of further indigenous lands and proceeded quite similarly. Despite mass indigenous support for Morales' national policy, the idea of autonomy is struggling to find supporters on the ground.

In 2016, Evo Morales held a referendum on abolishing the constitutional limitation of the presidency to two consecutive terms, which he lost. He therefore referred the case to the Constitutional Court, appointed by him, which declared this provision incompatible with human rights. In the 20 October 2019 elections, Morales declared himself the victor, winning by a margin of less than 10% of the vote, which, according to the constitution, should have lead to a run-off with non-partisan challenger Carlos Mesa Gisbert. However, the authorities did not publish the results and then declared that Morales had won in the first round. Protests erupted in the Creole city of Santa Cruz, but also in the Indigenous city of Sucre, and the United States and the Organisation of American States declared the elections fraudulent. Morales accused the opposition of organising a coup. However, the leaders of his MAS party resigned from their posts and the military protected

the demonstrating opponents of Morales'. The army's commander-in-chief demanded Morales' resignation, which the Senate approved on 11 November 2019. Morales fled to Mexico and then moved to Argentina. Jeanine Áñez Chávez was appointed interim president.

The next election on 18 October 2020 was unexpectedly won again by the MAS candidate with links to Morales, Luis Alberto Arce Catacora, with 55.1% of the vote, mainly in the west of the country. The divided east voted for Carlos Mesa of the Revolutionary Left Front and for independent candidate Luis Fernando Camacho. The new president agreed to allow Morales to return to the country, but gave guarantees to continue his ethnic policy and maintain ethnic autonomy. He also led to the prosecution of the previous president.

As of June 2009, 60 communities in the lowlands have applied for autonomy, of which 14 have already completed the procedure. In the highlands, by contrast, 143 communities have indicated a desire for autonomy, 72 of which have already obtained it (Ortiz, Chirif 2010: 54). In total, the autonomous lands of indigenous and peasant peoples already represent 15% of Bolivia's surface area. However, it was not until more than a dozen years after the start of the reform, on 2 February 2023, that the Bolivian Parliament passed a law to create autonomous territorial units of multi-ethnic indigenous territories. This will allow the creation of the first autonomous government of Multiethnic Indigenous Territory 1 (Teritorio Indigenia Multietnico 1) in the Bolivian Amazon (Vargas Delgado 2003).

SUMMARY

The origins of ethnic autonomy for minority ethnic groups has the longest tradition in Panama, although it is important to remember the 17th–19th century sovereignty of the Mosquito Coast in Nicaragua. Without doubt, Bolivia's ethnic autonomy is the youngest, however it follows in the deep-rooted tradition of self-governing Incan communities of *ayllu*, *markas* and *suyus*.

In the case of Panama and Nicaragua, rights were granted to a small minority of the population, while in Bolivia, the descendants of those who came from the metropolis, the Creoles, are the minority ruling the country since its inception until recent decades, and the act of granting rights to indigenous peoples applied to the vast majority of the society.

In Bolivia, the left-wing government's policy of promoting the transformation of the country into a multiethnic republic does not target the Creole minority, but the significant Indigenous majority, hitherto discriminated against by Creole--Mestizo governments. Panama, on the other hand, is also ruled by the Mestizo majority, together with the Creole minority, and autonomy is provided for the indigenous peoples, who remained at a very low level of development at the time

of the arrival of the Spanish colonists. During the colonial period, one of these nations (the Kuna) made significant progress in socio-civilisational development, while the others developed at a natural rate.

The territorial autonomy of ethnic minorities in Nicaragua, conceived as a process of recovery from civil war, has been in place for thirty-six years. However, in the 21st century, it is already proving far from sufficient (Finley-Brook 2016: 338). On the other hand, it is assessed that autonomy is the way forward to even out the social and economic differences between the east and west of Nicaragua (Finley-Brook 2016: 332). Two opposing visions of ethnic autonomy clashed here. The Marxist government created a regional multiethnic model of autonomy, while indigenous representatives sought a model based on an indigenous traditions of territorial self-government, different in each tribal group (Dennis 2000: 209; González 2016: 307). Essentially, the example of Nicaragua is a further confirmation of the bankruptcy of the Bolshevik idea of ethnic-territorial autonomy, as the autonomous regions have over time become institutions of coercion and repression by the Marxist government against the indigenous population.

Bolivia and Panama have two levels of autonomy, but their origins are different. In Panama, it stems from a tradition of struggles for autonomy and even independence for individual peoples, some of whom have been granted autonomy at the provincial level in the tribal area, while others, settling in areas where they have not always been present have only been granted autonomy at the sub-provincial level. Some of the autonomous ethnicities have never engaged in armed struggle against the government and their status is the result of a political decision by Panama's democratic authorities.

Bolivia's two-level autonomy, on the other hand, is the result of the attempted secession of the Creole east of the country, in the face of the electoral victory of the left, thanks largely to the votes of the indigenous support from the west of the country. Faced with the secession of four lowland departments, the authorities decided to give all nine departments of the country autonomy. In contrast, the autonomy for indigenous peoples and peasant communities resulting from the socialist government's ethnic policy applies to the three main indigenous nations of Aymara, Quechua and Guaraní (both at the level of the eastern departments dominated by them and lower forms of territorial autonomy) and 37 other legally recognised indigenous and peasant communities, as well as the Afrobolivians. Autonomy has therefore not been granted to the Mestizo minority, which has disappeared from the statistics altogether, nor to the Creole minority, which *de facto* controls entire lowland departments, but there, too, indigenous peoples and peasant communities are creating their autonomous territories at lower levels of local administration in provinces, municipalities and towns, as well as outside these already-established structures, these units not being subject to departmental authorities. Bolivia's decentralisation is total, and the only glue

is the Constitutional Court, which assesses the constitutionality of the statutes of the autonomous units and the legislation they enact. It must be acknowledged that this oversight is bad for the autonomies and the processes of enacting the legal construction of these entities go on for years, sometimes without reaching a final conclusion.

The application in all the states in question of the Bolshevik idea of ethnic-territorial autonomy bodes ill for the unity of these states. Only in Panama is there no visible threat to the integrity of the republic. Bolivia's integrity seems uncertain in the longer term, and a break-up into an Indigenous West (Altiplano) and a Creole East (Sierra) is quite likely. In Nicaragua, the failure of the experiment with ethnic-territorial autonomy could lead to the secession of the Mosquito Coast, whose traditions of independence are historically unassailable and whose roots in Hispanoamerica are relatively recent.

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Section 2

LOCAL CONSIDERATIONS FROM EUROPEAN AND POLISH PERSPECTIVES

Sokol AXHEMI
ID https://orcid.org/0009-0003-6990-346X
Endrit SALLJA
ID https://orcid.org/0009-0000-5378-2243
Ornela HASRAMA
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5422-0090
University of Tirana
Faculty of History and Philology
Department of Geography

REGION and REGIONALISM
No. 15

EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS AND SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT IN THE URBAN ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF ALBANIA

INTRODUCTION

Migration movements in Albania are at the centre of interest for researchers from different fields. There are many influencing factors expressed in a very dynamic way. Particularly, the influences of these factors are also stressed in the direction of the movement of this population, within the framework of urban administrative units of our country. The migration is also accompanied by important effects, which are necessarily studied from the point of view of geographers as well [2]. In this context, we have the presence of many geographic researchers, who have carried out studies in the framework of migration analysis, trying to provide the conditions and influencing factors, the geographical distribution, the types of migration, the socio-geographic spaces of origin, and destination, the expressed flows, the role they have played in these spaces, *etc*. In this paper is presented the context of the features of migration, its effects, and the impacts of these migratory movements in the direction of the urban administrative units of Albania. In our days this topic is a very sensitive issue, especially for our county, where the population developments have changed. Specifically, the active flows of population departure are affecting the depopulation of many of the country's administrative units, their orientation and concentration towards large urban units, the dynamics of the evolution of settlements, the negative effects expressed in the number of the population of units of migratory origin, the structural changes of the population, the decline in the rates of natural increase and the visible signs

of the aging of the population, make it immediately recognizable of such migratory effects and impacts. In addition to their evidence, the analysis presented in detail, for the evidenced effects we also aimed to give our recommendations and suggestions, regarding the application of policies and measures that should be taken, to make it possible to avoid the emerging problems.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The data used in this paper was obtained from multiple sources to capture a comprehensive background of migratory movements. Several demographic information and migration statistics were collected from national census reports for urban administrative units in Albania. Government immigration and emigration records from relevant authorities were accessed to compile data on the changes in population numbers from 1989 to 2011, as well as the number of social places according to counties and years of construction. Prior to analysis, surveys, and data from different sources were standardized. This involved resolving missing data points, harmonizing variables, and transforming datasets into the analyses that have contributed to ensure consistency in spatial analyses. To compare migratory movements across different countries and regions, various statistical and analytical techniques were applied.

MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS AND EFFECTS IN THE URBAN ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF ALBANIA

Migratory movements in the entirety of their role and activities are also associated with many impacts, consequences, or effects [1]. These effects appear especially sensitive in the socio-geographic space, where the active presence of the population and diverse social groups is present. Albania in a special way after years 1990 was under the pressure of different types of migratory movements [8]. Among the most evident are external and internal migrations, individual and family, permanent and temporary, spontaneous and organized, which in their forms and dimensions significantly influenced the development, change, and transformation of the socio-geographic space of Albania.

These migratory movements are very sensitive, they express their role and contribution also in the urban administrative units of our country. In the framework of administrative divisions, the former cities or today's municipalities became important "shelters" for migrants from different origins in several geographic areas of Albania [3]. On the other hand, these former cities or today's municipalities

were included by waves and several external migratory flows of their population. The external migration was concentrated in the main European destinations like Italy, Greece, France, Great Britain, the USA, Canada, *etc*.

Migratory movements of Albanians, inside and outside, influenced by currently analyzed economic, political, social, and historical factors, prove interesting impacts and effects for the urban socio-geographic spaces of their origin, and for those of destination as well. Among them, there are certain results as following: the depopulation of many of the urban administrative units of the country, their orientation and concentration towards large urban units, the dynamics of the evolution of settlements, the negative effects ex-pressed in the number of the population of units of migratory origin, the structural changes of the population, the decline in the rates of natural increase and the visible signs of the aging of the population, *etc*. Each of these effects of the migratory movements of the urban areas of the country serves as an important topic to be highlighted, studied, and analyzed by geographers. In general, we are trying to present some of our scientific considerations in relation to them, as part of a detailed analysis referring to such issues in the geographical aspect.

The depopulation of many of the urban administrative units of Albania, influenced by the development of migratory movements of the population, during the period after the 1990s, is presented in a different way. Particularly, this effect is accentuated in industrial cities, created in Albania during the period of 1945–1990 [4]. These industrial cities had their beginnings closely related to the natural resources express various assets of the processing industry in their administrative borders. The determining economic factor and development during the period of the socialist system, turned in the opposite direction after the 1990s, as many of the local population living in them, part of social groups (diverse social categories) of different professions migrated to external and internal destinations for better economy conditions. The closure of workplaces, difficult economic conditions, the inability to provide income for themselves and their families, and unemployment, were among the first impulses of migratory movements present in these administrative units, just like in other parts of Albania after the 1990s. In this context, we can distinguish the urban administrative units such as Bulqiza, Krasta, Kamë, Rubik, Fushë Arrëz, Cërrik, Memaliaj, Ballsh, Patos, Laç, *etc*. All these administrative units were faced with the departure and rapid abandonment, directly influencing the appearance of the first effects of migratory movements.

However, the depopulation also affected many of the other urban administrative units of Albania. Undoubtedly, the main role and factor remains the economic situation, accompanied by social factors. Many of the urban administrative units are gradually experiencing a rather pronounced decrease in their population. In the table below, we will figure out a continuous reduction of some of the urban administrative units of Albania over almost 20 years, referring to the official data

of INSTAT [5], according to the population and housing registrations in 1989, 2001, and 2011 (tab. 1). We emphasize that since 2011, the census of the population and housing has not yet been presented. The responsive authorities have set 2024 as the year of the official presentation of the census.

Table 1. Changes in population numbers 1989–2011

Municipiality	1989–2001 [%]	1989–2011 [%]
Bulqiza	−14.50	−43.58
Dibër	−13.76	−32.75
Gramsh	−17.94	−44.39
Has	−10.15	−20.40
Kolonja	−30.75	−42.33
Kukës	−19.69	−42.56
Ballsh	−3.41	−23.39
Mat	−20.20	−36.36
Përmet	−35.19	−44.62
Puka	−29.78	−50.33
Skrapar	−35.82	−59.42
Tropoja	−37.59	−63.69

Source: INSTAT – Census 1989, 2001, 2011.

Based on the statistical study of population movements in these urban administrative units, we evaluate that their depopulation affects a longer time interval. This is since internal and external migratory flows of displacements of different social categories of the population (part of different professions, who had connected their lives and activities with the typology of economic activities of these industrial cities) were absorbed by the movement other migrants, internal to the rural areas around them, affecting to some extent a numerical recovery of those who left [7]. This was more evident, especially in the first decade 1990–2000, in urban administrative units like Bulqiza, Cërrik, Laç, Ballsh, *etc*. Then during the second and especially the third decade (2010–2020) and onward, under the influence of other factors, not only economic but also social, migratory flows began to significantly affect the decline of local populations in these industrial cities. This trend has caused the effect of depopulation and the presence of more problems in those socio-geographical urban spaces.

Another effect that is quite expressed in some measures influenced by migratory movements in different urban areas, is also the running of the dynamics of population development. Such a binomial, as it appears between migration on the one hand and the problems of population dynamics developments on the other, is undoubtedly known in the scientific literature, as well as in the context of different geographical locations in countries, regions, and different administrative units in the world. However, in our study, we have concluded that the case of these urban administrative units in our country should be recognized and documented. Those cases should be recognized for the rapid downward flows of the population, intensive migration, the significant decrease in births, the appearance of the negative natural increase of the population, the migration of young and middle-aged people, the predominance of the third age, *etc*. The migration of mainly young people and the middle-aged has a significant effect on the decrease in the number of marriages, and the decrease in the number of births, directly showing the effects of a negative character in the natural increase of the population of these urban administrative units. On the other hand, external migratory processes have clearly influenced the aging of the population of these cities. In many surveys and direct surveys carried out in these urban administrative units, we notice the presence of the third-age population, which clearly evidences the departure of the youngest members of their families to different European countries. Although in the context of internal migration, large urban administrative units, have been provided in the biggest cities in Albania such as Tirana and Durrës.

The existence of these elements should be studied with the aim of analyzing them not only from a scientific point of view but also to serve as an important opportunity in the framework of public awareness, to undertake appropriate policies from the social function of the government in service to the population. Situations like that are also present in other urban administrative units of our country, which generate significant problems in the social and economic aspects related to the population year after year [6]. Referring also to the fact of the presence and evidence of depopulation and abandonment, quite evident in various rural administrative units, it is urgent to realize and recognize the situation, with the aim of building efficient policies to orient the population developments in Albania in a positive path.

Another effect in the context of migratory movements affecting several urban administrative units is the orientation of migratory flows towards the large urban centers of Albania (tab. 2). In distinguish way, the Tirana capital, but also Durrës, Elbasan, Shkodra, Fieri, Vlora, and Korça, became very important urban destinations, due to the arrival of a considerable number of different urban and rural migratory flows from different socio-geographic areas of Albania. Apparently, these important urban centers appear in the focus of internal migrants, as the possibility of a better life and economic conditions for them and their families. At the same

time, the revitalization and operation of the market economy were more active and favorable in these large urban centers, which show continuous demand and opportunities for employment. On the other hand, economic activities, business, and foreign investments had their role in these social movements.

Table 2. Changes in population numbers 1989–2011

Municipiality	1989–2001 [%]	1989–2011 [%]
Tirana	41.15	94.83
Durrës	10.44	47.61
Lezha	9.25	24.48
Elbasan	4.57	6.01

Source: INSTAT – Census 1989, 2001, 2011.

Already, in the context of recognition and statistical research, we identify that even though these administrative urban units of the country (such as Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra, Elbasan, Korça, *etc*.) were affected by external migration, they generated an increase in the number of the population, benefiting from internal migration movements [9]. Another very important effect, closely related to the migratory developments in the urban administrative units of the country, is the evolution, development, and transformation of the respective socio-geographic spaces in them [2]. While we have the presence of an increasing population number on the one hand, but also, we identify the increase and intensification of the social places, much necessary for the residents of a geographic area (tab. 3).

There is significant numerical change and transformation in housing, social places of production, exchange, and entertainment, in these large urban centers, but also the development of other new social places [3]. Tirana, Durrës, Shkodra, Elbasan, Fier, and Vlora became the main urban centers of the presence of new settlements, important economic poles, numerous commercial centers, and the functional diversity of many elements of social places of entertainment.

In those conditions, Albania had been working on several policies and strategies related to migration management. These policies and strategies aim to address various aspects of migration, including immigration, emigration, asylum, and integration. Albania has developed a National Strategy for Migration, which serves as a comprehensive framework for managing migration in the country. This strategy outlines the government's approach to various aspects of migration. This means amending and developing new national and local policies that take into consideration these interlinkages and the needs of and challenges faced by migrants. Policymaking on migration in Albania is a dynamic and ongoing process, as it must adapt to changing circumstances and new migration trends.

Table 3. Number of social places according to counties and years of construction

Social places	Until 1960	1961–1980	1981–1990	1991–2000	2001–2005	2006–2011	**Total**
Berat	2633	7238	5786	7319	2389	2015	**27.380**
Dibër	3570	6256	4895	3610	1046	1103	**20.480**
Durrës	2791	4349	4181	14.810	8445	6205	**40.781**
Elbasan	4902	10.166	8940	13.504	5791	5672	**48.975**
Fier	3385	9508	9370	16.537	7428	6268	**52.496**
Gjirokastër	3183	4432	2369	2377	977	997	**14.335**
Korçë	5456	9293	6506	7031	2950	3095	**34.331**
Kukës	1198	2725	2136	1529	650	731	**8.969**
Lezha	2412	3506	2896	5566	3138	3051	**20.569**
Shkodër	4060	6668	4920	8509	4237	4010	**32.404**
Tirana	6066	8087	8204	34.259	16.175	12.424	**85.215**
Vlora	4539	6267	4740	9423	3910	13.276	**42.155**
Albania	**44.195**	**78.495**	**64.943**	**123.844**	**57.136**	**48.847**	**417.460**

Source: INSTAT – *A new urban-rural classification of the Albanian population*, Tirana, 2014.

Additionally, the involvement of various stakeholders, including civil society organizations, international partners, and the private sector, can contribute to well--informed and effective policies.

THE TENDENCY OF THE EFFECTS OF MIGRATORY MOVEMENTS IN URBAN ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS OF ALBANIA

In addition to the research and analysis carried out in relation to the effects shown in urban administrative units influenced by the role and contribution of different types of migratory movements, it is also interesting to identify some impacts on the trends of migration to urban area of the future Albania. In relation to migratory trends and the accompanying effects of this social movement, we find that migration in the urban administrative units of Albania, will continue to provide the same rate in the future. Even more and more innovations are appearing in the framework of these migratory movements and their effects.

Specifically, based on statistics is estimated that the effect of depopulation of urban small administrative units will be the reality of the future. The sporadic trends in the context of the generation of new jobs; the lack of sustainable

development strategies in urban small administrative units; the declining interest and desire of young people to stay and realize their lives in these territories; the problems and shortages that appeared in the service sectors for citizens, especially in the social life sectors (education, health, infrastructure), *etc*., will be part of new features of these administrative units. The migratory generation, under the effect of chain migration, appeared in the entirety of the age groups present in these urban administrative units, in internal and external migration, will continue to be dominant, which will directly affect the reduction of the population in these small urban administrative units in Albania. The continuing trend of these migratory movements will affect the emergence of numerical population imbalances in the urban administrative units, the decrease in births, the decrease in the natural increase, which concludes with a relatively low number of the total population that composed those territories.

The dynamics of population development will continue to be dependent on the effects of migratory movements in the framework of urban administrative units, in Albania. The encouragement and inclusion of young or middle-aged of the population, who every day are more unsecure in the context of economic and social fields, has a direct impact on the migratory processes, in the dynamics of population development in the urban administrative units of origin [7]. Such movements will reflect the decline in the number of births, and the negativity of the natural increase of the population, further advancing the phenomenon of population aging in these urban administrative units. On the other hand, their behavior in the framework of the movement towards migratory destinations is unclear, while in the aspects of the natural increase of the population in Albania, only the district of Tirana marks a positive natural increase for the year 2021, among the 12 districts of our country.

Another significant trend will be the one related to the intensification of the orientation of population settlement towards large urban centers. Apparently, the economic and social factors, associated with better economic opportunities and offers, employment, and social and infrastructural services offered in these large urban centers, among which Tirana stands out, is a direct approach to the impact on the population that moves or changes residence, in the context of internal migration, for example towards of Fier and Vlora. However, from the confirmed statistics, in terms of internal migration of the population, it is estimated that Tirana is the clearest, and most identified "spot" at this moment. About 30 thousand citizens are placed in Tirana every year in the framework of internal migration.

The growth and transformation of different social places in the destination urban administrative units will be another trend in the direction of these migratory effects. Not only the necessity to deal of the capacity holder of territory for these new places, but also the evolution and change of urban life in accordance with

this trend need to take action about the territorial planification. The need for these future capacities, in large urban administrative units in Albania, has significantly influenced the generation of new social places of settlements, production, exchange, and entertainment. In addition to large urban centers such as Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Shkodra, Vlora, Elbasan, *etc*., an intensification of them is also observed in the direction of urban administrative units with a focus on economic development in the direction of the tourism sector. Lezha and Saranda stand out in this direction, in which significant changes are observed in social places of settlements, exchange, and entertainment, directly influenced by the trends of a very potent tourist development. Their variety and diversity, combined with the growing number of respective social places, is clearly seen as a very pronounced tendency of the dynamics of the economic development of these urban centers in Albania, where migratory movements of the population have also played an important role.

Another trend of migratory movements in the urban administrative units of Albania is the imbalance of various social services, especially in the educational and health areas. Although in the large administrative units of the country, such as Tirana, Shkodra, Durrës, Fier, Vlora, Korça, Berati, Elbasani, *etc*., is identified the presence of a qualified educational and health services in many of the other smaller urban administrative units or territories with a modest population (where we have the presence of a continuous displaced population), such services are distinguished by serious problems. Lack of personnel and qualified specialists, provision of sporadic services in various health fields, and limited investments in education and health, in various educational and health facilities, are important drivers of the influence on the professionals of these sectors to migrate in the framework of internal or external migration. Such a thing is increasingly appearing seriously in urban administrative units' small ones such as Tropoja and Has, Bulqiza and Martanesh, Klos and Mat, Erseka and Leskovik.

CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, in the context of the effects and sustainable management of migratory movements, is emphasized that the dynamic and transformative features of urban administrative units have led the development of the main cities in Albania.

First, is estimated that various urban administrative units of Albania, continuously after the 1990s, are involved actively in the effects of migratory movements. Their involvement is associated with important economic and social impacts, quite interesting to study and analyze from the point of view of the geographer.

Secondly, it's evaluated that urban administrative units are distinguished by their diverse involvement in migratory movements. Their population is included both in the framework of external and internal migration, as well as in spontaneous

and organized migration, in permanent and temporary migration, in individual migration, as well as in family migration. The presence of this migratory diversity has urged the emergence of the management of considerable impacts and effects, not only in the migratory population but also in the destination territory.

Thirdly, several accompanying effects are distinguished through the analyses of each urban administrative unit. In a particular way, they appear in the numerical imbalances of the population, in the different cycles of migratory flows, the depopulation trend in many of the urban administrative units, changes in population dynamics, especially in the direction of the decrease in the number of births, the decrease in the natural increase, the aging of the population, the evolution of social places of settlements, exchange, production, entertainment, *etc*.

Fourthly, the trends and the perspective of the population developments in many of these urban administrative units in Albania are not optimistic. The negative phenomena of the decline in the natural increase and the aging of the population are evident and a real concern for the future, the lack of qualified and specialized services in education and health are presented with serious problems. In addition to them, the tendency for migration is now quite expressed not only in the young but also in the middle – ages of the population living in these administrative units.

Fifth, the need of intervention from the part of the policymakers is a national emergency, through policies directly influencing the social and economic situation of the population of these urban administrative units of Albania.

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Krystian HEFFNER
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2737-6417
University of Economics in Katowice
Department of Spatial Economics
Brygida SOLGA
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5097-9339
The Silesian Institute in Opole

REGION and REGIONALISM
No. 15

DEMOGRAPHIC AND MIGRATION CHANGES IN THE OPOLSKIE VOIVODESHIP AS A CHALLENGE FOR DEVELOPMENT POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Significant changes related both to migration processes and changes in demographic structures are observed in Poland. In a relatively short period of time, the scale of immigration increased significantly, and Poland has changed from mainly an emigration country into an emigration and immigration country[1]. At the same time, significant demographic changes related to the decreasing number of births and the transformation of demographic structures, primarily related to the increasing share of older people in the general population are taking place.

These types of changes are also observed in individual regions of Poland, including the Opolskie Voivodeship. However, the Opolskie Voivodeship is one of those Polish regions that are characterized by extremely unfavourable demographic and migration phenomena. Several population changes here have a broader and more dynamic dimension than the average in the country. In the light of the demographic forecast, by 2060 the scale of population decline will have reached approximately 25% (compared to 2023) and thus – similarly to the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship – it will be the largest population loss in Poland. At the same time, there is a clear change in the population structure by biological age groups. The share of people aged 65 and over in the total population in 2060 will have reached 32% and will be one of the highest in Poland.

This trend of demographic changes is becoming a big challenge for regional policy. Since the processes of this type are shaped in the long term and it is

[1] Solga B., Kubiciel S. *Poland: immigration instead of emigration. Transformation of the mobility model*. The 30th International Business Information Management (IBIMA): 797–811; Sobczyński M. 2019. *Causes and main routes of the mass immigration to Europe in 2015*. European Spatial Research and Policy, 26(2): 7–34.

extremely difficult to influence them in the short term, adapting the social and economic spheres and taking advantage of specific opportunities arising from these changes is a useful strategy. On the one hand, it is about taking actions to adapt the economic and social sphere to a smaller regional population with a significant share of older people, and on the other hand, it is about taking actions to counteract the negative consequences of these processes. It is therefore necessary to implement comprehensive and multi-sectoral activities in the area of public policies, primarily including labour market, educational, family, migration and housing policies.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROCESSES

The population of the Opolskie Voivodeship reached its maximum at the turn of the 1970s and 1980s. However, since the mid-1980s there has been a continuous decline in the number of its inhabitants. This unfavourable population situation is mainly influenced by the permanently negative migration balance and, at least partially, the related negative population growth. The migration balance became negative starting from the 1950s. In some years, the absolute value of the migration balance was many times higher than the natural increase. The negative population growth in the region results from the very low fertility of women living in the Opolskie Voivodeship compared to the rest of the country. In 2002, the total fertility rate was only 1.05, with the average in Poland being 1.25, in 2012 – 1.14 and 1.29, respectively, and in 2022 – 1.19 and 1.26[2]. Negative natural growth and, at the same time, constantly negative migration balance result in a systematic decline in the number of inhabitants, observed at least since the mid-1980s.

The above changes adversely shape the future demographic situation. It is forecast that in 2060 the population of the Opolskie Voivodeship will decrease by approximately 25% (of 2023) and thus, together with the Świętokrzyskie Voivodeship, this will be the largest decline in the country[3] (fig. 1). The decline in population is accompanied by certain changes in the population structure. The number of children aged up to 14 and people aged up to 64 is systematically decreasing, while the number of people aged 65 and over is increasing[4]. In 2013, the share of older people was 15.3% of the total regional population, in 2020

[2] Local Data Bank: https://bdl.stat.gov.pl/bdl/dane/podgrup/tablica

[3] *Prognoza ludności rezydującej dla Polski na lata 2023–2060* (*Resident population projection for Poland for 2023–2060. The Opolskie Voivodeship*), GUS (*Central Statistical Office*): 5–6. https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosci/

[4] Heffner K., Klemens B., Solga B. 2019. *Challenges of Regional Development in the Context of Population Ageing. Analysis Based on the Example of Opolskie Voivodeship*. Sustainability 11: 5207.

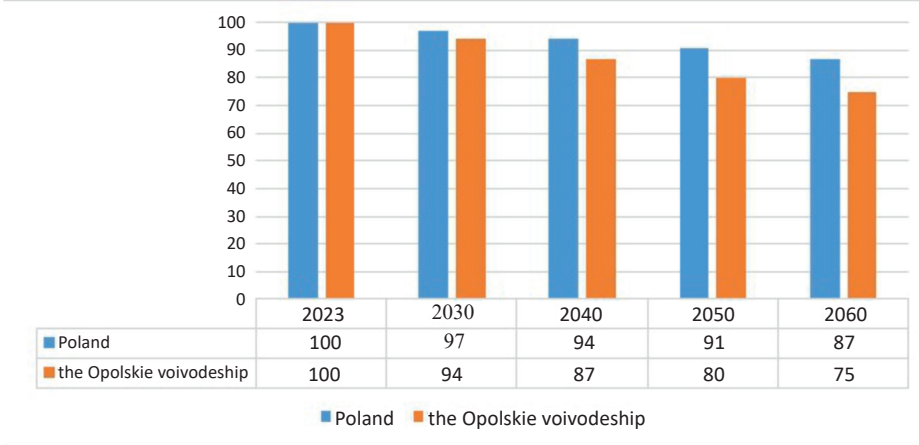


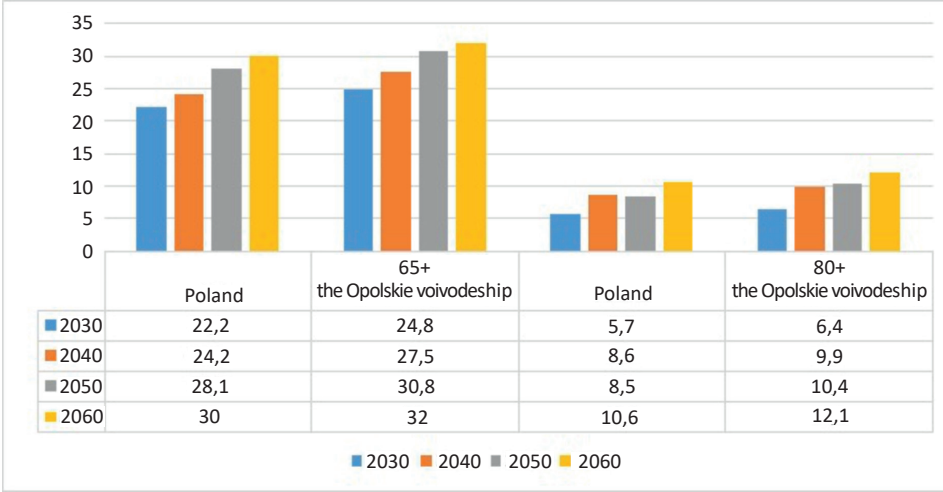
Fig. 1. Changes in the population in Poland and the Opolskie Voivodeship until 2060 compared to 2023 (in %)

Source: own elaboration based on: *Prognoza ludności rezydującej dla Polski na lata 2023–2060. Województwa*. GUS (*Resident population projection for Poland for 2023–2060. The Opolskie Voivodeship*). https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosci/

– 19.4%, and it is forecast that in 2060 this share will reach 32%, which means that compared to 2013, it will increase more than twice. Over this time, the share of older people in Poland will increase to 30% in 2060. The scale of this phenomenon will therefore be higher in the Opolskie Voivodeship than the average in Poland (fig. 2). The region will belong to a group of seven Polish voivodeships in which the share of older people will exceed 32%.

At the same time, a double aging process is observed, which means that the percentage of people aged 80 and over is growing at a faster pace than the total number of older people. At the same time, the scale of the phenomenon will be higher in the Opolskie region than the average in Poland. In 2060, compared to 2022, this share in the Opolskie region will increase from 4.9% in 2022 to 12.1% in 2060, while in Poland from 4.3% in 2022 to 10,6% (fig. 2).

Demographic changes are spatially diversified in the territorial structure of cities and rural areas and in the structure of individual communes of the Opolskie Voivodeship. Cities will be depopulated to a greater extent than villages, i.e. in urban areas the population may constitute approximately 70% of the 2013 population, while in villages – approximately 80%. In the country these population losses will be much lower (respectively – approximately 81% and 99%). The population loss of 30% in the cities of the Opolskie Voivodeship and 20% in rural areas shows the scale of population changes in the next few decades.



	Poland	65+ the Opolskie voivodeship	Poland	80+ the Opolskie voivodeship
2030	22,2	24,8	5,7	6,4
2040	24,2	27,5	8,6	9,9
2050	28,1	30,8	8,5	10,4
2060	30	32	10,6	12,1

Fig. 2. Share of people aged 65+ and 80+ in the total population in the perspective of 2060 in Poland and Opolskie Voivodeship (in %)

Source: own elaboration based on: *Prognoza ludności rezydującej dla Polski na lata 2023–2060. Województwa*. GUS [*Resident population projection for Poland for 2023–2060. Voivodeships*], GUS [*Central Statistical Office*]. https://stat.gov.pl/obszary-tematyczne/ludnosc/prognoza-ludnosci/

Moreover, the population structure by economic age groups is changing significantly. The decreasing share of people of working age, especially those of mobile age, and the simultaneously increasing share of people of post-working age are especially important. In 2000, people of post-working age constituted 14.5 of the total population, in 2014 almost 19%, and it is forecast that in 2050 the share of these people will exceed 32%. The increasing number of people of post-working age with the simultaneous decreasing share of people of non-working age influence changes in the level of the demographic dependency ratio. Currently, there are 58 people of non-working age, including 25 people of pre-working age and 33 people of post-working age per 100 people of working age. In 2050, the dependency ratio may increase to 110, which will be a consequence of a greater burden of people of post-working age (85), with an unchanged burden of people of pre-working age (25).

MIGRATION PROCESSES

The Opolskie Voivodeship still remains a specific region due to the migration processes observed there[5]. So far – and to a large extent also now – this specificity is associated with a significant foreign outflow, which in peak periods levelled the entire natural growth of the Silesian population, which was particularly involved in this outflow. The balance of foreign migration calculated as a percentage of the natural increase of this group exceeded 100% in the second half of the 20th century, in 1980s and the first half of 1990s; in 1981 alone, the balance reached 130% of the increase, and in the years 1994–2002 it exceeded 200%[6]. Despite the decline in the scale of emigration, due to its long-term and permanent nature, emigration still remains a significant element influencing the demographic and socio-economic situation in the region.

At the same time, in recent years, as in the entire country, the scale of immigration has increased significantly. The number of work permits issued in the Opolskie Voivodeship increased from 812 in 2014 to 13,894 in 2021, while the number of declarations on entrusting work to a foreigner increased from 6,160 to 133,152 in the same period[7]. The number of foreigners registered with the social security system is also continuously increasing (fig. 3). In 2022, there were 24,895 such people in the Opolskie region, which means that in the years 2015–2022 there was an almost 6-fold increase in submitted applications. Ukrainian citizens represent the largest group of immigrants in the region, just like in the whole country. However, their share in total number of foreigners, and especially their share in the total number of foreigners registered with the social security system, is higher than the average in the country. In recent years it has reached 85–88%.

[5] Heffner K., Solga B. 2020. *Koncepcja regionu emigracyjnego z perspektywy doświadczeń migracyjnych województwa opolskiego*. Czasopismo Geograficzne, 91(1–2): 21–36. https://open.icm.edu.pl/handle/123456789/20797

[6] Dybowska J. 2013. *Przemiany demograficzne w regionie o nasilonej migracji zagranicznej na przykładzie województwa opolskiego*. Uniwersytet Opolski, Opole; Heffner K., Solga B. 2017. *International migration and population decline in the regions with national minorities in Poland on the example of Opolskie Voivodeship*, in: Heffner K., Solga B. ed. *Borderlands of nations, Nations of Borderlands. National, ethnic and religious minorities in the Polish space – selected issues*. University of Łódź, Dept. of Political Geography and Regional Studies, Silesian Institute, Silesian Institute Society, Serie: Region and Regionalism, 13(2), Łódź–Opole: 11–26.

[7] These data do not reflect the actual scale of employment of foreigners in the region, but only provide information on the number of issued administrative decisions. Data from the Provincial Labor Office in Opole show that in 2021, 47% of declarations on entrusting work to a foreigner entered into the register ended with information about the foreigner not taking up work.

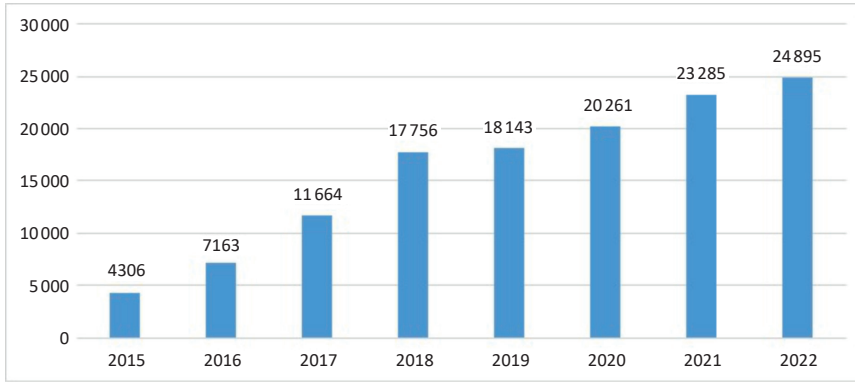


Fig. 3. Total number of foreigners registered for retirement and disability insurance in the Opolskie Voivodeship in the years 2015–2022

Source: own elaboration based of data from ZUS (*Social Insurance Institution*) https://psz.zus.pl/kategorie/ubezpieczeni/ubezpieczenia-emerytalne-i-rentowe

Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 became an additional factor that resulted in an increase in the inflow of migrants from this direction. Almost overnight, over 1.4 million people fleeing the war in Ukraine found shelter in Poland. In the Opolskie Voivodeship, 23,835 people were granted the status of a foreigner under the Act on Assistance to Ukrainian Citizens[8], currently, (March 2024) there are 21,117 of them[9]. However, the number of declarations on entrusting work to foreigners decreased significantly from the above-mentioned over 133,000 in 2021 to 53,123 in 2022 and 23,783 in 2023.

Even though the Opolskie Voivodeship is not a key region attracting a considerable part of the foreign labour force, its share on the regional scale is significant and the presence of immigrants from the point of view of the labour market is clear. Research shows[10] that economic immigrants who came to the region before the war in Ukraine are mostly men (70%), relatively well educated (32%) of them have higher education and incomplete higher education) and at the same time also with specific professional training (74%). Among them, there are larger groups of people whose vocations acquired by education are in short supply on the Opolskie labour market. Most often, they work as production workers, construction helpers,

[8] Act of March 12, 2022 on assistance to citizens of Ukraine in connection with an armed conflict on the territory of this country. https://isap.sejm.gov.pl/isap.nsf/DocDetails.xsp?id=WDU20220000583

[9] Statistical data on applications for Ukrainian refugee status submitted in connection with the conflict in Ukraine, Ministry of Digitalisation. https://dane.gov.pl/pl/dataset/2715

[10] Solga B. 2023. *Imigracja ekonomiczna z Ukrainy w województwie opolskim*, in: Solga B. ed. *Migracje i rozwój regionu, scientific supervision*. Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa (*the Government Population Council*), Warszawa: 103–119.

warehouse workers, cleaners and drivers. This means that they are largely represented in industries that traditionally employ foreigners. These are usually jobs that do not require high qualifications and are less in demand from the domestic workforce, especially in times of good economic conditions.

The motives for employing Ukrainian citizens are varied, but two of them are dominant, i.e. approximately ⅔ of entrepreneurs employ workers from Ukraine, because Polish employees are not interested in the job positions offered, or, to a lesser extent (approx. 24%), Poles are interested, but their financial expectations are too high compared to the entrepreneurs' capabilities (fig. 4). These reasons for employing foreigners are typical for all companies, regardless of their size. At the same time, the average costs of employing a Ukrainian employee in the same or similar job position as Poles prove to be similar to those of Polish employees (82%), and in some companies they are even higher (11%). The above data show that immigration from Ukraine is of a compensatory nature, i.e. employees from Ukraine fill staff shortages on the Opolskie labour market, do not "push" Poles out of the labour market and are not employed by Opolskie entrepreneurs to reduce labour costs. Therefore, in a situation of increasing problems with recruiting employees, economic immigration becomes a necessity[11].

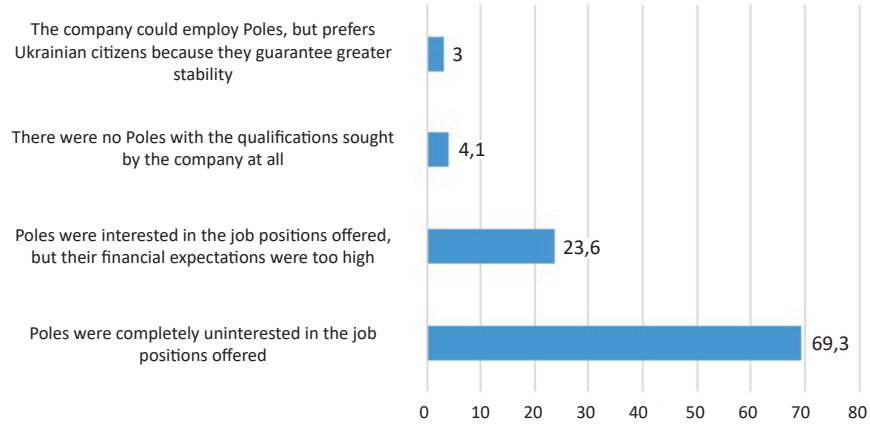


Fig. 4. Reasons for employing workers from Ukraine as assessed by entrepreneurs (%)
Source: Solga B. 2023. *Imigracja ekonomiczna z Ukrainy w województwie opolskim,* in: Solga B. ed. *Migracje i rozwój regionu, scientific supervision*. Rządowa Rada Ludnościowa (*the Government Population Council*), Warszawa.

[11] Gibas P., Heffner K., Korzeniowski M., Solga B., Sołdra-Gwiżdż T. 2021. *Rynek pracy jako obszar interwencji Regionalnego Programu Operacyjnego. Wpływ wybranych działań na poprawę sytuacji mieszkańców województwa opolskiego*. Instytut Śląski (*the Silesian Institute in Opole*), Opole.

On the other hand, research on refugees from Ukraine who came to the Opolskie region shows that the vast majority of them (approx. 63%) also have both specific qualifications and professional experience[12]. Although another almost 19% of Ukrainians have no professional experience, they have obtained professional qualifications, and 8% are people with no qualifications but who have already worked. The occupational segmentation of refugees is therefore internally diverse, nevertheless refugees from Ukraine can be described as labour resources prepared to enter the labour market. Additionally, almost half of them (48%) have higher education, and among the learned professions, economists, psychologists and educators, engineers and technologists, and medics are the most represented.

The structure of war migrants, i.e. the inflow of mainly women and children, can also be perceived positively in the context of demographic changes. However, it is difficult to presume its measurable and beneficial impact on improving the demographic situation in the near term, because the refugees' residence plans at the time of the research were mostly focused on returning to Ukraine (fig. 5). However, as the conflict continues and escalates, these plans may change significantly.

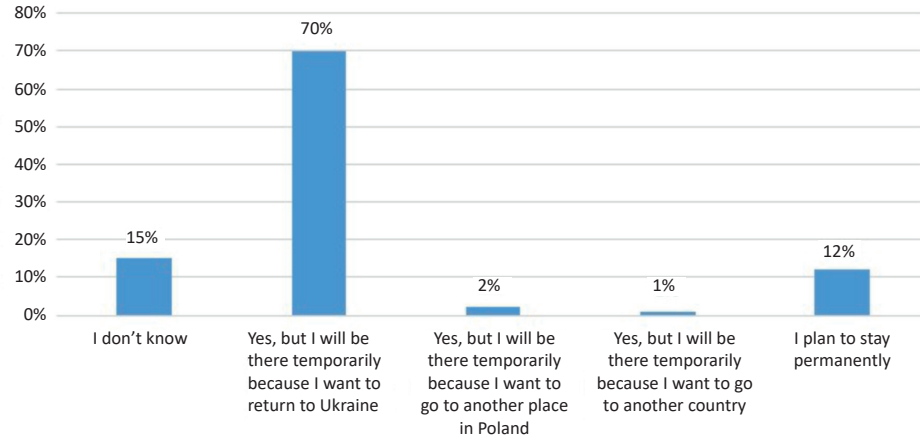


Fig. 5. Refugees' residence plans

Source: Kubiciel-Lodzińska S., Solga B., Filipowicz M. 2023. *Wykwalifikowani uchodźcy z Ukrainy wyzwaniem dla rynku pracy*. Horyzonty Polityki, 14(47): 187–207. https://doi.org/10.35765/hp.2401

[12] Kubiciel-Lodzińska S., Solga B., Filipowicz M. 2023. *Wykwalifikowani uchodźcy z Ukrainy wyzwaniem dla rynku pracy*. Horyzonty Polityki, 14(47): 187–207. https://doi.org/10.35765/hp.2401

CONCLUSIONS

The ongoing demographic changes in the Opolskie Voivodeship are still a significant challenge for the development policy of this region. In the context of the current, established migration trends, which give it the character of an emigration region, the inflow of migrants from Ukraine and other directions may reduce (at least to some extent) the negative effects of the permanent migration outflow[13]. In the area of ongoing migration changes, the proper integration of foreigners is the current urgent challenge[14]. The diverse nature of immigrant groups requires taking various integration measures towards them. In the case of pre-war migrants, facilitating matters related to the legalization of stay is important, but the priority is to keep them on the labour market, which is important if we think about their permanent stay in the region. Therefore, it is crucial to develop career counselling, especially vocational courses, so that immigrants can enhance or change their professional qualifications, considering the needs of the Opolskie labour market. It would also be important to implement a system of support for the development of entrepreneurship among immigrants and to facilitate the recognition of qualifications obtained in Ukraine and the official recognition of Ukrainian diplomas. Actions towards refugees, especially in the short term, are, in turn, of a different nature. Due to the much weaker knowledge of the Polish language, access to language courses is important for refugees. This is especially important in the case of contact with health services or offices, but poor knowledge of the language is also a significant barrier in access to culture[15]. Support in finding a place in a nursery or kindergarten for refugee children is important to a much greater extent than in the case of pre-war migrants. Eventually, if the family reunification process develops, including foreign children in the education system and taking specific actions in this area (e.g. integration support for foreign children, psychological and pedagogical advice) will also be important for pre-war migrants.

In turn, considering broader demographic changes, the aging of the regional population a key process. The population aging is most often perceived in an

[13] Heffner K., Solga B. 2024. *The Emigration-Region Concept, Emergence Mechanism and Characteristics: A Case Study of the Opolskie Voivodeship*. Central and Eastern European Migration Review, 8 May. https://doi.org/10.54667/ceemr.2024.07

[14] Kubiciel-Lodzińska S., Solga B. 2023. *The same or different? The challenges of Integrating Ukrainian Economic Migrants and Refugees in Poland*. Intereconomics, 58(6): 326–332. https://doi.org/10.2478/ie-2023-0067

[15] Bachórz A., Obracht-Prondzyński C. (red.). 2020. *Tradycja dla rozwoju?: instytucje - tożsamość - zmiany kulturowe w społecznościach lokalnych na przykładzie Pomorza*. Instytut Kaszubski, Nadbałtyckie Centrum Kultury, Gdańsk. https://wns.ug.edu.pl/sites/default/files/_nodes/strona-wns/101018/files/tradycja_dla_rozwoju_ksiazka_pobadawcza_wersja_ostateczna.pdf

ambivalent way, i.e. as an opportunity for development, but at the same time a huge challenge for development policy. On the one hand, elderly people may constitute an important consumer group in the housing, recreation and tourism markets, health services (including medical care, sanatoriums, fitness-improving services, pharmacology) and others, while on the other hand, there is an urgent need to increase the scope of health and care services provided to dependent seniors. It is not just about the lack of sufficient infrastructure. Another serious problem is its uneven distribution in the region's spatial layout – institutions and entities of this type are most often found in large cities, while the gaps concern small towns and rural towns. Along with the deepening process of population aging, the growing shortage of medical staff will also be severe. In this situation, caring for the elderly will require, for example, employing foreigners or additional support in the form of non-standard forms of care. There will be an increasing demand for appropriately focused education, e.g. caregivers of the elderly, art therapists, physiotherapists, sports trainers, psychologists, animators of events dedicated to the elderly, and educators of the elderly.

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Joanna SZCZEPANKIEWICZ-BATTEK
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8318-7955
WSB Merito University, Wrocław

REGION and REGIONALISM
No. 15

THE POPULATION OF MASURIA AND ITS ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS STRUCTURE AFTER THE SECOND WORLD WAR

East Prussia (German: *Ostpreußen*) is a region with a complicated history. This territory changed political affiliation several times and was further divided by national borders. The dominant religions and denominations on its territory changed, and after the Second World War there was an almost complete exchange of population, although – unlike the rest of the 'Recovered Territories' granted to Poland in 1945 under the Potsdam Conference – this process took not a few years, but several decades. All these events, often very dramatic, played an important role in shaping political and social relations in the region.

In the Middle Ages, the region was inhabited by the Prussians, classified as Baltic peoples. They practiced polytheism and offered great resistance to attempts to Christianize them. From the 13th century, the whole of Prussia was included in the territory of the state of the The Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem, commonly known as the Teutonic Order. The Teutonic Knights subjected the native inhabants to a brutal extermination, which was avoided only by those who chose to embrace Christianity. In 1525, the Order was dissolved and the territory of its former state was transformed into a secular principality of Prussia. It was headed by the Order's last Grand Master, Prince Albrecht Hohenzollern, nephew of King of Poland Sigismund the Old, who paid his uncle the fief tribute. Prince Albrecht met Martin Luther personally in 1523 and supported his demands for Church reform. In 1524, Sambian[1] Bishop Georg von Polentz introduced a new church order in his diocese as the first in Europe. In 1525, by Prince Albrecht's decision, Lutheranism became the state confession throughout the duchy. Lutheran doctrine mandated the celebration of church services and activities (baptisms, weddings, funerals) in the language „understandable by the people", while at the same time, it did not demand radical changes in the decoration of churches (no paintings or sculptures were removed from the churches at the

[1] The Diocese of Sambia had its headquarters in Königsberg.

time). Prince Albrecht supported Protestants living in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth with great benevolence (the Bible, hymnals[2] and other religious prints were printed in Polish in the printing house in Königsberg among others). He also received religious refugees from other European countries in his duchy. In 1548, a large group of Bohemian Brethren, who were exiled from the Habsburg Empire settled in Prussia and quickly assimilated into the local Lutheran population. In the 16th century, Lutheran services in Masuria were held in as many as four languages – besides German and Polish, also in Lithuanian and Old Prussian. A significant part of the rural population of Masuria still spoke Polish in the 19th century and many rituals dating back to pre-Reformation times were also preserved in church and in the secular area (Szczepankiewicz-Battek 2023). The population accepted the reform ordered in 1817 by King Frederick William III of Prussia with great reluctance. The reform combined the previous Lutheran and Evangelical-Reformed (Calvinist) churches into a joint Evangelical-Union Church, which was given the rank of state church. The Polish-speaking population in particular felt discriminated against, because church services and activities in Polish were restricted, as there was a shortage of Polish-speaking clergy. Beginning in the second half of the 19th century, gathering movements became very popular among Masurian Evangelicals. Their participants met in private homes for services led by lay preachers (called in Polish *predigter*)[3] as well as prayers and Bible studies, often distancing themselves from the officially operating Church. Gathering movements were most popular in the Szczytno and Nidzica counties. A significant part of the participants of the gathering movements were Polish-speaking Masurians (Otello 2003) and it may be stated that it was the gathering movements that significantly contributed to the preservation of the Polish language in the region. In this period, many Lutherans, who were rather German-speaking switched to the Baptist churches, which were emerging in large numbers and were much more vibrant. At the turn of the 20th century, in the whole of East Prussia there were only about 368,000 Catholics (out of a population of 2.4 million). $^{3}/_{5}$ of them lived in Warmia[4]. In the territory of Masuria in 30 counties, Evangelicals accounted for 90–99% of the population (Saxon 2017) (fig. 1).

[2] Hymnal – a songbook used during worship services. It contains numbered texts of hymns (sometimes also their notes), often also texts of occasional prayers.

[3] In Protestant churches, ordained (consecrated) pastors are needed only to administer the sacraments (Baptism and Holy Communion). Ordinary services can be conducted by lay people (lectors). If they do not have theolog-ical training, they read sermons from postilles – collections of sermons for all Sundays and feasts of the year written by respected clergymen.

[4] Warmia (the border between Warmia and Masuria is drawn on the line of lakes) is a historical land. Until 1772, it was part of the Kingdom of Poland and its population remained Roman Catholic. It was not until the First Partition of Poland that its territory was incorporated into Prussia.

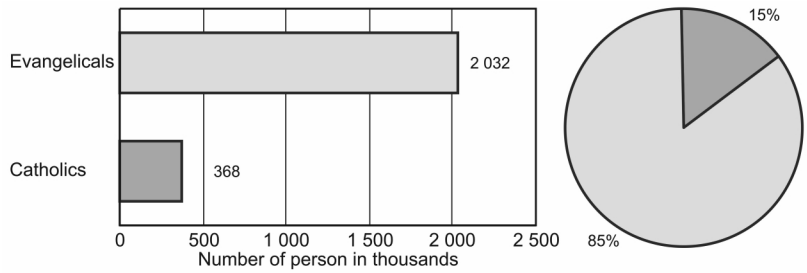

Fig. 1. The religious structure of East Prussia at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries

Sources: autor's own elaboration

According to the provisions of the Versailles Conference of 1919, it was a plebiscite, which was to determine as to what state Warmia, Masuria and Powisle regions were to be incorporated. The plebiscite was held on July 11, 1920 and it resulted in a total German victory. The vast majority of Polish-speaking Evangelicals also voted in favor of belonging to Germany (according to the German side, this was the population speaking a separate "Masurian" language). German propaganda, which was very active in the plebiscite area, convinced the Protestant population that if the territory was annexed to Poland, they might be forced to convert to Catholicism and abandon all their previous Masurian culture. The Polish authorities did not engage as intensively in pro-Polish propaganda because they were preoccupied with the concurrent Polish-Bolshevik war. Germanization tendencies against Polish-speaking Evangelicals in Masuria clearly intensified after they were incorporated into the German state (Otello 2003). As before, the strongest resistance to forced Germanization came from the gathering movements participants (Polish: *gromadkarze*). The residents of the sparsely populated, poor, mainly subsistence farming region largely supported the NSDAP in the 1933 elections, as they perceived in their election promises a chance to improve their material status. After the National Socialist party seized power, the situation for Polish-speaking Evangelicals in Masuria became even more difficult. Although many Evangelical clergy in the region supported the Confessing Church (German: *Bekennende Kirche*)[5], which opposed Nazism but this did not involve understanding the situation of the population identifying themselves as Polish. In 1938, services in the Polish language were completely abolished by order of the state authorities. In 1940, home services, commonly practiced by the gathering movements participants (Polish: *gromadkarze*), were also banned. However, they continued to be held clandestinely (Otello 2003).

[5] Confessing Church (German: *Bekennende Kirche*) – anti-Nazi movement in the Evangelical Church of Germany, formed as a reaction to the introduction of the so-called Aryan paragraphs into the official Church. Its leader was Pastor Martin Niemöller. Most of its activists were victims of more or less advanced repression by both the Nazi state authorities and the pro-Hitler church authorities (the so-called "German Christians").

As late as until 1944, the territory of East Prussia remained a war-free area. At the beginning of 1944, approximately 200,000 civilians arrived here from major urban centers bombed by the Allies, such as Hamburg (Saxon 1998). The vast majority of men living in the region had been mobilized and were at the front or serving in the ranks of the so-called *Volkssturm*[6] or were in captivity in the USSR. In October 1944, the Red Army offensive on East Prussia began. Despite the harsh winter in January 1945, the evacuation of civilians (mainly women, children and the elderly) from the region was ordered. Most often, it took the form of a disorderly flight. According to various estimates, between 150,000 and 500,000 people lost their lives during this evacuation (Saxon 1998). Those who chose to remain in place were subjected to bestial robberies, rape and even murder by Red Army soldiers. Most of the men who remained on the spot were deported to the USSR. According to Stalin's decree, the prisoners of war were supposed to rebuild the Soviet economy working as slave laborers. According to Polish researchers, the number of deportees from the region was about 200,000, while German researchers estimate the number as high as 350,000 (Sakson 1998). Almost none of the deportees returned to their hometowns.

Under the Potsdam Agreement of 1945, the territory of East Prussia was divided. The eastern part, the so-called Klaipeda District, which belonged to Lithuania before 1939, was again granted to Lithuania, which, as a Soviet republic, was incorporated into the USSR. The northern part of the region with its capital Królewiec (German: *Königsberg*), which was renamed Kaliningrad was incorporated into the USSR. The Kaliningrad District became an enclave of the Russian Soviet Federative Republic. The southern part of the region was granted to Poland as compensation for the territories occupied by the USSR. The state authorities proceeded to exchange the population. The German population, which remained in the area was to leave the region and be replaced mainly by relocatees from the Eastern Borderlands. The ecclesiastical authorities, both the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland started organizing their structures in the area. The number of Masurian Evangelicals, estimated at around 300,000 before 1939, has decreased significantly (Kłaczkow 2010). According to data from the 1950 Evangelical Calendar, in 1949, the Masurian diocese of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland had 68,500 believers, 89 parishes and 14 branches, which were served by 9 priests and 3 deacons. Many indigenous people did not want to leave their small homeland and were ready to undergo humiliating "nationality verification" before a special commission just to be able to stay in their place. They were often insulted, displaced, locked up in resettlement

[6] *Volkssturm* – an auxiliary formation to the Wehrmacht formed in the Third Reich during the last phase of World War II, recruiting mainly men who, due to age, health or other characteristics, had not previously been drafted into the regular armed forces. Due to their poor training and lack of armaments *Volkssturm* units were not of significant combat value.

camps and forced into semislave labor (Bażanowski 2017). The incoming Polish relocatees, who were frustrated by having to leave their hometowns and settle in completely unknown area usually treated the autochthons with undisguised hostility. Cases of robbery, rape of indigenous women, expulsion of previous owners from their homes and farms and even murders were a daily occurrence. The Communist security service usually referred to such transgressions with ostentatious indifference as long as the victims were indigenous people. According to many surviving accounts, particular chauvinism and hatred toward autochthons was shown by relocatees from northern Mazovia, that is a region adjacent to Masuria (Saxon 2017). Many Roman Catholic clergymen convinced the autochthons that conversion to Catholicism would be a condition for receiving Polish citizenship (Otello 1979). Some people, especially those who had married relocatees, gave in to this pressure. Nor were the state authorities interested in any form of integration between the autochthons and the immigrant population, seeing in stoking their mutual hostility a way to maintain their power.

In January 1945, only four Evangelical clergy remained in Masuria: in Olsztyn[7], Nidzica, Mrągowo and Mikołajki but they soon left to follow their parishioners. The Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland was facing a serious staff shortage at the time. A significant number of its clergy had died, been murdered or emigrated during World War II. It was very difficult to persuade only a few priests to agree to work in Masuria. The conditions for their work were extremely difficult. Each clergyman had a dozen or so parishes and branches to serve, which were located often dozens of kilometers away from each other. The only means of transportation to move between them were bicycles or hired wagons. Most Protestant churches were taken over by the Roman Catholic Church with the full approval of the state authorities, so services had to be held in private homes, schools or other venues (Bażanowski 2017). Wages were very low, as most parishioners were people who had been robbed of their property first by the Red Army and later by looters and new settlers. Irena Goller-Heintze, the only woman in the Polish Lutheran Church with a master's degree in theology was also sent to "auxiliary" ministry in Masuria (Cholewik 2005) but she soon had to resign due to health problems. Lay preachers, most often native Masurians with origins in the gathering movement (Polish: *gromadkarze*) could greatly relieve the burden on pastors but their service was mostly refused by the state authorities, who had doubts about their possible loyalty to the Polish state. Material assistance to Polish Evangelicals in Masuria was declared by the Lutheran churches of Sweden, Denmark and the USA but the possibilities of taking advantage of it were limited due to the strong surveillance of these contacts by the Polish security service (Bażanowski 2017).

[7] Olsztyn is located in Warmia. Until 1772, Evangelicals were forbidden to settle in the territory. An Evangelical parish was established here immediately after the ban was lifted but the Evangelical church in Olsztyn was not established until 1876–77 (Kruk 2002).

Attempts made by the church authorities to solve personnel problems in Masuria (for example, mandatory referral of all theology graduates to work in Masuria) ended in failure. In this situation, it was decided to ask for help from the clergy of the Methodist Church[8], which was building its structures in Masuria from scratch. The authorities of the Evangelical-Augsburg church promised that Methodist clergymen would conduct services and cover pastoral care for Lutherans in those towns where there were no Lutheran outposts. In practice, however, it soon became apparent that in the course of these ministries they were practicing active proselytizing, urging Lutherans to move to their church. Many Masurian Evangelicals, especially in western Masuria (Ostróda area) and in the Ełk region decided to formally move to the Methodists, initially, with the approval of the state authorities who hoped that this would accelerate the process of complete Polonization of the Masurians. After 1951, the situation changed and the state began to seek to limit the activities of the Methodists. The advantage of the Methodists over the Lutherans in the region was the fact that the model of religiosity presented by them and the liturgy of the services very much resembled the gathering movements (Polish: *gromadkarskie*) services. Also, their Church, as coming from Anglo-Saxon countries, completely distanced itself from the Polish-German conflicts. Methodists also argued that their activities saved many Protestant churches from being taken over by Catholics (Bażanowski 2020). These activities led to open, long-lasting conflicts between the two denominations. The situation improved only after 1990, when the Methodist Church in Poland formally adopted the name Evangelical-Methodist Church. In 1994, the two churches concluded an agreement on mutual cooperation and mutual honor of church offices, services and sacraments.

The ethnic and national structure of the region changed again in 1947 when approximately 50,000 Ukrainian population was forcibly resettled to Masuria as part of the Operation *Vistula*[9] (Saxon 1998). The relocatees sent to Olsztyn province (today it is called Warmian-Masurian province) came mainly from the vicinity of Przemyśl and were mostly adherents of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic

[8] The Methodists were a church split from the Anglican Church in Britain in the 18th century, emphasizing the personal sanctification of each adherent and distancing itself from official church structures. In its doctrine it was largely based on Central European Lutheran pietism and as a result Lutherans have always considered it a denomination close to themselves. The first Methodist churches on Polish soil were established in the beginning of the 20th century in Grudziądz and Chodzież but throughout the interwar period the church was not formally registered in Poland. It obtained legal personality only after World War II.

[9] Operation *Vistula* was the name given to the forced resettlement of Ukrainian and Lemko population from southeastern Poland to the western and northern territories granted to Poland in 1945. Most of the resettlement was carried out in 1947 but its repercussions lasted until 1950.

Church, which, according to the authorities' decision, was to be completely liquidated. The rationale behind the operation Vistula was to cut off the Ukrainian Insurgent Army, which was fighting for Ukraine's independence as well as for annexing Polish areas inhabited in large part by the Ukrainian population from the support shown to it by the local population. In reality, according to Drozd and Halczak (2010), by the time the action began, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army was already completely broken up. The entire Ukrainian population and mixed families were subjected to resettlement regardless of their loyalty to the Polish state. It took place in very brutal conditions (Drozd, Halczak 2010). They were directed to villages at least 50 kilometers from the state border and 30 kilometers from a provincial town (Barwiński 2013). This was later relaxed to 30 and 20 kilometers, respectively. In Masuria, the relocatees were mainly settled in the districts of Iława (30.5%), Węgorzewo (27.65%), Kętrzyn (13.6%), Giżycko (11%) and the Ełk district, which belonged to the Białystok province (Korzeniewska-Lasota 2007). They were settled generally on individual farms (usually those from which the local population had previously been displaced) or on former manor farms where socialized farms – state or cooperative – were established. Most of the relocatees were women, children and elderly men, as men of working age were mainly in prisons or labor camps. The settlers were deliberately settled most often in villages where most of the better farms were already occupied by newcomers from the East (often from Volhynia, so they remembered the massacres of Poles by Ukrainians) or central Poland. The hostility of a significant number of Poles was further compounded by the fact that the state authorities provided Ukrainians with many benefits as part of accelerating the assimilation processes (e.g. loans on favorable terms to compensate for property left behind in previous places of residence) (Sakson 1998). It was perceived by Poles as unjustified privileges. Despite the top-down assimilation pressure, Ukrainians tried to preserve their own linguistic, religious and cultural identity. Many of them were convinced that the resettlement was temporary and that it would be possible to return to their previous places of residence in a "short" time (Barwiński 2013). The denominational factor played an important role here. The Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church was officially liquidated and its activities were banned (many of its clergy were imprisoned) but services were held clandestinely in private apartments or in Roman Catholic churches made available to Greek Catholics by unofficial permission from the Roman Catholic Church authorities. One of the two legally operating Greek Catholic churches in Poland at the time was organized in 1947 in the building of a former school in Chrzanów near Ełk by a Greek Catholic priest Mirosław Rzepecki. The other was in Komańcza in the Subcarpathian region. The Polish Autocephalous Orthodox Church also undertook intensive efforts to extend pastoral care to the displaced, taking advantage of the fact that, unlike the Greek Catholics, it functioned completely legally. In this situation, over the next dozen

years or so, a number of Ukrainians decided to formally transfer to the Orthodox Church. These processes took place with the complete approval of the state authorities, since Orthodox believers were widely considered to be much more loyal to the state authorities than Greek Catholics. Orthodox services were mainly held in post-Evangelical churches hastily adapted into Orthodox churches, although, unlike the Roman Catholic Church, the Orthodox tried to take over these churches legally, buying them back or renting them from Evangelicals, although usually for token sums. A certain number of Ukrainians, especially those who entered into mixed marriages with partners of Polish nationality, also decided to formally convert to the Roman Catholic Church but the actual number of such conversions is impossible to determine.

It is also possible that a certain, albeit rather small portion of the resettled population of both Polish and Ukrainian nationalities decided to join evangelical-type churches operating in the area (Baptists, Pentecostals, Evangelical Christians, *etc*.). Although the German-speaking Baptists (they were recruited mostly from Lutherans disillusioned with the atmosphere in their mother Church) completely emigrated from Masuria immediately after World War II, among the relocatees from the Eastern Borderlands there were many Evangelicals (numerous Evangelical churches were located there, especially in Volhynia)[10]. They were subjected to very brutal surveillance by the Communist security service (Jańczuk 2024) and until 1989 had very limited opportunities to conduct activities, including attracting new adherents. Denominations of the Evangelical tradition also fluctuated repeatedly with churches frequently changing their ecclesiastical affiliation and individual churches merging or splitting, as well as changing their names. During the communist period, an independent denomination uniting believers of this trend was formed by the Baptist Church. In 1947, the remaining members of Evangelical communities formed the United Evangelical Church, which had a federative character and functioned until 1988. Later the denomination was dissolved and several independent churches were formed. Jehovah's Witnesses also carried out intensive missionary activities in Masuria and in the rest of Poland but they operated illegally throughout the communist period. Their denomination was registered as the "Watchtower" Bible Society in 1989. After 1989, there was a significant liberalization of laws regarding the establishment and operation of new religious denominations in Poland. There was then a rapid development of Evangelical communities throughout Poland, including Masuria. Most of their adherents were recruited from charismatic movements initially operating within the Roman Catholic Church. Because of the reluctant attitude of most church au-

[10] A doctoral dissertation on the history of the United Evangelical Church in Warmia and Masuria was defended at the Christian Academy of Theology in Warsaw by Wojciech Trytka in 2019, pastor of the Pentecostal Church in Giżycko. However, the work has not been published to date.

thorities toward this model of religiosity, they decided to move to already existing Evangelical churches or even to establish their own independent denominations.

According to Saxon (1998), in 1950, the indigenous population accounted for about 18% of residents of Masuria, Ukrainians – 7.5%, Poles who came from central Poland – 46%, and displaced persons from the Eastern Borderlands – 26%. According to data of the Roman Catholic Church, in 1949, out of 557,000 inhabitants of the territory of the Diocese of Warmia 80% were Roman Catholics (Kopiczko 1996). Catholics used 296 churches at their disposal, including 133 post-Evangelical churches (Kruk 2007) in the entire Olsztyn province, which also included the territory of traditionally Catholic Warmia. Most of the post--Evangelical churches were taken over in a completely illegal manner. In many cases, these were not churches abandoned by their previous owners. On the contrary, Catholic newcomers occupied churches, which were still in use by Evangelicals. In February 1946, the state authorities issued a decree according to which church buildings, as well as other church property belonged to the party that was using it at the time the decree was issued (Kruk 2007). This decree was not favorable for Evangelicals. Taking over churches continued in later years, which was ignored by the state authorities. According to the current Bishop of the Masurian diocese, the Rev. Paul Hause, "250 Roman Catholic parishes took over Protestant parishes, while a dozen passed into the hands of Orthodox or Greek Catholics" (*Masurian Confessions* 2024).

In the following years, especially after 1956, the situation of the Ukrainian population resettled in Masuria gradually improved. The acts of aggression or at least resentment against Ukrainians, which were frequent immediately after resettlement, became less and less frequent. From the beginning of resettlement, the state authorities intensively pursued the assimilation of the Ukrainian population into the Polish population but these processes gradually took on a more "soft" character than before. For example, people of Ukrainian origin were increasingly promoted to important positions in workplaces, they were elected to district or commune councils, they were active in the PZPR or other political parties (ZSL, SD). At the same time, Ukrainians were provided with opportunities to preserve their Ukrainian identity. In June 1956, the Ukrainian Social and Cultural Society was established. Also, emerging folk ensembles were supported and the first elementary and secondary Ukrainian schools were opened. Among others, in the school year 1956/57, a Ukrainian high school was opened in Bartoszyce in Warmia (Barwiński 2013). Ukrainian-language classes were provided in smaller towns where there was such a demand. The scale of repression against the Greek Catholic Church also diminished considerably. The state authorities did not agree to its reactivation as an independent denomination but in 1957, permission was given to conduct services and other church activities in Roman Catholic churches and to establish parishes of that rite, albeit under complete subordination to

the Roman Catholic Church (Drozd, Halczak 2010; Barwiński 2013). The official reactivation of the Byzantine-Ukrainian Church in Poland as an independent (though, of course, dependent on the Vatican) denomination did not occur until 1989. At present, the population of Ukrainian origin throughout Poland is considered to be a fairly well-integrated group socially. Many representatives of this minority hold important positions in local governments and they also have representatives in central-level authorities. At the same time, they preserve their traditional religion and culture. According to data from the 2002 census, 11.881 people in the Warmian-Masurian province declared Ukrainian nationality (Ożga 2009). Most of them reside in Warmia.

The situation of the indigenous population was much worse. They were openly discriminated against at work. There was a total and absolute ban on the use of the German language (exceptions were only made for "individual pastoral cases", such as religious services for the seriously ill) and at the same time, they were still treated as "Germans" in public life. The Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland was constantly struggling with shortage of personnel problems. In addition, the Masurian believers complained that priests coming from Cieszyn Silesia, from where the vast majority of Evangelical theology graduates were recruited, did not understand the specifics of their region (*Masurian Confessions* 2024). Embittered Masurian Evangelicals mostly declared their desire to leave Poland permanently. After 1956, many of them left our country. The exodus of Masurian Evangelicals intensified again in the 1970s, when the authorities of the People's Republic of Poland signed an agreement with the German government on "family reunification". It was also a public secret that in many cases the pressure for Masurians to leave was compounded by the desire to take over their homes, which were often located in very attractive tourist locations, such as by lakes, by prominent representatives of political life or the establishment, namely the artistic establishment. At the time, owning a house or at least a summer plot of land in Masuria became very fashionable among the elite, especially those from Warsaw. The departing autochthons generally received no compensation for the property they left behind in Poland. This led to one more decline in the number of believers. In addition to the mass departures, the loss of the believers was also related to the conversion of some of them to Catholicism. Most often, it concerned those living in mixed marriages, who were subjected to strong pressure from the Catholic part of the family and the fact that children of such marriages were, as a rule, raised Catholic, which was ruth-lessly enforced by the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church. Cases of destruction and vandalizing of Protestant property, especially cemeteries, as "German" were also still widespread, as were cases of illegal takeover of active Protestant churches by Catholics. As a rule, the militia and the prosecutor's office usually refused to accept reports or quickly discontinued investigations in those situations. The most drastic case occurred on Palm Sunday 1981 in Ukta, when

believers arrived for morning service and found out Catholics inside who had broken into the church at night and changed the locks (Szczepankiewicz-Battek 2023). After the easing of martial law regulations, the process of emigration of Evangelicals from Masuria continued.

According to the data of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland, in 1949, the Diocese of Masuria had 68,500 believers in 89 parishes and 14 branches. In 1953, it had 46,000 believers in 34 parishes, 56 churches and 32 preaching stations. In 1957, it had 39,811 believers in 45 parishes. In 1963, it had 16,368 believers in 35 parishes (according to other data, it was 21,617 people at the time). In 1968, it had 10,881 believers. In 1973, it had 6,771 believers. In 1983, it had 4,300 believers (Bażanowski 2007; Sakson 2017). At present (data as of 2023), the Masurian Diocese has only 3,500 believers in 15 parishes (*Masurian Confessions* 2024). Compared to the end of the 1990s, when the number of believers was estimated at less than 2,500, there has been a slight increase. It is related both to the fact that after 2000 there has been a certain liberalization of the Roman Catholic Church's position on the choice of religion for children of religiously mixed families, and to the number of conversions to Evangelicalism, which is clearly increasing. According to the Bishop of the Masurian Diocese, the Rev. Paul Hause, 15–20 conversions per year are now recorded throughout the Diocese (*Masurian Confessions* 2024). The converts tend to be well-educated people, often in prestigious professions. The number of conversions has clearly increased since most information on evangelicalism became available. Its doctrine, history, ethical assumptions, *etc*. is generally available on the Internet. There are also some cases of children from mixed families, who were raised Catholic to decide to choose the Evangelical denomination when they come of age. In the contemporary community of Masurian Evangelicals, there are local government officials, scientists, journalists, columnists, who are well-known in Masuria. They also have a representative in the Polish parliament, MP Urszula Pasławska of the PSL party. Unfortunately, in recent years the situation of Evangelicals in Masuria has again deteriorated. It can hardly be unconnected with the takeover of power in Poland in 2015 by right-wing parties. In 2021, public opinion throughout Poland was appalled by the destruction of the old Evangelical cemetery in Nowa Wieś Ełcka. This was done at the behest of the local Roman Catholic priest, who claimed that he had received written permission for this action from the Bishop of Ełk. The authorities of the Masurian Diocese of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland, supported by several prominent figures in the region, including MP Urszula Pasławska, ruthlessly demanded that the damage be repaired. The court verdict imposed hefty fines on the parish priest and the businessman carrying out work on the cemetery, as well as punitive damages for the National Monuments Fund. It also ordered the restoration of the cemetery to its original condition. However, it was handed down in the court of first instance as late as in

January 2024. In the last days of May 2024, the court of second instance reduced the scope of responsibility for the devastation of the cemetery to the defendants and lowered the amount of the punitive damages, which was ordered in the first instance. The verdict met with widespread outrage throughout the Evangelical community in Poland (Krawiel 2024). The chronology of the history of the Evangelicals in East Prussia is presented in the matrix table (fig. 2).

	PRUSSIANS – Baltic Peoples	**POLITEISM**
13th c.	The Order of the Teutonic Knights of St. Mary's Hospital in Jerusalem	Christianity – **CATHOLICISM**
1525	DUCHY OF PRUSSIA	**LUTHERANISM** as a State Confession, services in German, Polish, Lithuanian, and Old Prussian
1548	Settlement of the Czech Brethren expelled from the Habsburg Empire	
1817	The unification of the Lutheran Church with the Reformed (Calvinist) Church into a common Evangelical Union Church of state church status	
Second half of 19th c.	• Gathering movements, private services conducted by lay preachers large part consisted of Polish-speaking Masurians the preservation of the Polish language in the region; • The transition of some Lutherans (mostly German-speaking) to the numerous and actively functioning Baptist congregations	
July 11, 1920	Germany's victory in the plebiscite announced at the Versailles Conference in 1919	Resistance of gathering movements and Polish-speaking Evangelicals against Germanization
1933	Victory of the NSDAP in the election	Abolition of services in the Polish language and the prohibition of home services practiced by gathering movements
1944	Arrival of 200,000 civilians from major urban centers bombed by the Allies, such as Hamburg	
October 1944	Red Army Offensive in East Prussia	
January 1945	Evacuation of the civilian population from the region (mainly women, children, and the elderly)	
	Looting, rapes, and murders by Red Army soldiers; deportation of remaining men o the interior of the USSR; deportation of 200,000 to 350,000 residents from the region	
1945	Division of East Prussian territory under the Potsdam Agreement of 1945: **Lithuania** – the eastern part the so-called Klaipeda Region **USSR** – the northern part the Kaliningrad Region (enclave of the RSFSR) **Poland** – southern part compensation for territories occupied by the USSR	
	Expulsion of the remaining German population from the area	
	Arrival of settlers from the Eastern Borderlands	Organization of church structures by the Roman Catholic Church and the Evangelical-Augsburg Church in Poland
1947	Forced resettlement of 50,000 Ukrainians as part of the "Vistula" operation	Official dissolution of the Ukrainian Greek Catholic Church
The 1960s and 1970s	Emigration of the indigenous population to Germany	

Fig. 2. The chronology of the history of the Evangelicals in East Prussia
Source. autor's own elaboration

Since the 2015 seizure of power in Poland by parties clearly identified with the right wing, the situation of national, ethnic and religious minorities in our country has deteriorated considerably. These authorities proclaim an ostentatious dislike of national, ethnic and religious minorities living in Poland. There are even increasingly frequent voices calling for restrictions on their rights, sometimes even expressed by parliamentarians or other representatives of central and local government. Particular hostility is presented by the state authorities towards the German minority, as well as towards Evangelicals, who are still commonly identified with "Germanness". It should be linked to the overall policy pursued by the Polish authorities towards Germany and the European Union in recent years. Also, the privileged role of the Roman Catholic Church, which has become even stronger recently, leads to a situation when religious minorities in all conflicts with the hegemon stand in a predetermined lower position (the situations described above are an example). The Ukrainian minority, mostly members of the Byzantine-Ukrainian Church, which recognizes the supremacy of the Roman Catholic Church is in a much better situation in this regard than members of Protestant churches. Groups discriminated against and often even excluded by the previous government, as well as national, ethnic and religious minorities pin their hopes on the change of political power, which took place in Poland at the end of 2023.

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Marek BARWIŃSKI
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8059-6884
University of Lodz
Faculty of Geographical Sciences
Department of Political and Historical Geography
and Regional Studies

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CHANGES IN THE NATIONALITY STRUCTURE OF POLAND IN THE FIRST DECADES OF THE 21ST CENTURY IN THE LIGHT OF THE RESULTS OF THE CENSUSES (2002–2021)

INTRODUCTION

Determining the size of national and ethnic minorities in Poland in the second half of the 20th century was very difficult, mainly due to numerous migration flows, political conditions unfavourable to nationality declarations, and especially the lack of official nationality statistics (Eberhardt 1996, 2006, 2008; Sobczyński 2000; Gawryszewski 2005). The question of nationality was only included in the first post-war population census of 1946, but its results were, for a number of reasons, unreliable and unsuitable for an analysis of Poland's nationality structure at the time. It was mainly organised to determine the population losses caused by the war and occupation and to determine the size and distribution of the German population subject to displacement. The census was conducted in a very unstable, dynamic demographic situation, during ongoing resettlements of Germans, Ukrainians, Lemkos, Belarusians, Lithuanians, as well as resettlements of the Polish population from the lands occupied by the USSR. In addition, the census questionnaire only distinguished between Poles, Germans and "others", and those for whom rehabilitation or verification proceedings were underway, and therefore did not give any information on the numbers of, for example, Jews, Ukrainians or Belarusians at the time (Olejnik 2003; Eberhardt 2010; Barwiński 2015b).

In five consecutive censuses (1950, 1960, 1970, 1978, 1988), questions on nationality, native language and religion were not included. Contrary to the facts, the communist authorities concluded that after the border changes and population resettlements, Poland was transformed into an ethnically homogeneous country and the issue of national minorities became marginal. The size of the non-Polish

population was determined only on the basis of various types of more or less reliable estimates. This very significantly limited geographical research, both quantitatively and spatially, on national minorities living in Poland (Barwiński 2015a). In official questionnaires, the section on nationality survived until the late 1980s in personal forms submitted in order to obtain an identity document or passport, but this data remained the exclusive responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior, which, however, did not formally produce analyses of the nationality structure (Sobczyński 2012).

Moreover, only a few censuses in Poland, both in the 20th and 21st centuries, met all the theoretical criteria for conducting them. According to the demographer Z. Holzer (1989), a census, if it is to establish the structure of the population according to selected characteristics, must be carried out in a strictly defined time and territory by means of individual acquisition of information on the entire population under study. On the other hand, population geographer A. Gawryszewski (2005) draws attention to the four basic criteria of population censuses: universality (covers all inhabitants), simultaneity (is carried out over the whole territory according to the state on a specific date), naming (each person is surveyed by name) and directness (answers are obtained from the surveyed person).

The absence of official census data on the nationality structure of Poland in the second half of the twentieth century necessitated estimates of the size of national minorities. However, despite the unquestionable occurrence of assimilation processes, including Polonisation, among national minorities in the last few decades, they were not reflected in various estimates of their numbers. According to them, the number of representatives of the so-called traditional national minorities in Poland (such as Germans, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Slovaks), starting from the 1950s, either remained at a similar level or increased slightly, although systematically. However, the dissemination in the early 1990s of estimated data on the number of members of the then numerous ethnic organisations, the continued lack of official census data and the conviction of many researchers that during the communist period the authorities deliberately underestimated the size of the non-Polish population (e.g. Sakson 1991; Eberhardt 1996; Kurcz 1997; Chałupczak & Browarek 1998; Sobczyński 2000) resulted in a marked increase in the estimated size of particular national and ethnic minorities.

2002 CENSUS

It was not until the 2002 census, which included a question on nationality, that the official size of non-Polish communities on Polish territory was presented for the first time in several decades (tab. 1).

Table 1. The nationality structure of Poland at the turn of the 20th and 21st centuries – a comparison of estimates from the 1990s and the results of the 2002 census

Nationality	Estimated population before 2002 census (thousands)	2002 census results (thousands)	
		total	with Polish citizenship
Poles	–	36 983.7	36 895.2
Silesians	–	173.2	172.7
Germans	300–360	152.9	147.1
Belarusians	200–300	48.7	47.6
Ukrainians	150–300	31.0	27.2
Roma	15–25	12.9	12.7
Russians	10–17	6.1	3.2
Lemkos	50–80	5.9	5.8
Lithuanians	9–25	5.8	5.6
Kashubians	370–500	5.1	5.1
Slovaks	10–25	2.0	1.7
Vietnamese	–	1.8	0.4
French	–	1.6	1.0
Americans	–	1.5	1.0
Greeks	–	1.4	0.8
Jews	5–15	1.1	1.1
Bulgarians	–	1.1	0.4
Armenians	5–15	1.1	0.3
Czechs	1–5	0.8	0.4
Tatars	2.5–5	0.5	0.4

Source: author's compilation based on M. Barwiński (2006: 348) and Central Statistical Office (GUS) data (2008). *Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2002 w zakresie deklarowanej narodowości oraz języka używanego w domu*. Retrieved from http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/ (15 July 2008).

The question on nationality was formulated in the simplest yet very direct way – *which nationality do you belong to?*[1] This was a clear reference to the first Polish census of 1921, while at the same time remaining in line with European norms

[1] The census form defines nationality as *a declarative (based on subjective feeling) individual characteristic of each person, expressing his or her emotional, cultural or genealogical (due to parental origin) connection with a particular nation*.

and the criteria for ethnicity prevalent in the literature. The question, asked in a face-to-face interview by the census taker, was open-ended and in the form of a subjective declaration; there was no list of nationalities to choose from, nor any opportunity to declare complex, dual, gradable identities.

The census showed a small size of non-Polish population – a nationality other than Polish was declared by only 471.5 thousand people (1.23%), 444.6 thousand of whom had Polish citizenship (1.16%)[2]. These figures confirmed the commonly held thesis that Poland is one of the most ethnically homogeneous countries in Europe[3]. However, despite the small minority population, Poland's nationality structure proved to be extremely diverse and at the same time fragmented. The census identified as many as 109 different minorities, both national, ethnic and ethno-regional[4].

The most surprising result of the census was the large number of declarations of Silesian nationality – 173.2 thousand. Silesians turned out to be the most numerous minority group in Poland. The reasons for this phenomenon can be found in the historical specificity of Silesia as a peculiar Polish-Czech-German border region, its cultural and economic uniqueness, the strong awareness of the regional distinctiveness of its inhabitants, as well as in the activities of various Silesian socio-political organisations, especially the Silesian Autonomy Movement. Certainly not without significance was also the very clear reluctance, persisting to this day, of the Polish authorities to officially recognise the Silesian nationality.

Another characteristic result was the demonstration of a very small number of so-called traditional (historical) national minorities, deviating sharply *in the negative* from earlier estimates. The difference between the estimates and the census results was up to tenfold. This was the case for both relatively numerous minorities, e.g. Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lemkos, as well as numerically marginal ones, such as Tatars, Armenians, Czechs or Jews (tab. 1).

Such large differences between the 1990s estimates and the census results may indicate two possibilities: that the actual numbers of individual minorities were previously overestimated, or that they were underestimated through the procedures used during the census. Both factors seem to have acted simultaneously.

[2] Based on Central Statistical Office (GUS) data (2008). *Wyniki Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2002 w zakresie deklarowanej narodowości oraz języka używanego w domu*. Retrieved from http://www.stat.gov.pl/gus/ (15 July 2008).

[3] A country is considered ethnically homogeneous if national and ethnic minorities do not constitute more than 5% of its citizens; in the case of Poland in 2002, this share was almost five times lower.

[4] Of the 109 nationalities listed in the census, the five most numerous (Silesian, German, Belarusian, Ukrainian and Roma) accounted for as much as 88.7% of the total number of declarations of non-Polish nationality. Together with the next five minorities (Russian, Lithuanian, Lemko, Kashubian, Slovakian), they represented as much as 96.4% of all persons declaring non-Polish nationality during the census (Szczygielski 2006).

Despite the very large number of studies published in the 1990s on the nationality structure of Poland, estimates of the size of the various minorities differed greatly from one another or were contained in wide ranges, which significantly limited their reliability and cognitive value (tab. 1). This was mainly a consequence of objective and subjective problems in the study of ethnic issues, the use of different research methods and minority criteria by researchers, underestimation of the intensity of assimilation and acculturation processes, varying reliability and representativeness of research. It can be assumed that these estimates were inflated; moreover, they referred to the total number of people from non-Polish backgrounds. This meant those with a very strong national identity and those of non-Polish "origin", with a complex, gradable national identity, as well as those who have largely lost their sense of national distinctiveness and consider themselves Poles rather than members of national minorities (Barwiński 2006; Rykała 2014).

The results were also influenced by the method of conducting the census. In 2002, for the first time in decades, the census asked a question about nationality, phrased very directly and unambiguously. Such novelty was bound to cause consternation among parts of the non-Polish population, which may have resulted in them concealing their true ethnic origin or consciously choosing Polish nationality in the case of little sense of identity with one's own minority group. Prior to the census, representatives of individual minorities, especially members of the authorities of the main minority organisations, widely criticised the inclusion of a question on nationality in the census form (Łodziński 2006). They argued that members of minorities would be afraid to officially declare their own distinct national identity, thus making the census results unreliable, underestimating the actual numbers of individual minorities.

These concerns may have been justified. It should be borne in mind that the census is seen as an administrative undertaking of the state authorities, which, in the context of the negative historical experiences of some nationality groups (e.g. Germans, Ukrainians, Lemkos, Jews) and the various kinds of personal fears associated with this, may have resulted in a reluctance to reveal non-Polish identity, especially in a face-to-face interview with the census taker. A sense of anonymity, especially in rural and small-town environments, was also a factor that may have influenced the results. Not insignificant for such a small number of non-Polish nationalities shown during the census, was the still persisting low level of tolerance and negative stereotypes among Polish society, which may have caused an aversion to declare, among others, Roma, Jewish or Ukrainian nationality.

The 2002 census, showing a small number of national minorities, showed, on the one hand, the scale of overestimation and the intensity of the Polonisation processes that took place in the second half of the 20th century, and on the other, due to the adopted method of conducting the census and the structure of the question as well as social conditions, underestimated the number of national minorities

in Poland (including Babiński 2004; Łodziński 2004, 2005, 2006; Adamczuk & Łodziński 2006; Barwiński 2006; Chałupczak 2006). Its results, like all censuses of this type in democratic countries, were based solely on subjective declarations of citizens. They did not fully reflect the national structure of Poland at that time, but they cannot be fully disregarded. They did not show the actual number of individual minorities, but rather the state of national awareness of non-Polish nationalities at the beginning of the 21st century. The data obtained during this census should be treated as minimum values, or the number of people with a strongly established non-Polish national identity (Barwiński 2015b).

2011 CENSUS

The next population census was conducted less than a decade later, in 2011, under new social, political and legal conditions, related to, among others, Poland's acceptance of obligations related to the ratification of the *Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities*, the adoption of the *Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and the Regional Language*[5], and Poland's accession to the European Union. These events empowered minorities, who were effectively included in discussions about how ethnic data was collected. Also, unlike the previous census, this time the leaders of minority organisations were very actively involved in mobilising their communities. The next census gave hope for verifying previous data and presenting changes in the nationality structure of Poland at the beginning of the 21st century. Unfortunately, in both censuses (2002 and 2011) completely different procedures and methods of obtaining data and presenting results were used, which made it difficult, although not impossible, to carry out comparative studies.

The 2011 census was conducted using a mixed method. It was divided into the so-called full survey (prepared mainly on the basis of data from administrative registers) and a much more extensive sample survey, which covered residents of 20% randomly selected households (over 8 million people), with the intention of generalising the data to the entire population. Other novelties were the optional possibility of individually completing the census via the Internet, declaring double

[5] The Act defined the conditions under which the Polish state may recognize a given community as a national or ethnic minority, and granted official legal status to nine national minorities (Belarusian, Czech, Lithuanian, German, Armenian, Russian, Slovak, Ukrainian, Jewish) and four ethnic minorities (Karaim, Lemko, Roma, Tatar), providing them with legal protection and a number of privileges regarding, among others, education, bilingual place names, minority languages as an auxiliary language in offices. Moreover, it recognised the Kashubian language as the only regional language in Poland (Journal of Laws, 2005, No. 17, item 141).

national identity and (only in the sample survey) answering questions about religion and native language. Data was collected from various sources: administrative registers, an online self-census, a telephone interview conducted by a statistical interviewer and from an interview recorded on an electronic device conducted by a census taker. No paper forms were used. What is much more important, similarly to the 2002 census, there were no direct visits by the census taker at all homes. This form of conducting the census, although consistent with international recommendations and using modern technologies, was also caused by the need to save money (Gołata 2013, 2018; Barwiński 2014).

According to information published immediately after the end of the census on the website of the Central Statistical Office (GUS), in the sample survey, 100% of randomly selected apartments were listed, while in the full survey, complete data was obtained for 98.9% of the population. In 2011, only 12% of the population (approximately 4.5 million people) took advantage of the option of completing the census form themselves via the Internet. In this group, the share of people from national and ethnic minorities was probably significantly higher than indicated by nationality statistics. This was a consequence of active promotion of this form of census in non-Polish communities by national minority organisations and direct assistance in completing online forms during the census. The Central Statistical Office also informed that *if a given person was not contacted by the census taker or the phone interviewer, it means that all the information required by the thematic scope had been collected from the registers, and therefore, in accordance with the Census Act, the obligation to participate in the census has been fulfilled*[6]. From the administrative registers, the Central Statistical Office could obtain a number of information falling within the scope of the questions included in the census form, but data regarding, among others, nationalities could only be collected using survey techniques, as it was unavailable in any registers. This means that if someone did not take advantage of the opportunity to fill out the census form via the Internet, was not approached by a census taker or a phone interviewer, they were not able to declare their own national identity, and the Central Statistical Office, contrary to its own declarations, could not have reliable and reliable knowledge on this topic, and thus could only produce estimated data.

The Central Statistical Office emphasised that in 86 communes with the largest (over 10%) share of national minorities (according to data from the 2002 census), the full survey covered all residents who had the opportunity to declare their own national and linguistic identity[7]. This made it possible to collect data on

[6] Based on *Komunikat Centralnego Biura Spisowego nt. uczestnictwa w Narodowym Spisie Powszechnym Ludności i Mieszkań 2011*. GUS (2011). Retrieved from http://www.sosnowiec.pl/_upload/file/POZ_Komunikat_3006_1115.pdf (3 April 2013).

[7] Based on *Zasady opracowania wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego Ludności i Mieszkań 2011 w zakresie mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych oraz języka regionalnego*.

nationalities with high territorial concentration, such as Germans, Belarusians and Lithuanians. In turn, in several hundred communes inhabited to a small extent by national and ethnic minorities, not all residents, including minority representatives, declared their national affiliation. Moreover, this method largely eliminated the possibility of collecting reliable statistical data for highly dispersed minorities, e.g. in 2002, Ukrainians constituted over 10% of the total population in only nine communes, Lemkos in a single commune, and, among others, Czechs, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Tatars or Jews – in none.

Due to little interest in the online self-census and the lack of a census taker's visit to many apartments, the 2011 census did not meet at least two of the four basic criteria of modern population censuses. In terms of ethnic questions, contrary to the claims of Central Statistical Office officials, it did not meet the criteria of universality and directness (not all information could be obtained from administrative registers and not all answers were obtained directly from the person being surveyed). It only met the criterion of simultaneity, but it is debatable whether, assuming its lack of universality, it met the criterion of naming.

Ethnic questions were formulated in a completely new way in the census forms. Although the basic question was the same as a decade ago, i.e. *What is your nationality?*, it was not an open question, but included a list of 14 nationalities (Polish and 13 alphabetically arranged minorities specified in the Act[8]) and the option "other", which in turn contained a list of as many as 177 nationalities, including, among others, Silesian, Kashubian, Masurian, Ruthenian, Boyko, Hutsul. If someone still could not find a nationality that would be consistent with their sense of identity, it was possible to enter any unlisted identification.

However, the next question was completely new, included for the first time in Polish population censuses following the suggestions of leaders of national minority organisations: *Do you feel you also belong to another nation or ethnic community?* Including this question in the census form was a response to appeals from groups of non-Polish nationalities to give people with a complex, dual national identity a chance to express it. In practice, this meant the possibility of declaring two nationalities. What is very important, it was decided that people declaring that they belonged to a minority and at the same time to the Polish nation would be included in the minority, regardless of whether the minority declaration came first or second. However, in the case of two minority declarations, the order of declarations would determine whether a person was classified as a given mino-

GUS (2012). A note of the Department of Demographic Research for the 31st meeting of the Joint Commission of the Government and the National and Ethnic Minorities. Retrieved from http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/Notatka_KWRzMNiE_22-23_luty_ 2012.pdf (5 April.2013).

[8] *Act on national and ethnic minorities and the regional language*. Journal of Laws, 2005, No. 17, item 141.

rity[9]. This method of calculating the nationality structure was innovative in Poland, especially the principle of superiority of the declaration of belonging to a minority over the Polish national identity, which had a very significant impact on the results obtained during the census[10].

Therefore, the nationality structure of the Polish population in 2011, unlike the 2002 census, was developed on the basis of information obtained from only 12% of participants in the online self-census, and also using a random method among the inhabitants of 20% of households and 86 deliberately selected communes with the largest (over 10%) populations of minorities followed by extrapolations and estimates for the entire population, and not based on a direct conversation during a general census. The data that the Central Statistical Office obtained from administrative registers during the census were worthless in the case of ethnic issues. This method of conducting the census, obtaining data and determining the nationality structure significantly limited the cognitive value and reliability of the results obtained (Barwiński 2014; Rykała 2014).

At the same time, it should be emphasised that among statisticians and demographers there were many positive opinions about the methodology used and the organisation of the census. They emphasised the scale of organisational and methodological challenges, improving the efficiency and quality of research, the use of administrative registers in public statistics, statistical integration of data from various sources, compliance of the methodology with international recommendations, and the use of new technologies. They also drew attention to the fact that the 2011 census was the first in the history of censuses in Poland to examine ethnic issues on such a large scale. The solutions to ethnic questions were significantly expanded compared to the previous census and, for the first time, also allowed for the identification of complex identities. Moreover, the use of an online self-census in ethnic research, also for the first time, was treated as a guarantee of safety and anonymity (Gołata 2012, 2013, 2014, 2016).

During the 2011 census, 1,467.7 thousand people (3.81%) declared their nationality as other than Polish (in very different configurations). As many as 917.3 thousand people took advantage of the opportunity to express double identity people, the vast majority of whom (871.4 thousand) declared both Polish and other national-ethnic identity, most with Polish in first place (788.1 thousand). All these people (regardless of where they placed Polish nationality) were assigned to national or ethnic minorities, which did not always have to be consistent with

[9] Position of the *Joint Commission of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities* of September 16, 2010, Lublin.

[10] All those who declared Polish nationality first and then *the feeling of belonging to another nation* during the census were not recognised by the Central Statistical Office as Poles, but as representatives of a national, ethnic or regional minority. There were almost 788,000 such people in 2011.

their intentions. This method of calculating the nationality structure turned out to be crucial for the more than three-fold increase in the number of national and ethnic minorities in Poland in the years 2002–2011. However, 596.3 thousand people (1.55%) declared their nationality to be exclusively non-Polish, including 45.9 thousand identified with two non-Polish nationalities. Thanks to the possibility of choosing nationality from the extensive dictionary of ethnonyms included in the form or freely writing any identity declaration, a total of over 200 non-Polish national, ethnic, regional and local identifications were recorded[11].

Among the nationality declarations, by far the most numerous concerned the ethnic distinctiveness of regional groups – Silesians and Kashubians, but, especially in the case of Kashubians, they were expressed mainly in the second question and were largely associated with the simultaneous feeling of Polish national identity. In terms of population, Silesians completely dominated the national structure in Poland. Declarations of Silesian nationality were more numerous than all other non-Polish ethno-national identifications combined (tab. 2).

This was a confirmation of their dominant position from the previous census in 2002, but such an impressive increase in number (from 173.2 thousand to 846.7 thousand people) in less than a decade was mainly a consequence of changes in the method of conducting the census (411 thousand people declared Silesian nationality second, most often after Polish nationality), the propagation and dissemination of the idea of the Silesian nation, group mobilisation, activity of Silesian organisations and media publicity and politicisation of the issue of Silesian nationality, including the persistent denial of the distinctiveness of this community by right-wing political groups.

The impressive result obtained by Silesians during the 2011 census resulted in the intensification of the efforts of the leaders of this community, ongoing since 2002, for the formal and legal recognition of Silesian nationality, including Silesians as an ethnic minority in the *Act on national, ethnic minorities and regional languages*[12], and on recognition of the Silesian language as the second regional language, apart from Kashubian. After many appeals and legal battles, in 2013 the Supreme Court decided that Silesians could not be recognised as a separate nation. This situation has not changed to this day, and Silesian nationality is still not legally recognised in Poland. The denial of the ethnic distinctiveness of Silesians is mainly politically motivated. The national aspirations of Silesians and the activity of organisations that awaken their awareness are considered by the state authorities, especially the right-wing ones, as a threat to the national unity of

[11] Based on the study by the Central Statistical Office (GUS) (2013), *Ludność. Stan i struktura demograficzno-społeczna*. Retrieved from http://www.stat.gov.pl/ (9 April 2013).

[12] Silesians meet all the conditions regarding the status of an ethnic minority contained in the Act (Journal of Laws, 2005, No. 17, item 141).

Table 2. The national structure of Poland based on the results of the 2011 census

Nationality	Declared nationality during the 2011 census (thousands)				
	total	as first	of this as only one	as second	together with Polish
Poles	37 393.7	37 310.3	36 522.2	83.3	x
Silesians	846.7	435.8	375.6	411.0	430.8
Kashubians	232.6	17.7	16.4	214.8	215.8
Germans	147.8	74.5	44.5	73.4	63.8
Ukrainians	51.0	38.4	27.6	12.6	20.8
Belarusians	46.8	36.4	30.2	10.4	15.6
Roma	17.1	12.6	9.9	4.5	7.0
Russians	13.1	8.2	5.2	4.8	7.1
Americans	11.8	1.2	0.8	10.6	10.8
Lemkos	10.5	7.1	5.6	3.4	3.6
English	10.5	1.6	1.2	8.9	9.1
Italians	8.6	1.7	0.9	7.0	7.5
French	8.0	1.5	1.1	6.5	6.8
Lithuanians	7.9	5.6	4.8	2.3	3.0
Jews	7.5	2.5	1.6	5.0	5.4
Vietnamese	4.0	3.6	2.9	0.4	1.1
Spaniards	4.0	0.5	0.4	3.5	3.4
Dutch	3.9	0.9	0.5	3.1	3.3
Armenians	3.6	3.0	2.0	0.7	1.5
Greeks	3.6	1.1	0.7	2.5	2.9

Explanations: [a] applies to all persons, both with and without Polish citizenship; [b] the data do not add up, the answers come from two questions.

Source: author's elaboration based on data from Central Statistical Office (GUS) (2013). *Ludność. Stan i struktura demograficzno-społeczna*. Retrieved from http://www.stat.gov.pl/ (9 April 2013).

Poles. Such behavior by politicians in a country with a small number of national and ethnic minorities, towards not only the largest but also indigenous nationality, is very difficult to defend[13] (Michna 2013; Rykała 2014; Barwiński 2016).

The results of the 2011 census also clearly indicate an increase in the sense of ethnic distinctiveness of other regional groups, not only Silesians and Kashubians. For the first time in the history of Polish censuses, the following declarations of regional affiliations were recorded: Kociewie (3.1 thousand), Highlander (2.9 thousand), Greater Poland (1.5 thousand), Masurian (1.4 thousand), Cieszyn Silesian (0.9 thousand), Zagłębie (0.9 thousand), Tuchola (0.8 thousand), Masovia (0.3 thousand), Kurpie (0.3 thousand). In the vast majority (over 90%) they were, as in the case of Kashubians, declared second, along with Polish national identity, i.e. their appearance during the census was a direct consequence of the innovative method of formulating ethnic questions.

Among the so-called traditional minorities, as in the previous census, Germans, Ukrainians, Belarusians and Roma were most numerously represented, although the Belarusian and German minorities recorded a slight decrease in number compared to 2002. In the case of all other communities with the official status of national, ethnic minorities or minorities using a regional language in Poland, there was an increase in number, but it varied greatly depending on the configuration of answers to ethnic questions. This was mainly caused by people, whose national identifications were subject to a specific rule of gradation or were not fully crystallised. In several cases (Kashubians, Jews, Germans) it was extremely strongly associated with Polish national identity (tab. 2).

Also noteworthy is the number of American, English, Italian and French nationalities shown during the census, placing these communities among the dozen or so most numerous non-Polish nationalities living in Poland. However, it should be remembered that approximately 90% of these declarations are double identification with Polish nationality indicated first (tab. 2).

The main quantitative and qualitative differences between the results of the 2011 and 2002 censuses, i.e. a significant increase in the number of individual minorities and a very clear domination of regional groups in the nationality structure of Poland, were caused to a much greater extent by changes in the census methodology, and to a lesser extent by the evolution of the sense of national identity among minority groups.

[13] The situation changed temporarily only after liberal-left parties took power in Poland. In April 2024, the Parliament adopted a resolution recognising Silesian as a regional language, which, among other things, gives the opportunity to voluntarily learn the Silesian language in schools, use it as an "auxiliary language" in offices, or use bilingual place names. However, in May 2024, President Andrzej Duda vetoed the act, so the adopted provisions did not enter into force. In the censuses (2011, 2021), approximately 0.5 million people declared that they spoke Silesian.

2021 CENSUS

The next census in 2021, unlike in 2011, was carried out as a full survey, using only one form, and, similarly to ten years earlier, utilising a mixed method, both using data from administrative sources and data collected from respondents. In 2021, it was not only decided to continue the digital form of the census, but for the first time in the history of Polish public statistics, self-registration online became mandatory (under penalty of a fine), and the online method was recognised as the most important and basic method of obtaining information. The telephone interview was treated only as an additional and supplementary method, and data from administrative registers were still useless in the case of ethnic issues. This created challenges for the organiser of the census, the Central Statistical Office (GUS), related to the lack of digital competences of part of the society and difficulties with access to the Internet. The Central Statistical Office used various forms of communication with the public, mainly through information campaigns on social media (Kubiczek & Hadasik 2022). Minority organisations also conducted intensive information, promotional and educational campaigns. They were visible mainly on the Internet, but also in public space in the form of posters, leaflets, billboards, announcements and broadcasts in local media. Large-scale assistance was also provided, mainly to older people, in registering online and filling out the census form. In the interest of all minorities, it was crucial to ensure that as many people as possible declared their non-Polish origin during the census, because the scale and amount of support from the Polish authorities depends mainly on the size of individual minorities and their legal status. Therefore, for activists of national and ethnic minorities, the census is the most important moment of mobilisation of their communities (Popieliński 2024). Activity promoting participation in the census and declaring non-Polish identity among national, ethnic and regional minorities was clearly greater than during the two previous censuses. The wording of the ethnic questions was also not questioned. They were widely considered justified and needed, equally by the state and local government authorities, and by the minorities themselves. At the same time, the insufficient consideration of the cultural and social specificity of some minority groups in the organisation of the census was emphasised (Łodziński 2022). An additional difficulty was the fact that the 2021 census was carried out in particularly difficult conditions related to the outbreak of the SARS-CoV2 epidemic, which made it impossible to organise most gatherings, meetings, and socio-cultural events, shifting this activity to the Internet.

For minority representatives, one of the most important issues related to the census was the ability to safely and anonymously declare their own national, ethnic or regional identity without fear of stigmatisation and discrimination, especially in the local environment. The online self-census method, unpopular ten years earlier, was already mandatory and widely used in 2021, provided a sen-

se of greater anonymity and certainty of entering data into the system, which, in the opinion of many minority representatives, was not provided by census takers. The technological exclusion of part of society remained a problem (Łodziński 2022). Similar to 2011, the 2021 electronic census form contained the same two questions regarding national and ethnic affiliation, both nationality and origin, and more specifically *the feeling of belonging also to another nation or ethnic community*. These questions were intended to allow for a declaration of a complex identity, two separate national and ethnic identifications. It was positively received and widely accepted in minority communities (Łodziński 2022).

The same form and content of ethnic questions in both recent censuses should be assessed positively, because it enables comparability of data that was not available between the two previous censuses. Likewise, the principle of collecting sensitive ethnic data using a mandatory, and therefore universal, online self-census, rather than a random sample survey as in 2011, was also a very positive change. It certainly increased the credibility of the results compared to the previous census. Also, the very structure of the question about "origin", enabling the declaration of complex ethnic identities, is justified and necessary in Polish conditions. However, maintaining the controversial principle of the primacy of declarations of minority affiliation over Polish national identity, as in 2011, significantly influenced the ethnic results obtained during the census, overestimating the share of national, ethnic and regional minorities in the national structure of Poland.

Ultimately, during the 2021 census, 1,404.8 thousand people (3.69%) declared their nationality as other than Polish. As many as 1,006.9 thousand people took advantage of the opportunity to express double identity, with the vast majority (974.9 thousand) having both Polish and other national-ethnic identities, with most putting Polish in first place (879.4 thousand). Similarly to 2011, all these people, including those who declared Polish nationality in the first place, were assigned to national, ethnic or regional minorities, which did not always have to be in line with their intentions. However, 429.9 thousand people (1.13%) declared their nationality to be exclusively non-Polish, including 32.1 thousand identified with two non-Polish nationalities.

Among the nationality declarations, similarly to the previous census in 2011, by far the most numerous ones concerned the ethnic distinctiveness of regional groups – Silesians and Kashubians, but the number of both of these communities has clearly decreased over the course of ten years: Silesians in total by 250 thousand, to 596.2 thousand (by 29.6%), and Kashubians by 53 thousand, to 179.7 thousand (by 22.7%). In particular, the decline in the number of Silesians was spectacular, especially in the two most important response categories in terms of identity, i.e. the declaration of Silesian nationality in the first place and the declaration of this nationality as the only one. In both of these configurations, the decrease compared to 2011 reached 50% (tab. 2, 3). This may prove the validity of

the assumption that during the 2011 census, the very large number of declarations of Silesian nationality was caused not only by an increase in the sense of separateness and regional-ethnic identity among this group, but also to some extent was a political manifestation, a reaction to the politicisation of the issue of Silesian nationality and an opposition to the denial of its distinctiveness by some political groups (Michna 2013).

Despite declines in numbers, both regional communities, Silesians and Kashubians, are still the most numerous minority groups in Poland, together constituting 55% of all declarations of non-Polish nationalities during the census. Silesians once again confirmed their numerical dominance, becoming the most frequently declared non-Polish nationality in the third census in a row (tab. 3).

Among the so-called traditional minorities who have legal minority status in Poland, the decrease in number compared to 2011 concerned only Germans and Roma. However, the remaining communities from this group (including Ukrainians, Belarusians, Jews, Lemkos, Lithuanians, Czechs), saw in 2021 a significant increase in numbers, especially in the case of declarations in the first place and the only declaration of nationality (tab. 2, 3). This may indicate growing group mobilisation among these national and ethnic minorities, their awareness of the importance of the nationality declaration during the census, effective information and educational activities of various types of minority organisations, as well as inhibition of the processes of assimilation and Polonisation among traditional national and ethnic minorities. This increase was certainly also influenced by a different method used in 2021, i.e. the universal obligation to take an online self-census, as opposed to the estimation of the nationality structure practiced in 2011 based on a sample survey of 20% of randomly selected households and an optional, very small participation in online self-census. With small and scattered traditional national and ethnic minorities, the last census provided more reliable and credible data.

The nationalities that can be described as Western are a peculiar minority group, very clearly and surprisingly marked in numbers during the 2021 census. These include English, Americans, Italians, French, Irish, Dutch, Norwegians, Spanish. They are characterised by a very large number, considering Polish ethnic realities (from approximately 10,000 to over 55,000), an impressive (even 4–6 fold) increase compared to the results of the census from ten years earlier, and – unlike traditional minorities – a clear domination of submitted identity declarations, together with Polish nationality, in approximately 90% of them in first place (tab. 3). A common feature of these nationalities is the fact that they are directly related to the countries that have been the most popular migration destinations for Polish residents over the last few decades. This feature may be a starting point to explain the phenomenon of the increase in the number of these communities in the current nationality structure of Poland.

Table 3. The national structure of Poland based on the results of the 2021 census

Nationality	Declared nationality during the 2021 census (thousands)				
	total	as first	of this as only one	as second	together with Polish
Poles	37 595.1	37 499.7	36 620.2	95.4	x
Silesians	596.2	236.6	187.4	359.6	385.0
Kashubians	179.7	15.2	12.0	164.5	166.8
Germans	144.2	42.6	23.5	101.6	98.3
Ukrainians	82.4	64.9	45.8	17.5	34.1
Belarusians	56.6	43.7	35.4	12.9	20.0
English	54.4	4.7	3.1	49.7	50.7
Americans	27.8	2.6	1.7	25.1	25.6
Italians	20.0	3.4	2.2	16.6	17.4
Jews	17.2	8.1	6.0	9.1	9.7
Russians	16.0	11.0	7.8	5.0	7.0
French	14.7	2.1	1.3	12.7	13.1
Lemkos	13.6	9.2	7.3	4.4	5.1
Roma	13.3	9.0	7.1	4.3	5.8
Irish	11.6	0.9	0.6	10.7	10.9
Lithuanians	10.3	8.1	7.3	2.2	2.8
Dutch	10.3	1.1	0.7	9.2	9.3
Norwegians	9.0	0.5	0.3	8.5	8.5
Spaniards	8.5	1.0	0.7	7.5	7.6
Czechs	7.8	4.0	3.5	3.8	3.7

Explanations: [a] applies to all persons, both with and without Polish citizenship; [b] the data do not add up, the answers come from two questions.

Source: Author's elaboration based on data from Central Statistical Office (GUS) (2023). *Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2021. Ludność. Stan i struktura demograficzno-społeczna w świetle wyników NSP 2021*. Retrieved from http://www.stat.gov.pl/ (9 April 2013).

Some emigrants from the first period of Poland's accession to the European Union, for various reasons, including Poland's economic development, Brexit in Great Britain, political and socio-economic changes in Western European coun-

tries, decided to return to Poland in recent years. Hypothetically, during the census, some of them, in addition to their Polish nationality, could declare the nationality of the country in which they spent many years of their lives and often also founded families. A much larger group of migrants from Poland still stays in the United States and Western European countries. The census obligatorily covered all permanent residents of Poland, including people who stayed abroad (regardless of the period of stay) but retained permanent residence in Poland. They could have completed the online census form themselves in their country of residence or their household members residing in Poland could have done it. However, it did not cover immigrants staying in Poland temporarily[14]. Therefore, it did not contribute to a dynamic increase in the number of economic immigrants from Ukraine[15], but caused an increase in the number of people who declared English, Irish, Italian, French or Norwegian nationality in addition to, or rather after, Polish. This may be partly the result of the mixed families in which some migrants live, partly of identification with the new homeland and its society. However, this is mainly the result of the formulation of the ethnic question and the possibility of a double declaration of national identity, and especially the principle adopted by the Central Statistical Office of superiority of the declaration of belonging to a minority (in this case, Western European) over the Polish national identity. It can be assumed that a large part of the English and Irish people shown in this way in the statistical results of the Polish census did not expect such an effect from their declarations regarding *the feeling of also belonging to another nation* and would be very surprised by this effect.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

A survey such as a general census can be viewed from different perspectives: as one of the statistical surveys presenting an objective, true, scientifically grounded image of society (Gołata 2008, 2012, 2014; Kubiczek & Hadasik 2022), one can also see it as an event important from the point of view of politics, a social fact influencing social and political reality, intergroup relations, and subjective self-determination of citizens (Adamczuk & Łodziński 2002; Kertzer & Arel 2002; Łodziński 2004, 2006, 2022; Chałupczak 2006; Simon 2012; Michna 2013). One can also try to look from both of these perspectives, because they are undoubte-

[14] Based on Central Statistical Office (GUS) (2022). *Narodowy Spis Powszechny Ludności i Mieszkań 2021. Metodologia i organizacja badania*. Retrieved from https://stat.gov.pl/spisy-powszechne/nsp-2021/ (12 March 2023).

[15] Even more so, it did not show any war refugees from Ukraine because it was carried out several months before the outbreak of the war. Therefore, regardless of the census results, currently Ukrainians are by far the largest non-Polish nationality in Poland.

dly complementary – the census is both a wide-ranging statistical survey and an important socio-political event that mobilises various population groups, often changing their perception and behavior.

All nationality statistics, as rightly and repeatedly emphasised by, among others, P. Eberhardt (1996, 2006, 2008), D.I. Kertzer and D. Arel (2002), G. Babiński (2004), S. Łodziński (2004, 2006, 2022), A. Gawryszewski (2005), H. Chałupczak (2006), E. Gołata (2008, 2012, 2013, 2016), P. Simon (2012, 2017), A. Rykała (2014), C. Balestra and L. Fleischer (2018), concern issues that are very delicate, subjective and difficult to measure, therefore they will always be subject to errors, they will not provide "ideal" results nor present the actual nationality structure, and their results will arouse greater or lesser emotions and controversy and require very careful interpretation. Moreover, their credibility is often the result of the methodology used and current political and social conditions, as well as state policy towards individual minorities. These theses are also confirmed by the ethnic results of the last three censuses conducted in Poland. Z. Rykiel (2006) even states that nationality statistics are apparent numbers of individual ethnic groups.

The fact is that population censuses do not provide "ideal" results, as they are unable to do so, but they nevertheless provide valuable data necessary for demographic, social and economic analyses. They are considered one of the basic sources of information about the population of a given country, not only in terms of demographic, but also national diversity. They influence state policy towards minorities, and therefore play an important social and political role (Simon 2012). Despite this, according to international standards, nationality issues do not belong to the basic thematic scope of censuses, therefore including ethnic questions is treated as optional (Gołata 2013, 2018). Questions about citizenship are common, while strictly ethnic questions: about nationality, ethnic group membership and language are more sensitive and are used in approximately 50–60% of European countries (Simon 2007).

However, in the case of Poland, the provisions of the *Act on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional language* adopted in 2005 impose the need to include questions regarding national, ethnic, and linguistic identity in population censuses. The results of general censuses are not only the basic but also the only source of statistical information about national and ethnic minorities in Poland. In the context of this Act, one of the most important legal and practical consequences of the census for minorities is the fact that its results become official data that must be followed by central and local government institutions and bodies, among others when introducing the possibility of using bilingual place names or a minority language as an auxiliary language in a given commune[16]. The results of censuses are thus very important for representatives of national

[16] Journal of Laws, 2005, No. 17, item 141.

minorities, especially leaders of national organisations, but also for state and local government authorities (Michna 2013; Barwiński 2014, 2015b; Łodziński 2022; Popieliński 2024).

Including questions about national identification in censuses raises arguments both "for" and "against". Ethnic issues have a subjective dimension and constitute a very sensitive social and political problem, although they usually concern small groups (Adamczuk & Łodziński 2006). This is both an ethical and methodological challenge, related to concerns about the way data is collected and used, and a practical one, related to conducting policy towards national and ethnic minorities (Simon & Piché 2011). Nowadays, arguments emphasising the need for the state to have this type of data are becoming more and more important due to the need to protect minority rights and conduct anti-discrimination activities (Balestra & Fleischer 2018).

Ethnic questions in censuses mean additional difficulties and challenges for public statistics authorities. They raise legitimate concerns about confidentiality and privacy, and any reservations in this regard undermine the credibility and reliability of the census results. It is natural to ask about the reliability of the information obtained in the census, which is a consequence of the way it was conducted, its methodology, and the formulation of ethnic questions. The answer to ethnic questions is closely related to the personal, often delicate and sensitive, subjective feelings of individual people, which are difficult to assess objectively. The social climate and the atmosphere of trust in state administration and public statistics bodies, as well as fear of using information for political purposes, are also important. Since minorities may be exposed to ethnic or religious discrimination, census procedures recommend taking all precautions to ensure adequate data protection (Adamczuk & Łodziński 2006; Gołata 2013).

Despite many doubts and sensitive issues, including concerns about maintaining privacy and undermining the credibility and reliability of the results, minority organisations in Poland, especially after the adoption of the *Act on national and ethnic minorities and the regional language* in 2005, demand the collection of ethnic information. Polish state is obliged to do it anyway. These data determine their public status, have real and practical "official" significance, increase group mobilisation, help ensure appropriate conditions for maintaining national and cultural identity, as well as their presence in the Polish public space, including participation in the social and political life of the country (Łodziński 2006, 2022; Barwiński 2016; Popieliński 2024). In the case of some minority groups, such as Silesians, they are also the basis for demanding recognition of their distinctiveness and a change in their legal status (Michna 2013).

Poland is one of the countries where the issue of nationality in censuses, within the meaning of international standards, is treated in an exceptionally comprehensive manner. Despite the relatively homogeneous national structure, ethnic issues,

especially in the last two censuses, were included more broadly than in other countries with a much more complicated nationality structure, such as France or Germany (Gołata 2013).

In 2002, after several dozen years of break in research on nationality statistics and a 45-year period of lack of freedom of speech and democracy, in the reality of a practically monoethnic country, a clear way of asking questions about nationality and a direct method of obtaining statistical data by census takers were adopted. However, social conditions, and especially the fear of some minorities about declaring non-Polish nationality, justified by negative historical experiences, contributed to the underestimation of its results, which, combined with inflated estimates of the nationality structure of Poland at that time, resulted in numerous allegations regarding the reliability of this census. At the same time, it sparked discussions and controversies surrounding Silesian nationality, which continue to this day, and influenced the adoption of many legal solutions empowering national and ethnic minorities in Poland in the following years.

In turn, the 2011 census was conducted using a very diverse method and an approach completely different from all previous ones. The scope of ethnic questions was expanded to include questions about "ethnic origin", native language and religion. The changes were introduced mainly under the influence of suggestions and demands from national organisations. The formulation of questions regarding nationality, and especially the calculation, or rather estimation, of the nationality structure for the first time significantly overestimated, and not underestimated, its results and limited its credibility. The factor that had the greatest impact on the deformation of the results was the possibility of declaring double national identification with the simultaneous "automatic" assignment to national or ethnic minorities of people who declared the "minority" identity second, along with the dominant Polish identification. In addition, a methodology was used to combine various data sources and randomly select households for a sample survey, which forced estimates in the case of dispersed or small minorities. It may be assumed that declarations of double national identity, used together with the principle of superiority of belonging to a minority over Polish national identity, distorted the results of the 2011 census more strongly by overestimating the number of non-Polish nationalities than the method of conducting the census in 2002 and the social conditions at that time influenced the underestimation of national and ethnic minorities.

Positive changes were introduced in the methodology of the latest census, in 2021, which increased the credibility and reliability of ethnic data. The most important was the departure from a random sample survey and two separate census questionnaires, as well as an optional online self-census, and replacing it with a full survey based on mandatory online forms. The wording of the ethnic

questions was not changed, which increased the comparability of the results obtained. As in previous censuses, the concept of "subjective nationality" was maintained, according to which the affiliation of people to a national or ethnic group was determined by a free declaration of nationality of the people being surveyed. This freedom was increased by the method of universal online self-census, in which the answers are direct and independent of the influence of the environment, including the census taker. However, they are declarative and subjective in nature, which means that there will always be doubts as to whether they represent the actual situation.

With all these positive changes, it should be emphasised that in 2021, the controversial principle introduced ten years earlier of the superiority of the declaration of belonging to a minority over the Polish national identity was maintained, which, similarly to 2011, significantly influenced the results obtained during the census, overestimating the share of minorities in Poland's national structure. Due to the adoption of such a method of summing ethnic results, in both recent population censuses, the majority of people (53.7% in 2011, 62.6% in 2021) who were "classified" by the Central Statistical Office as representatives of national, ethnic or regional minorities, declared Polish nationality first, and only then *the feeling of also belonging to another nation or ethnic community*. Despite this, they were not recognised as Poles. One can only assume that it was not always in line with their intentions. This had a very significant impact, especially on the population of regional minorities (e.g. Kashubians and Silesians) and western minorities (e.g. English, Americans, Italians, French, Irish, Norwegians), among whom over 90% declared, first of all, Polish nationality.

In terms of ethnic questions, none of the three population censuses discussed was fully reliable, and for the numerical determination of the nationality structure of Poland in the first decades of the 21st century, the varied statistical methods used during the censuses, the formulation of ethnic questions, and especially the adopted method of calculating the structure were of greater importance.

As emphasised above, no census will provide "ideal" results because no census is capable of doing so. And within each census, questions regarding nationality issues are among the most personal, sensitive and subjective, and are also strongly dependent on the census methodology and the current socio-political situation. Therefore, ethnic results will never be fully credible and acceptable to everyone, they will always arouse emotions. This does not change the fact that for many reasons, not only statistical and cognitive, but also social, it is worth asking this type of questions during the census, even though the results obtained should be assessed and interpreted very carefully.

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Section 3

MISCELLANEA

Andrzej RYKAŁA
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2183-3103
Marek BARWIŃSKI
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8059-6884
Marek SOBCZYŃSKI
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1066-3687
University of Lodz, Poland
Faculty of Geographical Sciences,
Department of Political and Historical Geography
and Regional Studies

REGION and REGIONALISM
No. 15

THE WORLD FACING THE PANDEMIC DIFFUSION OF THE SARS-COV-2 VIRUS IN THE WORLD AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN POLAND

INTRODUCTION
EPIDEMIC DISEASES – A COMPANION OF MANKIND FROM THE DAWN OF ITS HISTORY

Epidemic diseases have accompanied mankind since the dawn of its history. Among other things, they are reflected in the Bible[1], appearing in the form of at least two of the ten so-called the plagues that struck Egypt. The smallpox epidemic that spread in the Roman Empire in the 2nd century and killed about ⅓–¼ of the population is one of the oldest and well-described[2]. Plague, known as the Black Death killed half the population of Europe in the 14th century[3]. In 1918, the entire European continent was covered by the so-called Spanish – a form of flu that claimed about 50 million people[4]. Entering the Polish courtyard in times not so distant from the present day, one can mention one of the last smallpox outbreaks in Europe, which appeared locally in Wrocław in the summer of 1963. The city was paralyzed for several weeks and fenced off from the rest of the country. 99 people fell ill, seven of them died[5].

[1] *Biblia. Pismo Święte...* t. 3. (2009); Szamocki G. (2007: 52–53); Hergesel T. (1981: 107–108).
[2] Załuski W. (2012: 76); Supady J.J. (2009: 80).
[3] Supady J.J. (2009: 80).
[4] Wnęk J. (2014: 16–17); Supady J.J. (2009: 83); Krajewska H. (2020: 28–29).
[5] Trzaskowska G. (2008).

VIRAL PATHOGENS – AS CARRIERS OF EPIDEMIC DISEASES

Viral pathogens (Greek: *pathos* – suffering, and *genes* – producer of something), as the factors responsible for causing the epidemic diseases, were widely identified in the world only in the 1980s[6]. The first was Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), which killed about 40 million people.

Research since that decade has uncovered, among others, the pathogens of hemorrhagic fever (which first appeared in Marburg in 1967), Ebola (in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 1976), severe respiratory distress syndrome SARS (in 2002) – defined by its specific structure as "coronavirus" – and another variant, MERS-Cov (in the Middle East, 2012)[7].

Several major factors have been identified for the emergence and recurrence of human viral pathogens. A combination of environmental and social changes is believed to be responsible for local outbreaks of infection. The emergence of infectious diseases in previously infection-free regions is mainly due to transmission of the virus through international trade and travel[8]. Recent examples of such spread include: ZIKV in Brazil in 2015 (which moved to the country from the Pacific Islands, possibly during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, causing the Zika fever epidemic)[9] and another variant of the SARS virus – SARS-CoV-2 – which appeared in Wuhan (China, Hubei Province) in December 2019[10].

THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC AROUND THE WORLD

On February 11, 2020, the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2 was officially named COVID-19[11]. After 84 countries and territories had already reported the outbreak of the disease – thus contradicting the initial assumption that the contagion would

[6] Figas A. (2020: 373–375).

[7] Jacob S.T., Crozier I., Fischer W.A., Hewlett A., Kraft C.S., de La Vega M.-A., Soka M.J., Wahl V., Griffiths A., Bollinger L., Kuhn J.H. (2020). https://www.nature.com/articles/s41572-020-0147-3#Abs1 (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

[8] Figas A. (2020: 376).

[9] Musso D. *Zika Virus Transmission from French Polynesia to Brazil*. https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/21/10/15-1125_article (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

[10] Duszyński J., Afelt A., Ochab-Marcinek A., Owczuk R., Pyrć K., Rosińska M., Rychard A., Smiatacz T. (2020: 12).

[11] *Ibidem*: 72.

end with the arrival of spring – on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared a pandemic[12].

Within two years (by August 2022) COVID-19 reached 227 countries and dependent territories. By then, a worldwide pandemic had caused 590,631,265 people to become ill and 6,439,905 patients to die[13]. Thus, the disease rate was 826 people per million inhabitants, and the global mortality rate due to COVID-19 – 1.09% of patients. More than 10 million people fell ill in 13 countries, most of them in the United States – over 95 million (fig. 1).

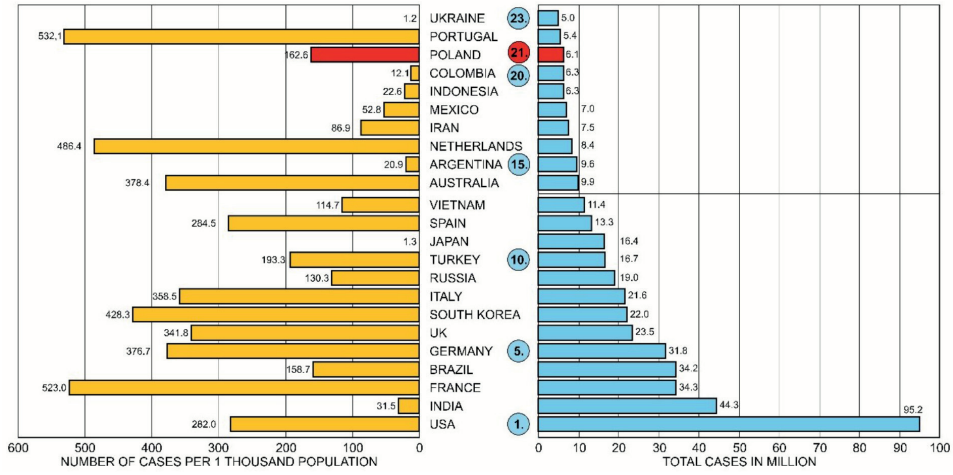

Fig. 1. The largest number of cases of Covid-19 (on August 9, 2022)

Source: author's own elaboration based on the data from Worldometer website

Most deaths (over 1 million) were also recorded in the United States. Next in terms of the number of fatalities were: Brazil (680,000), India (527,000), Russia (383,000), Mexico (328,000), Peru (215,000), Great Britain (185,000), Italy (173,000), Indonesia (157,000), France (153,000), Germany (145,000), Iran (143,000), Colombia (141,000), Argentina (129,000), Poland (117,000), Spain (111,000), Ukraine 108,000) and South Africa (101,000)[14] (fig. 2).

[12] Sobczyński M. (2023: 23).

[13] https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ (accessed on: 24.08.2022); *Koronawirus. Mapa Polski i świata*. „Wirtualna Polska. Wiadomości", 27.XII.2022. https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/koronawirus-mapa (accessed: 27.12.2022); WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashbord. *Situation by region, country, territory and area*. https://covid19.who.int/table (accessed: 28.12.2022); *COVID-19 pandemic by country and territory*. „Wikipedia". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/COVID-19_pandemic_by_country_and_territory (accessed on: 28.12.2022).

[14] Worldometer website. https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

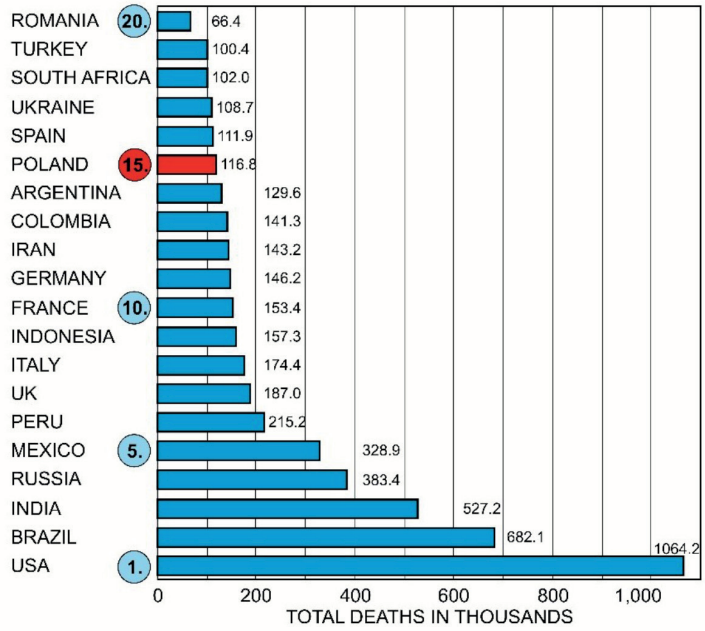

Fig. 2. The largest number of fatalities (on August 9, 2022)
Source: author's own elaboration based on the data from Worldometer website

After more than two years, there were practically no countries and dependent territories without coronavirus cases. The fewest cases of Covid-19 until August 2022 were recorded in Saint Helena (2), in Tuvalu (8) and the Vatican (28)[15]. Until then, there were no Covid-19 deaths in only 6 territories (among others in the Falkland Islands, Niue). These are isolated archipelagos or countries that do not accept COVID-19 patients in hospitals (such as Vatican).

An important indicator of the progress of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic is the number of deaths per 1 million inhabitants[16]. In this respect, Peru (almost 117,000) ranks first in the world, followed by the four Balkan countries: Bulgaria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Hungary[17]. Thus, the top ten in terms of the number of deaths due to Covid-19 included,

[15] https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

[16] The number of cases per 1 million inhabitants is a slightly misleading category, because microstates come to the fore, where with a small population even a small number of cases gives a high rate. So counting per 1 million inhabitants, the largest number of people fell ill in the Faroe Islands (theoretically 703,687). Among the 48,800 inhabitants of this archipelago, 35,000 people with covid-19 make up more than 70% of the population.

[17] Watoła J. *Dlaczego Polska bije rekordy zgonów na COVID. „Jest tolerancja dziadostwa"*. https://wyborcza.pl/7,75398,27984851,polska-bije-rekordy-zgonow-na-covid-

apart from one Latin American country, as many as 11 so-called post-communist countries of Eastern Europe. This is the result of the poor health care system inherited by these countries from the previous regime and still maladjusted. Poland was in the 19th place in this classification (fig. 3).

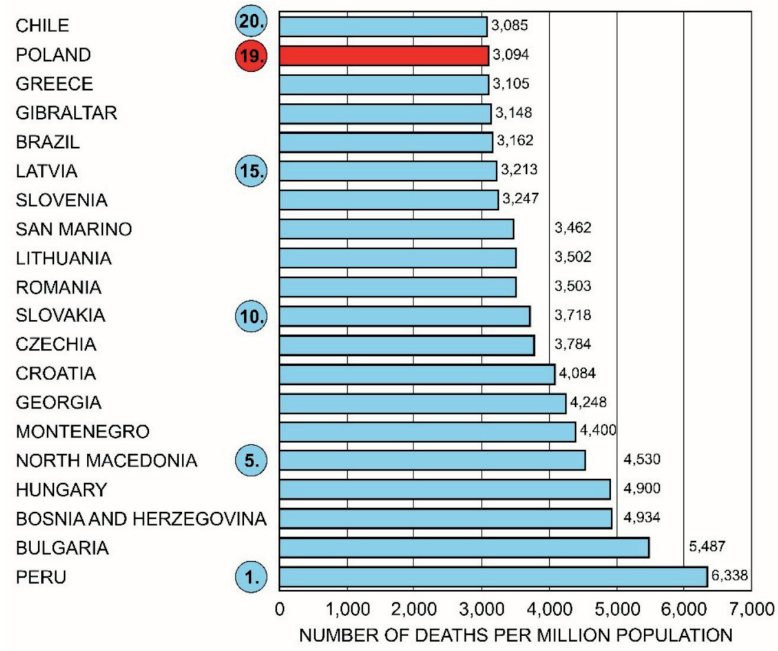

Fig. 3. The number of deaths per 1 million (on August 9, 2022)
Source: author's own elaboration based on the data from Worldometer website

Mass testing is a very important factor in the pandemic control process. By the beginning of August 2022, only 4 countries had carried out over 300 million tests (United States – 1088 million, India – 878 million, Great Britain – 553 million, Spain – 471 million). With 37 million tests, Poland was ranked 29th, ahead of Colombia and Argentina[18].

However, much more important than the total number of tests is their relation to the size of the tested population, i.e. the number of tests per million inhabitants. The top ten in this category includes very rich countries, mainly Western

-jest-tolerancja-dziadostwa.html (accessed on: 24.08.2022); Pawłowska D., Gadomska A. *Sto tysięcy ofiar COVID-19 w Polsce. Do tego trzeba dodać 80 tys. nadmiarowych zgonów*. https://biqdata.wyborcza.pl/biqdata/7,159116,27979625,sto-tysiecy-ofiar-covid-19-w-polsce-do-tego-trzeba-dodac-80.html (accessed on: 24.08.2022); https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

[18] https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

European (Denmark, Austria, Spain), Middle Eastern countries (the United Arab Emirates), as well as micro-countries and dependent territories (Gibraltar, Faroe Islands, Bermudas). The highest testing rate in the world (22 million per 1 million inhabitants) was recorded in Denmark, where statistically every citizen was tested almost 22 times[19]. Poland took 102th place in this classification (with an index of almost 1 000 000, i.e. less than one test *per capita* – fig. 4), accompanied by countries such as: Saint Vincent, Samoa and Eswatini.

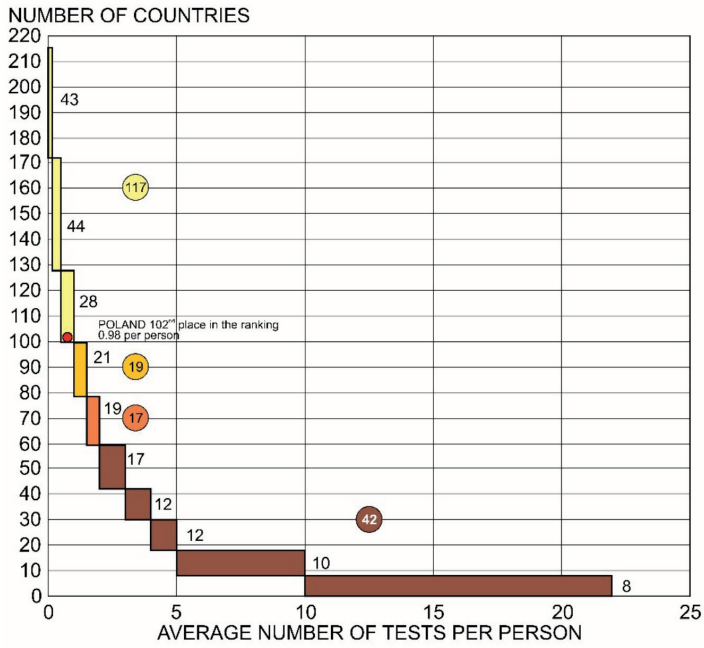

Fig. 4. Average number of tests per person (on August 9, 2022)
Source: author's own elaboration based on the data from Worldometer website

SARS-COV-2 VIRUS DIFFUSION IN POLAND

The virus reached Poland (and other Central and Eastern European countries) about 100 days later after it appeared in China[20]. Western Europe was already at the epicenter of the pandemic at that time. The main reasons for the later appearance of the virus in this part of the Old Continent were: lower mobility of the

[19] Watoła J. *Dlaczego Polska bije rekordy zgonów…* (accessed on: 24.08.2022); https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/ (accessed on: 24.08.2022); Sobczyński M. (2023: 32).

[20] Sobczyński M. (2023: 25).

inhabitants, no mass events (such as music festivals and football matches of the Champions League), a different approach to diagnosis than in the West (resulting in lower infection detection rates).

The analysis reveals the existence of several large areas of disease concentration: densely populated regions with a large scale of commuting (Upper Silesian conurbation and agglomerations of Warsaw, Tricity, Wrocław, Szczecin and Poznań – fig. 5), a high percentage of the elderly population (centers of large and medium-sized cities, rural regions of southern Poland) and large share of multi-family block housing (making difficult to maintain social distance)[21].

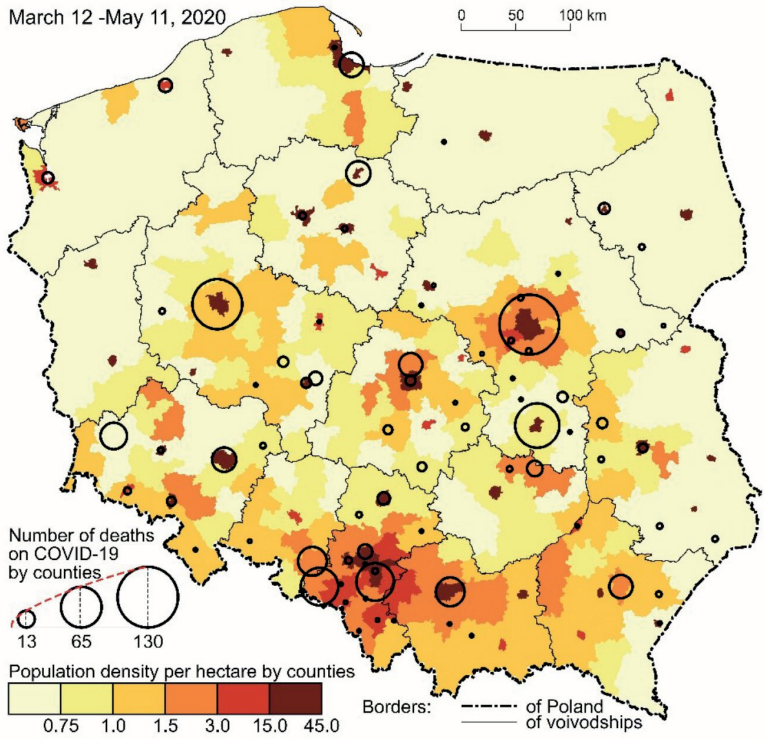

Fig. 5. Number of deaths due to COVID-19

Source: author's own elaboration

[21] Raciborski F., Pinkas J., Jankowski M., *et. al*. 2020. https://www.mp.pl/paim/en/node/15430/pdf; https://doi.org/10.20452/pamw.15430 (accessed on: 28.12.2022); Śleszyński P. (2020b: 30–31, 2020c: 5–19); Śleszyński P., Nowak M.J., Blaszke M. (2020: 427–444); Śleszyński P. (2020a: 53–55); Krzysztofik R., Kantor-Pietraga I., Spórna T., 2020. https://doi.org/10.1080/15387216.2020.1783337; Kowalski M. (2020).

August 10, 2022 six administrative provinces exceeded the number of over 400,000 cases of disease: Mazowieckie, Śląskie, Wielkopolskie, Małopolskie, Dolnośląskie and Pomorskie[22]. The first of these voivodeships, where the capital agglomeration is located, recorded the highest number of Covid-19 cases (almost 950 thousand). The smallest number of people fell ill in the Opolskie Voivodeship (over 151,000), which is one of the least urbanized administrative regions in Poland (fig. 6).

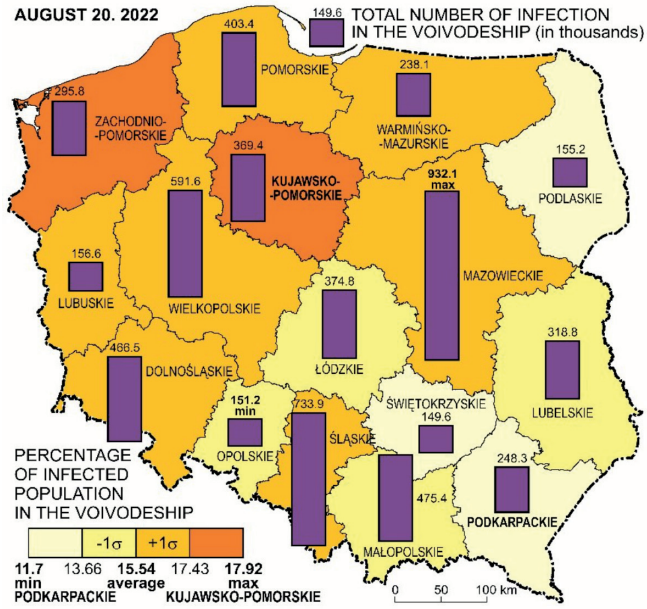

Fig. 6. Number of infections due to COVID-19 in voivodeships

Source: author's own elaboration

In the same provinces, the highest number of people died due to COVID-19. Most victims – almost 15 thousand – was recorded in the Mazowieckie and Śląskie voivodeships (fig. 7). Nowhere was the number of victims lower than 3,000, with the fewest deaths recorded in the Lubuskie Voivodeship (3,175)[23].

In turn, taking into account the number of deaths from Covid-19 per 1,000 inhabitants, the worst situation was in Lubelskie and Kujawsko-Pomorskie voivodeships, where 7,807 and 7,254 people died respectively (fig. 7). The high value of this indicator, especially in the eastern part of Poland (Lublin region),

[22] https://tvn24.pl/polska/koronawirus-w-polsce-mapa-zakazen-ile-szczepien-ile-nowych-przypadkow-wykryto-20-sierpnia-2022-4344739 (accessed on: 21.08.2022).

[23] *Ibidem*.

was largely due to the small number of people vaccinated and the less developed health care network compared for example to the Warsaw agglomeration and the Silesian conurbation.

The high mortality rate per 100 Covid-19 patients resulted from the same causes. The highest value of this indicator was similarly achieved in eastern and south-eastern Poland (fig. 8) – Podkarpackie (2.88), Świętokrzyskie (2.77), Lubelskie (2.45) and Podlaskie (2.39)[24].

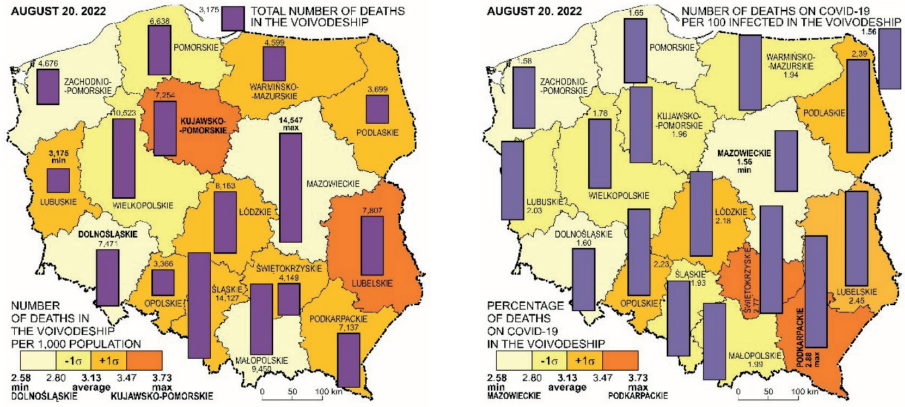

Fig. 7–8. The number of deaths due to COVID-19 by voivodeships – in total (including per thousand people; fig. 7) and per 100 infected (along with the percentage distribution of the dead by voivodeships; fig. 8)

Source: own study

PANDEMIC SITUATION MANAGEMENT DILEMMAS

Since the beginning of the epidemic in Poland (to August 20, 2022), the authorities have confirmed 6,142,917 infections. 116,881 people died due to COVID-19[25].

Poland took first place in Europe in the category of excessive deaths. In 2020, 477,000 people died (as much as 69,000 more than in 2019). 2021 was even worse when 519,000 people died (over 40 thousand more than the year before). These were the highest mortality rates in Poland since the end of World War II. The analysis shows that Poland achieved a 68.9% increase in deaths in 2021, while the EU average was 22.9%.

[24] *Ibidem*.

[25] *Koronawirus. Mapa Polski i świata*. „Wirtualna Polska. Wiadomości", 27.XII.2022. https://wiadomosci.wp.pl/koronawirus-mapa (accessed on: 27.12.2022).

From the very beginning of the pandemic, most of the victims (65%) were people over the age of 70[26] (fig. 9). In the fourth wave of the pandemic – when everyone had a chance to get vaccinated – 83% of all deaths are unvaccinated. Among young people (up to 44 years of age) this indicator exceeds 90%.

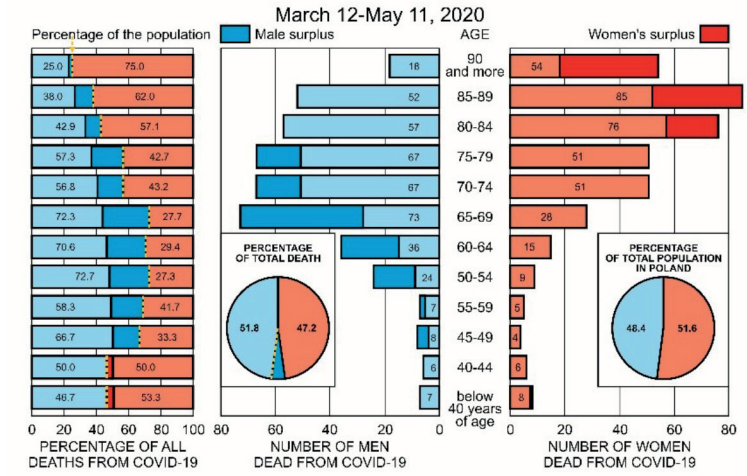

Fig. 9. The number of deaths due to Covid-19 in Poland by age and gender

Source: author's own elaboration based on the data collected from the official announcements of state institutions

When we look at government actions during a pandemic, we can see that the level of restrictions did not always match the intensity of the pandemic. With the arrival of the first wave of the pandemic (March 10, 2020), the first lockdown was introduced on. All mass events in the country were cancelled at that time, students switched to remote learning. State borders, hairdressing salons and a ban on entering the forest have been closed. Over time, however, the economy gradually thawed, and despite the still high daily infection rate (400), presidential elections were held (first and second rounds). The effect of the restrictions introduced at that time was the obligation to wear masks in public places.

In the second wave of the pandemic (since August 2020), the government introduced the division of the country into poviats with different levels of risk, where appropriate restrictions were in place (in some, for example, cultural events did not take place). In November 2020, when a record number of deaths were recorded, the slopes were closed under the sanitary regime and then (during the regime) reopened, as were cinemas, swimming pools, theaters and concert halls.

[26] Pawłowska D., Gadomska A. *Sto tysięcy ofiar COVID-19 w Polsce*… (accessed on: 24.08.2022); Watoła J. *Dlaczego Polska bije rekordy zgonów*… (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

With the arrival of the third wave (March 2021), shopping malls, kindergartens, nurseries, hair salons were closed; Then we also had days with the highest daily number of infected (among others, on March 26, 35,000 new cases were diagnosed). In May, the gradual lifting of restrictions began.

The fourth wave (October 2021) was characterized by a daily number of new diagnosed cases exceeding a thousand. New restrictions have been introduced consisting in reducing the limit of unvaccinated people in restaurants and hotels, closing discos. An exception to this type of games was New Year's Eve, which was not subject to any quantitative restrictions[27].

At the turn of March and April 2022, the state authorities lifted most of the restrictions, including the wearing of masks. However, they limited access to tests, thus hindering the fight against the pandemic. According to the assumptions of the new policy of the Ministry of Health, tests can only be performed on the recommendation of a doctor.

There are several reasons for the higher mortality rate due to COVID-19 in Poland than in other countries. One of them is the poor health care system, inherited by this country after the so-called communist regime and still not adapted to the new realities. It is characterized by: chronic underfunding, permanent but ineffective reforms, low work culture, sometimes simple under-education (there are hospitals that treat patients in the intensive care unit according to the schemes from 30 years ago, where 99 patients [out of 100], who are connected to a respirator, dies, e.g. in the Łódzkie, Małopolskie and Podlaskie voivodships)[28].

From the beginning of the fight against the epidemic, the method of financing it had many imperfections. The state has launched 36 hospitals focused on the treatment of Covid-19, including 14 temporary hospitals organized by state-owned companies. Several temporary hospitals were built with unimaginable sum of money, including one at the National Stadium – the largest in Poland, where the beds were only partially occupied for many days (the cost of its adaptation amounted to PLN 18 million), and the transformation of a private facility in Wrocław into a temporary hospital (for PLN 75 million) is the subject of a parliamentary investigation.

The government's Covid-19 testing strategy has had a very negative impact on the effective fight against the pandemic. The tests were expensive and access to them was limited, because they were only performed on a person with four symptoms of COVID. As a result, the positive rate rose to a very high level, and thousands of patients were infecting others because they could not get into the tests.

Equipping hospitals with respirators and masks was a procedure close to crime. The Ministry of Health contracted the purchase of ventilators to an arms dealer

[27] Pawłowska D., Gadomska A. *Sto tysięcy ofiar COVID-19 w Polsce*… (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

[28] Watoła J. *Dlaczego Polska bije rekordy zgonów*… (accessed on: 24.08.2022).

who was internationally prosecuted for this activity. The offer for the equipment, which was twice the market price at the time, was largely not realized. Hospitals received only part of the order. In addition, the equipment was unusable as it turned out to be non-compliant with EU standards[29].

The government forced the state-owned Copper and Metallurgy Combine to buy 22 million masks in China. The purchase also turned out to be non-compliant with European standards and unsuitable for use in hospitals. The masks ended up in the government's strategic material stores.

Numerous studies conducted on the effects of the pandemic in Poland have shown its significant impact on many areas of the economy[30], including tourism and hotel services[31].

CONCLUSIONS

One million people died in Poland during the two years of the pandemic (2020–2021). That's over 180,000 more than in the two years before the pandemic (2018–2019). In addition to covid-19, the cause of more deaths than in previous years was the poor health of the society, mainly inappropriate lifestyle, poor nutrition, late reporting to the doctor with symptoms of the disease.

The pandemic also indirectly contributed to the increase in deaths. Patients who did not develop COVID-19 not only had difficult access to treatment, but were often simply deprived of it. This situation resulted in delays in the diagnosis of other diseases, discontinuation of treatment by these patients, which in many cases led to death.

In terms of testing citizens (per 1 million inhabitants), Poland was, as mentioned, 102th in the world (fig. 10). It occupied the last place in the EU, and in Europe it was ahead only of Moldova, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Ukraine.

Undoubtedly, the government saved on testing citizens at the expense of losing their health and even the lives by physically weaker, sick retirees, and allowed the epidemic to run uncontrolled, which also hit the health of the younger population and deeply undermined the foundations of the economy.

[29] A trader who mysteriously died in June 2022 was operating under the guise of the government's Intelligence Agency. It seems that the operation (the purchase of respirators) was planned by the services not to purchase equipment necessary to protect the health of citizens, but to increase the operating budget of the services.

[30] Chowaniak K. (2020: 10–15).

[31] Napierała T., Leśniewska-Napierała K., Burski R. (2020: 4697). https://doi.org/10.3390/su12114697

A positive element of the government's crisis management strategy was widespread vaccination (although at the beginning of August only 63% of Poles used it). As a result, society has become more resilient and patients are experiencing mild symptoms of Covid-19.

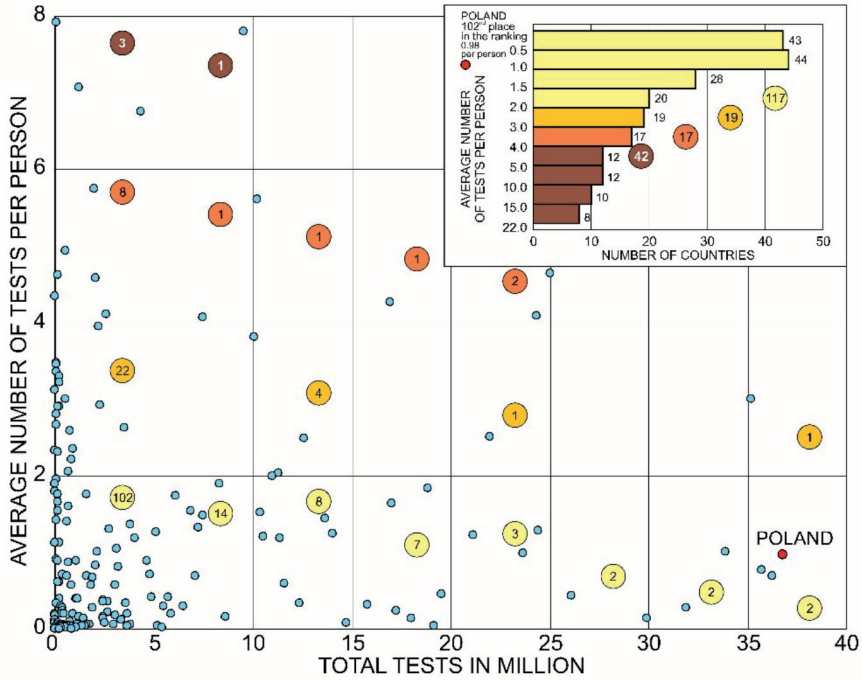

Fig. 10. Total tests in milion (on August 9, 2022)

Source: own study

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Krystyna KRAWIEC-ZŁOTKOWSKA
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0128-3148
Pomeranian Academy in Slupsk
Institute of Philology

REGION and REGIONALISM
No. 15

SUB UNO CAELO... RELIGIOUS SONGS PERFORMED IN THE CHURCHES OF POMERANIA (SELECTED EXAMPLES)

Pomerania is a special area on the map of Poland. Especially today, looking at the history of the region from the perspective of the 21st century, we see the complicated history of people living in these areas, coming to the Baltic lands and leaving them. What is important in this context are the geopolitical conditions that determined the fate of people. In the past, Pomerania was inhabited by Slovinians, Kashubians, Germans, and Jews. We can talk about Germanic, Scandinavian, and Slavic influences. In Pomerania, the interests of Poland, Brandenburg, the State of the Teutonic Order, Mecklenburg, Sweden, Denmark, and the German Empire intersected. Historically, the region is divided into Western and Eastern Pomerania, and the border between them is the Lębork-Bytów Land. Already from this general information, we can see that the former Gryfite Dukedom was not homogeneous.

Nowadays, Pomerania remains a diverse region in terms of nationality, religion, and culture. Currently, the region is inhabited mainly by three nations: Poles, Kashubians, and Ukrainians, but besides them, representatives of national minorities can be met e.g. of German origin, as well as Asians, and people of African origin. Just like in the past, today all those who live and/or work here live under one sky. This does not mean, however, that migration and assimilation processes, close proximity, or events of a transnational social nature have led to the loss of their national identity. Poles, Kashubians, Germans, Catholics, Greek Catholics, Orthodox, Protestants, and others cultivate their own traditions and rituals, pray in their churches, sing various religious songs, and speak different languages. This state of affairs confirms the diversity of Pomerania, which is an area of many borders and, at the same time, an area of affiliation and influence of many cultures.

The historical borders of Pomerania have changed over the centuries; even in a similar period (fig. 1, 2) and/or over a longer period of time (fig. 3).

Fig. 1. The Historical Atlas by William R. Shepherd (1923)

Source: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_Pomorza#/media/Plik:Central_Europe,_919-1125,_snippet_North.PNG

Fig. 2. The state in times of Boleslaw the Brave

Source: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_Pomorza_Zachodniego#/media/Plik:Polska_992_-_1025.png

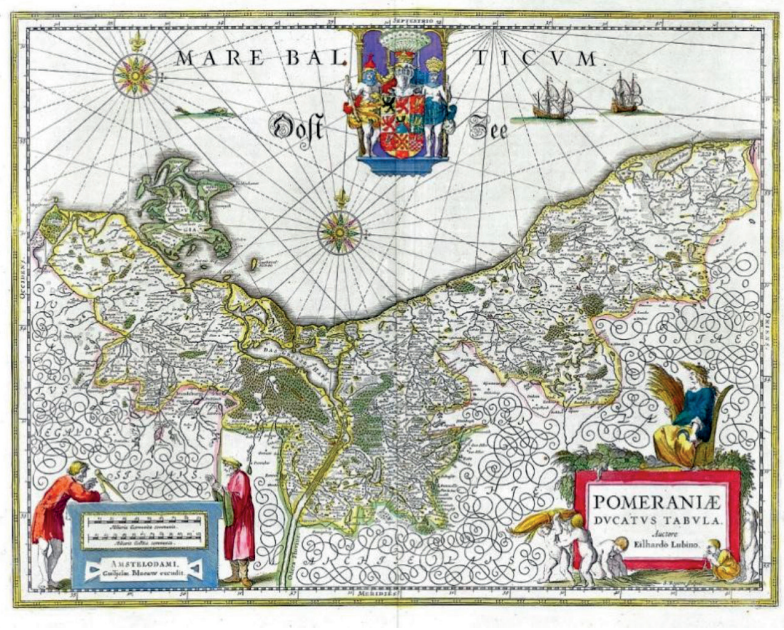


Fig. 3. Western Pomerania, *Map of Lubinus*, Willem & Joan Blaeu, Atlas Blaeu (later Atlas Maior) (1662)

Source: https://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historia_Pomorza_Zachodniego#/media/Plik:Pomeraniae_Ducatus_Tabula.jpg

Differences and similarities in customs, sacred architecture, traditions, and rituals of people living in Pomerania, as well as their mutual interactions, can also be found in religious songs.

Various criteria can be taken into account when classifying songs. In the basic terms, they are defined as works characterized by a simplified structure, strophic arrangement, text rhythm and the presence of refrains. In the literary aspect song is the genre name of lyrical poetry. The origins of this genre are related to rituals and music. As a genre, song gradually freed itself from music and became an independent artistic form. In medieval literature, songs were epic narrative works with historical themes, such as *La Chanson de Roland – The Song of Roland*. The modern form of songs understood as poems comes from Greek odes and the works of Horace – the examples are *the Songs* of Jan Kochanowski and other poets. Depending on the subject matter, the following song types are distinguished into religious, feast, philosophical, occasional, patriotic, love, and pastoral songs, as well as songs of praise, songs of thanksgiving, and finally mourning songs. In the musicological context, we distinguish songs based on the musical form: vocal, vocal-instrumental or instrumental (e.g. verse, verse-chorus, variation form, and others), or depending on their complexity, and type of compositional techniques

used by creators (e.g. idyll, serenade, chorale, canzona, dumka and many others) (Frankowska 2005: 178–186; *Muzyka* 2007: 578–579).

The author of this work is interested in songs understood as a literary text and a musical piece used during religious ceremonies in Pomerania, specifically in Catholic and Protestant rites. The choice of these confessions is related to the fact that they existed in Pomerania since the 16th century, and they played a sigificant role in building the identity of Pomeranians, inluding Poles, Germans and Kashubians. These confessions are also associated with the oldest preserved cantions written in Latin, German, and Polish with elements of Kashubian. The exemplification material includes religious songs recorded in the Żarnowiec Graduale, Luther's Evangelical songs translated by Szymon Krofey (a pastor from Bytów) into Slavic, and works from the Wejherowo Calvary *Road to heaven*.

The oldest monument containing religious songs in Pomerania is the *Żarnowiec Gradual*, dating from around 1458. Its founders were Gertruda Koelers from Elbląg and her daughter Magdalena. The gradual is available in the Baltic Digital Library[1]. The original manuscript is located in the Benedictine monastery in Żarnowiec in Pomerania. Until 1589, this monastery served as the seat of the Cistercian nuns. The songbook is meticously produced, bound with wooden boards covered with leather, with buttons and a rim made of bones; brass fittings were also used. The book, with a total of 278 pages, is fastened with two leather straps. The interior is filled with parchment cards covered by Gregorian musical notes based on a four-line scheme (Borkowska 1993: 174–177).

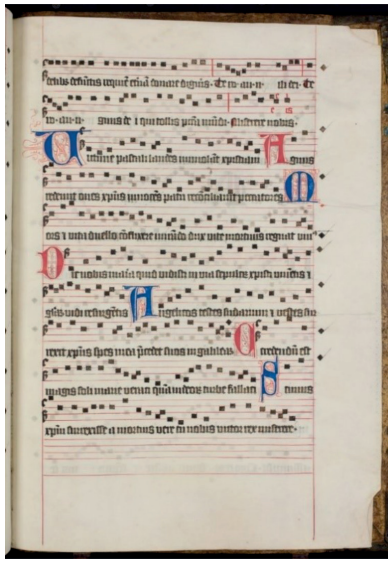


Fig. 4. *Graduał żarnowiecki*, p. 270
Source: https://bibliotekacyfrowa.eu/iiif/image/65396-3121078/full/1000,1444/0/default.jpg

[1] http://www.bibliotekacyfrowa.eu/dlibra/show-content/publication/71631/edition/65396/

The entire *Żarnowiec Gradual* consists of two complete sets of texts. This fact is generally justified by the need to equip both sides of the monastic choir with a copy of sheet music. However, it cannot be ruled out that during Mass, the singers gathered in front of one copy while the other one was intended for the celebrant, who, as a monk, could also be able and willing to sing. A nun from Żarnowiec, Małgorzata Koelers, also known from other sources, is mentioned as the music copyist (Borkowska 1993: 173). It is worth noting that, thanks to her work, we can learn about not only the songs collected and sung by the Cistercian nuns from Żarnowiec, but also about the saints worshipped by their community. Throughout the year, they celebrated 115 people raised to the altars (Borkowska 1993: 177). The small number of popular saints from mendicant orders is intriguing; only three are represented: St. Elizabeth of Turin, representative of the Dominican Order, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. Francis of Assisi. Notably, there are no texts confirming, for example, the cult of St. Clare (although it is known that the Cistercian nuns in Chełmno had been worshiping her since at least 1319, i.e. since the indulgence granted to them on her feast day by the guardian of the Toruń Franciscans, Nicholas). There are also no traces of St. Dominic and St. Jadwiga. Their absence suggests that the nuns did not implement the prescriptions of the order's central authorities; instead, they selected the saints whose cult they wished to cultivate. The manuscript was used in Żarnowiec for prayer and singing, most likely until the end of the 17th century.

The first set of the *Żarnowiec Gradual* consists of two volumes. The first volume – *Missa pro pace* – begins with patterns of Masses for various intentions. The chants of Mass in the church year (i.e. *de tempore*) are initiated by a large and decorative initial „A" (*Ad te levavi*). There are texts intended for singing from the first Sunday of Advent up to and including Good Friday, followed (excluding the Paschal period) by the Sundays after Pentecost. Next are fragments of the *Kyriale*, which are a collection of neume melodies typical of Gregorian chant that comprise the regular parts of the Roman rite Holy Mass (inluding *Kyrie eleison*, *Gloria*, *Sanctus*, *Agnus Dei*, *Benedicamus Domino*). On the last page, the antiphon *Petite et accipietis* can be found. The gradual shows missing text and Roman numbering, as well as traces of cut-out pages – one page is missing between today's numbers 115 and 116, one between numbers 116 and 117, three between numbers 129 and 130 (Borkowska 1993: 174). The second volume of the first set – *Laudate Dominum* – after the *Laudate* psalm at the beginning, contains *de tempore* Mass chants from Holy Saturday until the fifth Sunday after Pentecost. Then there are a few loose Masses: *Dum sanctificatus* (with a note that it is about the Holy Spirit), *introit of St. Lawrence* and a Mass for the dedication of the church. On cards 45 v – 46 r there are diagrams of masses for various intentions along with links to the pages where the necessary chants are written down. There are, among others: masses *pro pace*, *pro pluvia poscenda* (but also *pro serenitate*), *pro tribulatione Ecclesiae*, *pro infirmis*.

On card 46 v, the *proprium sanctorum* begins, starting with St. Stephen (December 26th) and ending with the Thomas the Apostle (December 2nd). Some of the holidays included in the cantional do not have their own assigned songs, but only links to other pages. References to other locations in the gradual include the diagram of the *Commune sanctorum* (p. 114 v), followed by various additions – such as the responsory of the *Spiritus Sanctus*, *Dulce lignum*, the diagram of Saturday Mass of the Mother of God, and the full text of the requiem Mass. Then, beggining on p. 117 v, the texts for monastic rites (cloths and vows) commence, followed by the *Contra pestilentiam* Mass (p. 121 v) and a few loose chants. Then there are: the *Rorate* Mass, the common Mass about the apostles, the Mass about St. Nicholas (probably as a common Mass for bishops' holidays) and the *In medio Ecclesiae* Mass (common for doctors of the Church). At p. 128, the *Kyriale* begins. Starting from page 133, the Good Friday chants from *Ayos otheos* (*Hagios ho theos*) are repeated, followed by the litany to *All Saints*, the sequence *Victimae Paschali*, *Credo* (today called the first) and finally the antiphon *Melchisedech rex Salem* (Borkowska 1993: 175).

The content of the second set of the *Żarnowiec Gradual* is similar to the content of the first one but not identical. The first volume – *Ad te levavi* – opens with *proprium de tempore* chants from the first Sunday of Advent to Good Friday. Then, unlike in the first volume from the first set, there are texts for Trinity Sunday (p. 109 v) and subsequent Sundays after Pentecost. On page 137 r, there is a Mass for the dedication of the church, followed by a Mass for the eve of the Ascension and a Mass for Corpus Christi. From p. 140 r, the *Kyriale* begins, and from 145 r, several antiphons. On page 146 r, there is an unfinished sequence from Christmas (*Grates nunc omnes*), with the final *Alleluias* missing and the verso of the page blank.

The second volume – *Cantemus Domino* – contains Masses during Paschal time, from Holy Saturday until Pentecost. On p. 35 r, the *Dum sanctificatus* Mass begins, followed by several offertories (without information on when they are to be used), the *Rorate* Mass, and the introit for the Holy Cross. From p. 42 v, a series of Masses dedicated to saints begins, starting with Saint Stephen. The masses for saints are followed by additions (although there are much fewer of them than in the parallel part from the first set). These include the *Requiem*, *Contra pestilentiam* Mass, monastic ceremonies, *Kyriale*, Litany of All Saints, *Victimae paschali*, several antiphons (including *Melchisedech rex Salem*), and chants related to Corpus Christi (perhaps used during the procession).

Among the songs included in this volume, one that can be considered unusual is p. 98 r, *Gaudeamus* for the Feast of the Assumption, adjacent to the introit. The text of the introit contains an insert: *Gaudeamus omnes in Domino*, *diem festum celebrantes sub honore beatissimae Virginis Mariae*, which could be modified and adapted to various religious celebrations by inserting a different designation or the name of another saint (Borkowska 1993: 177). Based on the content of the

Żarnowiec Gradual and other hymnals, it can be assumed that the introit was used several times a year in the Catholic church. Over time, the introit began to be replaced by other forms of initiating the Holy Mass, for example antiphons or entrance chants. However, as a permanent part of the liturgy, it still occurs in the Lutheran Church (Pawlak 2001: *passim*).

The oldest information about songs performed in Protestant churches in Pomerania is provided by the Lutheran songbook translated into Slavic and published by Szymon Krofej[2]. The translator is considered the most outstanding figure in the history of the Bytów region, and his cantional – "the oldest printed monument of Kashubian writing" (Frankowska 2015: 27). The translator's surname, according to Zygmunt Szultka, comes from the South-German word "Kroff", which means "old cow" (Szultka 2004: 99). Edward Breza associates the etymology of the Krofej surname with the Polish word *krowa* (Breza 2000: 16). These hypotheses – in both cases – have their source in the history of the pastor's family, which was engaged in cattle breeding. Many researchers are also convinced that Krofej was Kashubian (Szultka 1994: 14–22; the same 2005: 138–144). He was born around 1550 in Dąbie near Bytów. He began his education at the municipal school in Bytów, continued at the Latin school in Słupsk, and in 1567, thanks to the protection of Bartłomiej Suawe, the administrator of the Bytów domain (the former first Evangelical bishop of Kamień), he was admitted to the University of Wittenberg. He studied during the favorable period, as there was an interested in Slavic languages, which were treated with kindness and tolerance. The youth Slavic students – educated at the Wittenberg University at that time – were under the careful care of professor of medicine Caspar Peucer, a Sorbian, son-in-law of Philip Melanchthon. Therefore, Krofej had excellent conditions for learning the Polish literary language; there he probably came across translations into Slavic languages of the most important liturgical texts as well as books and church writings (Szultka 2005: 140–141). After completing his studies, he returned to Bytów, where – according to Meyer and Szultka – he became the second preacher (deacon) in 1569, city writer and teacher, and from 1579 – the parish priest of the Bytów evangelical commune (Meyer 1929: 95–96; Szultka 2005: 141). Before taking up the parish in 1574, Krofej also studied at the university in Königsberg. At Albertine in Königsberg, not only he deepened his knowledge, but in this then thriving Protestant publishing center, was able to collect books for the chapel in the Bytów castle,

[2] Old Polish cantionals have a rich history in literary and musicological research. Among the studies, noteworthy is the monograph by Alina Nowicka-Jeżowa (Nowicka-Jeżowa 1992), which contains a bibliography of objects and subjects related to the theme of the "time of death" songs. Information about religious songs and music of Kashubia is provided by the works of Witosława Frankowska (Frankowska 2005, 2015).

where he was appointed as the court chaplain[3]. In Königsberg, Krofej had the opportunity to come across songbooks previously published there, inspired by Luther's cantional from 1524; this edition was a model for all Protestant prayer books (Kawecka-Gryczowa 1926: *passim*; Nowicka-Jeżowa 1992: 31). He even could have bought there the *Spiritual and devotional songs* compiled by Jan Seklucjan, newly collected and published [...] in 1547, their extended version from 1559, the *Kancjonal or Books of Divine Glory* by Walenty of Brzozów from 1554, or the now lost *Songs of the clergy newly made into notes, which are used at the court* by Michał Hey-Stawicki (Nowicka-Jeżowa 1992: 34–35).

If we accept this perspective, we can assume that when preparing his cantional, Krofej had at his disposal not only Luther's songbook in German, but also Polish-language collections of songs (not only Protestant ones), which he used. This thesis is quite probable, because he included several Latin and Polish songs written in the Catholic Church in his cantional (Frankowska 2015: 28). Krofej's undoubted merit lies on his effort to compile a songbook for the local population, most of whom were Kashubians who did not know the German language. These Kashubians had adopted Lutheranism in accordance with the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*. To enable them to actively participate in services, Krofej published the *Duchowne piesnie D. Marcina Luthera y ynszich naboznich mężów. Z niemieckiego w Slawięsky ięzik wilozone przes Szymana Krofea sługe słowa Bozego w Bytowie. Drukowano w Gdainsku przes Jacuba Rhode. Roku Panskiego 1586* (*Spiritual Songs of D. Martin Luther and other pious men. From the German into the Slavic language, translated by Szyman Krofe, a servant of the word of God in Bytów. Printed in Gdainsk by Jacob Rhodes. In the year of our Lord 1586*) (fig. 5.)

Only one copy of the cantional has survived to this day. It was found by a German ethnographer, Franz Tetzner, in the parish office in Smołdzino near Słupsk in 1896. Krofej's surviving work can be found in the collection of the library of the University of Greifswald, which purchased it in 1926. Thanks to the efforts of a linguist, professor of Slavic studies Reinhold Olesch, a phototype reprint of the cantional was published by the Böhlau Verlag Köln-Gratz publishing house in 1958. The term "Slawięsky", visible in the title of the hymn, referring to the language of the song, remains a subject of disputes in the linguistic community (Frankowska 2015: 32). In fact, the oldest printed monument of the Kashubian language is written in Polish, in which Kashubian dialectisms became visible for the first time, including words with dialectal characteristics (Kamińska 1968: 406); the basics of the Kashubian alphabet were developed only in the 19th century, and the first Kashubian literary work was Hieronim Derdowski's

[3] This position was entrusted to Szymon Krofej by Barnim X after the castle in Bytów was raised to the rank of a princely residence, which took place in 1569. However, the ruler of the Bytów domain stayed there permanently only from 1573; then came a need to equip a new castle chapel and appoint a court chaplain (Rymar 1995: 184; Szultka 2005: 142).

poem *O panu Czôrlińsczim co do Pucka po séce jachôł* (the text of the current Kashubian anthem was taken from it, the refrain of which is: *Nigdë do zgùbë nie przińdą Kaszëbë, Marsz, marsz za wrodżem! Më trzimómë z Bòdżém* (*Kaszëbë will never come to ruin, March, march for the enemy! We stand with God*) (Krawiec-Złotkowska 2017: *passim*).

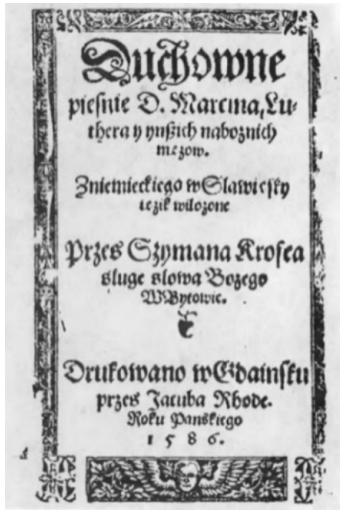
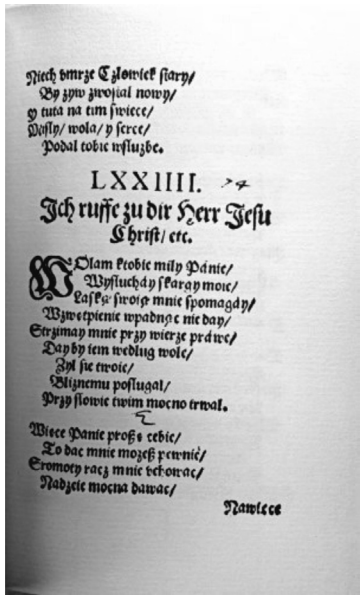

Duchowne
pieśnie D. Marcina, Lu-
thera y innych nabożnich
mężow.
Z niemieckiego w Sławieńsky
ięzik włożone
Przez Szymana Krofea
sługę słowa Bożego
W Bytowie.
Drukowano w Gdańsku
przez Jacuba Rhode.
Roku Pańskiego
1586.

Fig. 5. Title page of Szymon Krofej's cantional
Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/04/Duchowne_piesnie_Szymona_Krofea_1586.png

According to researchers, including Reihnold Olesch (Olesch 1958: 3), Krofej's songbook was modeled on Martin Luther's collection of songs, *Geystlische Lieder. Mit einer newen vorrhede/D. Mart. Luther* published in 1545 by Velentin Babst. This is indicated by the composition and content of the cantional. The substantive criterion related to the liturgical calendar is preserved in the arrangement; small deviations occur in the register of texts – the pastor of Bytów's edition contains more works than its original, though their internal division is adequate to the order adopted in all Protestant editions. There can be found both songs and prayers related to a specific period of the church year, as well as translations of biblical texts, among them psalms and canticles. It is interesting that Krofej – contrary to the practice of Protestant publishers of concealing the names and surnames of authors (in order to avoid "flattering of human vanity" (Nowak-Dłużewski 1966: IX)) – mentions not only Martin Luther, but also provides information about eight other authors; these are: Erasmus Albertus (1500–1553), Paul Eber (1511–1569), Iustus Ionas (1493–1555), Lazarus Spengler (1479–1534), Paul Speratus (1484–1551) and obscure to this day Erhardus Gegenwaldt and Johan Weis (Frankowska 2015: 29). The pastor is not consistent in writing down the titles of songs – he usually signs subsequent songs with one title (usually in German), but there are also songs with double titles with reference to the Latin version (usually being the original one) and the adequate German version (Fig. 6, 7).



Niech umrze Człowiek stary/
By zyw zwrosial nowy/
y tuta na tim swiecie/
Wesly/ wola/ y serce/
Podal tobie wsluzbe.

LXXIIII.

Ich ruffe zu dir Herr Jesu Christ/ etc.

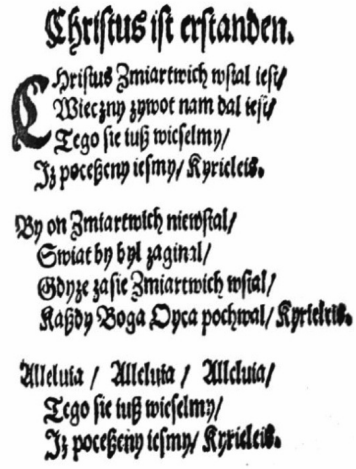
WOlam k tobie miły Panie/
Wysłuchay skargy moie/
Łaskę swoią mnie spomagay/
Wzwetpienie wpadnąc nie day/
Strzymay mnie przy wierze prawe/
Day by tem wedlug wole/
Zył sie twoie/
Bliznemu posługał/
Przy słowie twym mocno trwał.

Wiece Panie proszę cebie/
To dac mnie możesz pewnie/
Sromoty racz mnie wskonac/
Nadzieie mocna dawac/

Nawiecie

Fig. 6. A page from Krofej's cantional with the song I Call You, Jesus Christ

Source: https://czasksiazki.pl/pl/p/S.--Krofey%2C-Duchowne-piesnie-D.--Marcina-Luthera/23082074



Christus iſt erſtanden.

CHriſtus Zmiartwich wſtał ieſt/
Wieczny zywot nam dał ieſt/
Tego ſie tuß wieſelmy/
Iż poczęcny ieſmy/ Kyrieleis.

By on Zmiartwich nieſtał/
Swiat by był zaginął/
Gdyże ſie Zmiartwich wſtał/
Każdy Boga Oyca pochwał/ Kyrieleis.

Alleluia / Alleluia / Alleluia/
Tego ſie tuß wieſelmy/
Iż poczęcny ieſmy/ Kyrieleis.

Fig. 7. Song Christ is Risen

Source: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/53/Christus_Zmiartwich_wsta%C5%82_jest%2C_Szymon_Krofey%3B_Duchowne_piesnie%2C_Gda%C5%84sk_1586.jpg

We see affiliations with the Latin tradition, for example, in the following songs[4]: I. *Przydz, Odkupicielu pogański* (*Come, Pagan Redeemer*) – a reference to the Latin hymn *Veni Redemptor gentium* and the German translation of Luther from 1524 *Nu kom der Heiden Heylandt* (the modern version is *Nun komm, der Heiden Heiland*); II. *Chrysta my wszytcy już chwalmy* (*Let us all praise Christ already*) – translation of Caelius Sedulius' hymn *A solis ortus cardine*; also known in German translation as *Christum wir sollen loben schon*; VI. *Coż się strachujesz, Herodze* (*What are you afraid of, Herod*) from the hymn *A solis ortus cardine*; according to Friedrich Blume, from 1541 this hymn also functioned in Martin Luther's translation as *Was furchstu feind Herodes sehr* with the melody of the hymn of Sedulius; VII. *Ten czas już nynia wiesoły* (*This time is already joyful*) – a very common Christmas song, which probably came to Poland from Bohemia; its Latin prototype is considered to be the piece *Dies est laetitiae*; IX. *Chrystus porodzon*

[4] The titles are given by: W. Frankowska (2015: 30–31) according to the transcription by H. Popowska-Taborska from the collection *Kolędy polskie* Nowak-Dłużewski (1966: 509–516), retaining the numbering from Krofej's cantional.

w Betlejem (*Christ Born in Bethlehem*) – translation of the medieval wandering song *Puer natus in Bethlehem*; in Krofey's songbook it was titled *Stara piesnia* (*Old song*) – after each stanza in Latin a translation in Polish can be found; X. *Dziś nam dziecię porodziła* (*Today she gave birth to our Child*) – a popular carol in the Middle Ages, which was based on the hymn *Nobis est natus hodie*. In this song Polish and Latin stanzas appear alternately. XII. *Dziękujmy wszytcy Panu Bogu* (*Let us all thank God*) – a Kashubian version of the Christmas sequence *Grates nunc omnes* used during the liturgy in the Catholic Church; XIII. *W pokoju, z wieselim idę* (*In peace, with happiness I go*) – the words of the Canticle of Simeon's from the Gospel of Luke (Lk 2: 29–32); in the Latin version, beginning with the words: *Nunc dimitis servum tuum*.

The following Christmas carols have German origins: III. *Chwała bądz tobie, Jezu Chryst* (*Glory be to you, Jesus Christ*) – translation of Martin Luther's song titled *Gelobet seystu, Jesu Christ* (which evolved to *Gelobet seist du, Jesus Christ*); music by Johann Walter, 1524 (the text of this song is close to the version from Seklucjan's cantional, which proves that Krofej could have used many sources available to him when preparing his songbook); IV. *Z niebam przyszed(ł) wysokiego* (*From the high heaven he came*) – a translation of Luther's song, which is a counterfracture of the secular folk song *Ich komm aus fremden Landen her*; V. *Z nieba rzesza anielska przyszła* (*Angelic crowd came from heaven*) – translation of the song *Vom Himmel kam der Engel Schar*; VIII. *Jedno dzieciątko chwalebne* (*One glorious child*) – a song known as *Ein Kindelein so löbelich*. It is a paraphrase of the rotula's *Dies est laetitiae* second stanza, followed by subsequent stanzas not inspired by the original; XI. *In dulci iubilo spiewajcie wiesoło* (*In dulci jubilo sing joyfully*) – translation of the Latin-German song *In dulci jubilo, nun singet und seid froh!* to the words of Peter of Dresden from 1440, with music by Johann Walter.

Szymon Krofej's translations are characterized by a rich vocabulary. The topics of the songs also fit into the conventional catalog of comparisons, metaphors and allegories that narrate the biblical history of the world and the vision of its redemption through the saving sacrifice of Christ. These works – adequate to the order of the liturgical calendar – played an important evangelizing role, but they also had a didactic dimension and shaped moral attitudes. The sophisticated poetics of the lyrics can be considered as a clear contrast to the simpleness of the music, limited to a canon of a few popular melodies that underwent various local modifications. This was a consequence of the lack of notes in the pastor of Bytów's cantional; only two songs were printed with musical notation: *Kyrie które na Niedziele y Roczyſte Swieta przes ciały Rok w Chrzeſcyaſkie Cierkwy bądą ſpiewany oraz Aufer o nobis, Domine* (Frankowska 2015: 33). Of course, in the case of many songs – especially those with common Latin roots – it was possible to guess what melody the text should be sung to, but it is not certain that this

particular melody was being chosen in practice. Moreover, the final shape of the song was influenced by the contrafacture used at that time, which further complicates the verification of the texts of Krofej's cantional. Nevertheless, apart from these difficulties, it should be said that this songbook played a huge role in the formation of the Slavic literature, speech and identity, as well as Protestant spirituality, which were emerging at that time.

The third songbook, which had unquestionable importance in shaping the spirituality of the Pomeranian people, was *Zbiór Pieśni Nabożnych z przydatkiem Nauki Chrześcijańskiej* (*Collection of Devotion Songs with the addition of Christian Science*). The first edition of the songbook from 1716 was an addition to the book, which bears the significant title *The way to Heaven* (fig. 8).

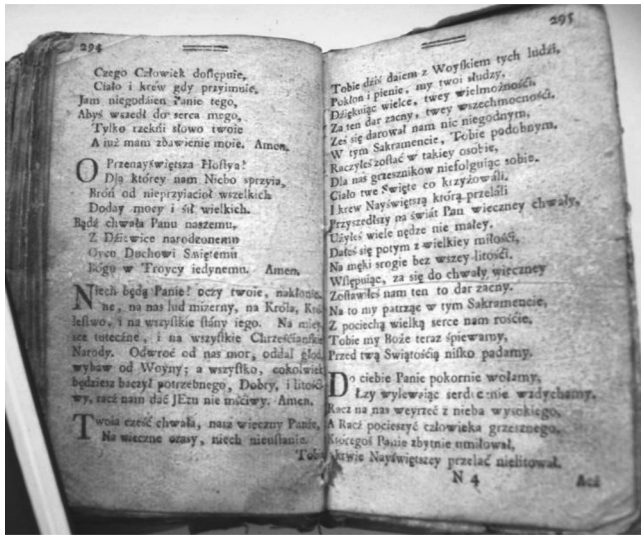


Fig. 8. A photo from the oldest preserved copy of *The way to Heaven*... from 1785

Source: photography from the author's archive

This prayer book is known as the *Kalwaryjka Wejherowska* (*Small Calvary of Wejherowo*). It had a well-thought-out composition that was subordinated to pilgrimage rituals and respected the order of the liturgical year. A title of a work is stigmatic, because – as Jan Perszon claims – the earthly image of the *way to Heaven* is the road to the sanctuary, and pilgrimage – especially its ultimate goal – has an eschatological dimension (Perszon 1998: 27). The hardships of the journey make people aware of their earthly life's vanitas nature and serve to find a clear definition of their purpose as well as Christian hope. The motive of imitating Christ is very important in this context, because the path to salvation, to Heaven, leads through Christ and his Mother. The words hidden in the songs were supposed to make this path easier and understandable. The *Small Calvary of Wejherowo* belongs to the cultural heritage of Pomerania. It contains songs for the entire liturgical year as well as works related to the themes of the Passion of Christ

and the Mother of God. It corelates to Great Calvary of Wejherowo, called the Kashubian Jerusalem. The songs included mainly originate from the tradition of the Catholic Church. There can also be found paraphrases of poetic texts, such as those written by Jan Kochanowski or Franciszek Karpiński. This songbook has been reissued many times. A detailed analysis of these reprints was conducted in 2008, in the article *Songs of Wejherowian Calvary. An attempt at synthesis* (Krawiec-Złotkowska 2008: 95–111).

* * *

Songs are part of the oldest, archetypical human activity, thanks to which people can cross the boundaries of *sacrum* and *profanum*. Song is a special form of linguistic expression, it can express faith and be a source of metaphysical experiences. In addition to the religious function (ritual or cult), songs can be credited with the ability to integrate people regardless of their cultural, ethnic and sociological diversity. People who sing songs together are united by a collective experience, a common experience of time and place. That is why new religious songbooks are constantly being published with new songs being written. Contemporary authors of lyrics and music include for example: Antoni Pepliński, Jan Trepczyk, Gaudenty Kustusz and Witosława Frankowska.

In the oldest cantionals related to the Pomeranian region presented above, one can observe both differences and similarities. The songs in these collection adhere to biblical tradition and respect the order of the church year, while simultaneusly highlighting themes important and specific to a given confession or religious group. For example, in the *Żarnowiec Gradual* – being somewhat outside the canon – the Cistercian nuns' preferences regarding the cult of saints are revealed. The local Kashubian element comes to the fore in the songbook of the Bytów pastor, Szymon Krofej. However, in Wejherowo's The *Road to Heaven*, the importance of the Kashubian Jerusalem in the life of the Pomeranian and Kashubian people participating in pilgrimages is revealed. These songbooks allow us to verify not only the confessional situation, but also the demographic and cultural situation. The prism of religious songs allows us to see the changes taking place. The circumstances and places in which the cantionals were built reveal a panorama of past centuries and the history of people. Songs sung in Pomeranian churches – regardless of whether they were Catholic or Protestant (and of other confessions omitted in this article) – allowed people to get closer to the *sacrum*, and at the same time helped to build community and to shape group identity. The oldest Pomeranian hymnals, preserved in Latin, German and Polish with elements of Kashubian, reveal common roots and affiliations among their users. And they were Catholics and Protestants, lay people and consecrated individuals. They all praised the Creator and proclaimed His works with beautiful songs and prayers – under a common sky.

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Andrzej RYKAŁA
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2183-3103
University of Lodz
Faculty of Geographical Sciences
Department of Political and Historical Geography
and Regional Studies

REGION and REGIONALISM
No. 15

IN THE CIRCLE OF POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY... ON AN OUTSTANDING REPRESENTATIVE OF THE DISCIPLINE AND THE WORK DEDICATED TO HIM

In the mid-20th century, Harrison Church, a researcher in political geography deemed the discipline a "clever" but "capricious child in the geographic family" (Church 1948: 1957). This intriguing disposition was to some extent influenced by the relatively young age of this discipline of science, which he included in his description. Although the problems it deals with were at the root of the development of geographical reflection, initially undertaken by philosophers and historians, and in time by a distinct guild of geographers, it was not until the end of the 19th century, with the publication of Friedrich Ratzel's controversial book *Politische Geographie* (1897), which was accused of inspiring imperialism and partitionist expansion.

Being burdened almost from the dawn of its independent existence with the baggage of being accused of promoting dogmatic and abstract theories, including the inevitability of the outbreak of boundary disputes, marked – to refer to the 'epoch' of evolutionism in the aforementioned century – the further development of the discipline. The underlying methodological concepts of *Politische Geographie*, based on the controversial analogy of organisms and states (subject, like their biological counterparts, to the laws of natural selection and the struggle for existence), as well as the work's superficial analysis of historical processes, contributed to the development in the early 20th century of geopolitics – a discipline understood as the practical application of political geography. The expansionist slogans it promoted were relatively quickly turned into practice, and geopolitics and political geography, widely believed to be almost "organically" linked, were held co-responsible for the development of the totalitarian ideologies of the 20th century.

With the fall of fascism, political geography did not shed its ideological corset. In the post-war period, influenced by radical political and economic concepts (communism and so-called "real socialism"), the governments of the Central and Eastern European countries ascribed to themselves the right to a monopoly on speaking out on policy issues in the broadest sense of the term. By programmatically restraining the freedom of scientific research, they stifled the aspirations of geographers to study political processes in their spatial dimension. Despite the complicated situation of political geography, dependent on the part of the world (Charles Alfred Fisher even concluded that in Germany the discipline, burdened by the inheritance of geopolitics, "committed suicide"), it was not abandoned altogether (Barbag 1987; Schlögel 2009; Rykała 2012). This also applied to Poland.

The history of political geography has thus been a series of ups and downs, depending closely on the rise and fall of the socio-political ideas that inspire the discipline. In addition to possessing stimulating values, determining the nature and dynamics of the research undertaken, these ideas often constituted, as in the case of Central and Eastern Europe, a significant barrier, as their influence on the political systems of the states limited the possibility of undertaking many scientific challenges, desirable from a geo-political point of view. It was only with the fall of the "Iron Curtain" that an ideologically muzzled discipline embarked on a path of unfettered development.

The tendency to use anthropomorphic comparisons (such as "capriciousness" and "cleverness") to illustrate the qualities of political geography may also stem from a reflection on the nature of the discipline, which refers on the one hand to "quantifiable natural facts" as the material substrate of human activity, and on the other hand to dynamic political-historical phenomena and processes which, being unique, are not subject to experimentation or repeated observation. In view of the researcher's often involuntary involvement in the course of these events and the natural tendency to judge them, resulting from the speciality represented, it is not so easy to avoid subjectivity in the field of political geography. Despite efforts to maintain an objective view, many of the issues considered are emotionally charged. For example, small communities (ethnic, religious), often marginalised in social life and obliged to occupy and organise specific fragments of space, not always in accordance with their own needs, communities, which were an integral part of many countries, regions, cities and villages and which, through no fault of their own, became absent from these places – can provide an opportunity to empathise with the experiences of the object of study.

Despite its controversial beginnings, the burden of geopolitics and being forced into an ideological corset by the will of those in power, political geography is today a fully-fledged member of the geographical family. Although the generally accepted scope of the discipline's problems has not yet been clarified, the established research tradition of the discipline include the territorial formation and

political development of countries and regions, the state and its territory (fig. 1), borders (including relic borders – the degree of their persistence in the cultural landscape and the consciousness of their inhabitants; (fig. 2–3), borderlands (as zones of cultural penetration of neighbouring nations), intra-state political structures, national, ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities, political conflicts on the grounds of race, nationality, religion, as well as class and group (which are integral components of the experience of living in large cities), spatial differentiation of political attitudes of the population. Recently, the research interests of political geography have included monumental commemoration of public figures and political events (the fate of monuments after political breakthroughs, sites of mass murders) and interdisciplinary feminist geography (due to the perception of contemporary state power as paternalistic, directing attention to alternative ideas of political identity, to the location and significance in contemporary socio-political systems of LGBT+ individuals and movements) (Harvey 1973; Bohdanowicz, Dzięcielski 1994; Michalski 1998; Blacksell 2005; Sobczyński 2014). The partial absorption of the latter subdiscipline seems all the more natural, as the socially excluded groups at the centre of its interests were at the heart of the development of the – now iconic – geographical-political research study of minorities (national, religious, linguistic). A fresh look at the arena of social tensions involving excluded people seems warranted, since in some authoritarian states these groups (for example, non-heteronormative) continue to face persecution by those in power (including the imposition of the death penalty for sexual orientation), while in others, widely regarded as democratic, they are subject to witch-hunts and vilification inspired or condoned by secular and clerical authorities.

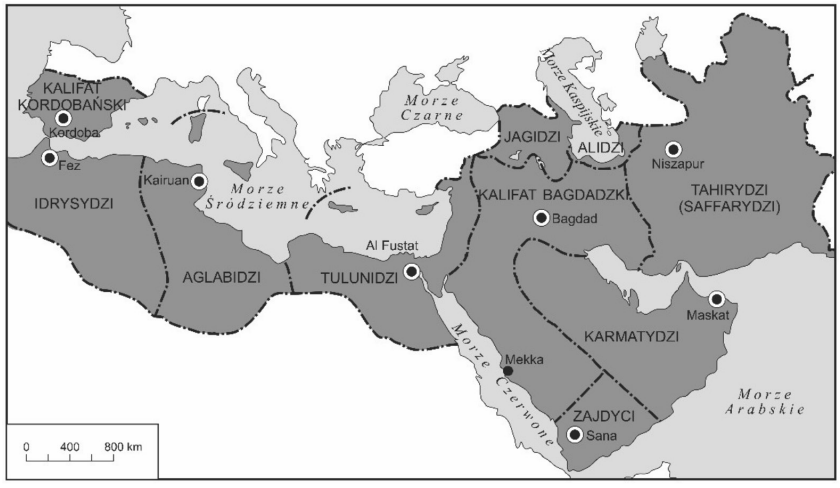

Fig. 1. The state and its territory
Source: M. Sobczyński (2006: 78).

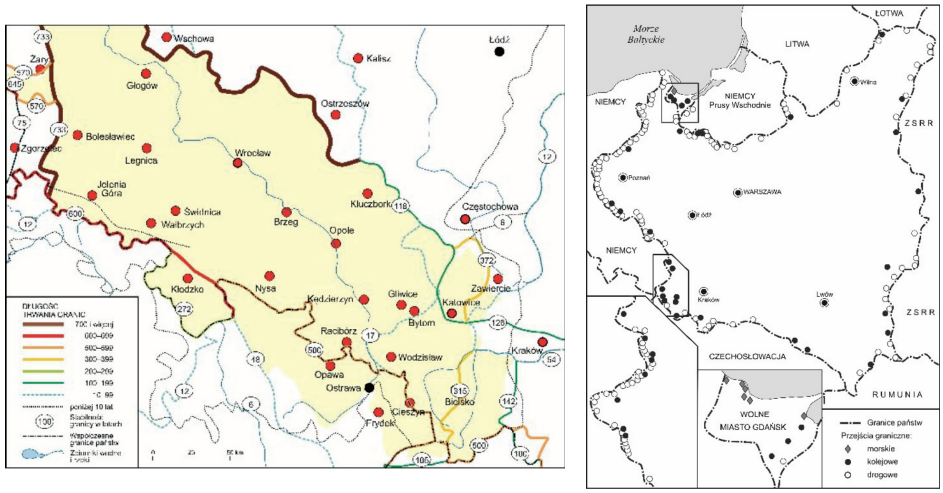

Fig. 2–3. National borders

Sources: M. Cepil, M. Sobczyński (2022: 49) in: Sobczyński M., Wosiak A. (2020: 30) – fig. 2; M. Sobczyński (2006: 366) in: Dominiczak H. (1992: 167) – fig. 3.

Professor Marek Sobczyński entered this alluring, albeit undefined, slippery and not quite safe field several decades ago with an unbridled inclination to chart his own research paths – while maintaining humility towards the achievements of his predecessors and respect for the not always glorious tradition. He captured the numerous streams of cognitive and research reflection carried by generations of political geographers in an individual stream of scientific exploration. His numerous studies, focused mainly on the problems of borders, borderlands, territorial formation of states, historical-political landscapes, ethnic minorities and electoral geography were characterised by in-depth analysis, striving for synthetic and theoretical approaches, attempts to classify and typologise political phenomena and processes in the arrangement of spatial units.

With his unflagging activity over the years and his breadth of approach to a wide variety of topics, the Professor repeatedly crossed the boundaries of political geography. He explored the field of historical geography, exploiting the traditionally close relationship between geography and his other passion – history. What emerges from reading the Professor's works written on the borderline between the two sciences is an allegiance to the thoughts of the German philosopher of the Enlightenment, Johann Gottfried von Herder, according to whom geography is the basis of history, while history is the geography set in motion, and the geographer Carl Ritter, for whom "... geographical skill cannot do without the historical factor if it is to be indeed a science of the filling relations of telluric space" (Romer 1969: 49).

Imbued with the spirit of the school of urban morphology, whose founding father on Polish soil was our Jubilarian's predecessor as head of the Department of Political, Historical Geography and Regional Studies at the University of Łódź, Professor Marek Koter, took up the challenge of urbomorphological analyses. It was an experience all the more inspiring for him as it was carried out, among others, on cities close to his heart: Cracow, the place of his childhood, and Łódź, the place where he is rooted in life. Thanks to his well-developed morphological and urbanistic research awareness, our Jubilarian moved effortlessly in the fields of settlement geography and spatial management, undertaking studies on the transformation of the centres of large cities and the development of industrial spaces.

Among the many scientific and popular-scientific activities of the Professor, which by definition cannot be listed in "a few words", the biographical and monographic attempts made in recent years are noteworthy. This type of work consists of studies dedicated to the members of the Polish Geographical Society (PTG) and the organisation itself. This particular writing experience allowed the Jubilarian – a distinguished and active member of the PTG and a long-standing member of its Board – not only to establish a specific relationship with the figures he described, who were important to him, but also to take a closer look at himself in terms of the achievements he had contributed to the output of Polish geography (Rykała 2023).

On the occasion of the Professor's seventieth birthday, his protégés from the Department of Political and Historical Geography and Regional Studies organised an anniversary scientific session on 24 March 2024. In doing so, they realised their desire to thank their Mentor for continually infecting them with the passion for creation, providing substantive support at every stage of their scientific development and imbuing their professional activities with empathy, in conjunction with his concern for their harmonious coexistence with the sphere of private life.

A material token of gratitude for his attitude towards his employees and for establishing friendly, scientifically fruitful and long-lasting relations with representatives from other research centres in Poland and abroad came in the form of a jubilee book, entitled *In the circle of political geography and related disciplines. Studies presented to Professor Marek Sobczyński* (*W kręgu geografii politycznej i dyscyplin „okolicznych". Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Markowi Sobczyńskiemu*, Łódź 2023, 515 pp.). Its structure reflects the spectrum of the authors' research interests. The variety of topics undertaken is also an illustration of the Jubilarian's scientific versatility (fig. 4).

Fig. 4. Jubilee book to mark the 70th birthday of Professor Marek Sobczyński

The opening chapter of the book, *From the theory of political geography and "surrounding" disciplines*, included two texts: Jan Wendt's *The emergence, development and contemporary problems of political geography research*, and Roman Matykowski and Kamila Zmudzińska's *Reflections on the development of research issues in the geography of music and sound*. In the section entitled *Borders (National)*, Krystian Heffner took up the topic of *Border – definitions, etymology, typology. The evolution of concepts and new meanings*, Marek Barwiński discussed *State boundaries according to geographers – an outline of the problem*, and Gideon Bigger sketched the problem of *Boundaries of troubled nations – history, geography, and politics of the boundaries of Georgia and Israel*. The chapter *States and (political) landscapes* consisted of studies by R. Szul, *The dynamics of empires-civilisations: Russia* and Mariusz Kowalski – *Between Russia and the West. Changes in the spatial differentiation of political attitudes among Ukrainians in the last three decades*. The considerations by Ryszard Żelichowski on *The vision of the modern state in the third millennium according to John Adam II, Prince of Liechtenstein* and Izabela Lewandowska on *The genesis of the East Prussian Cultural Centre in Ellingen against the background of the political history of the city and the situation of the displaced Germans* were tied together in the next chapter, entitled *Power and (cultural) institutions*. The most extensive, in terms of the number of texts, is the section on *Minorities (national, ethnic, religious)*. It includes studies by Tadeusz Marszał, *Social integration and assimilation processes of the German minority in Central Poland in the 19th century*,

Andrzej Rykała, *One should put up resistance. The ŻOB is the order of the moment. Origins, activities and spatial prameters of self-defence of Holocaust survivors in postwar Cracow*, Jernej Zupančič – *Minority in postmodern paradigm. The Carinthian Slovenes* and Joanna Szczepankiewicz-Battek – *Protestant cultural heritage of Masuria*. The final chapter, entitled *Cities (from a morphological and literary perspective)*, contains: Antonio Violante's *The Navigli Circle in Milan, yesterday and today*, Magdalena Baranowska-Deptuła, Tomasz Figlus and Łukasz Musiaka's *Historic settlement near Lodz modelled on the idea of garden cities – origins, morphological transformations and problems of development*, and Krystyna Krawiec-Złotkowska's *Locus urbanus in the poetic creation of Wacław Potocki of Potok* (*W kręgu geografii politycznej*... 2023).

In her review of the book, Jolanta Jakóbczyk-Gryszkiewicz wrote that "the thematic scope of the works impresses with its breadth, originality, and also with its reference to current political problems". Piotr Kendziorek, author of the second review, concluded that "the texts present original theses and innovative conclusions to varying degrees. Difficulties in comparison arise from the different levels of analysis (sometimes concerning problems with a very broad spatial-historical scope, other times 'micro-analyses')". In the reviewer's opinion, the publication constitutes "a significant contribution to the development of the field of geography in our country, which has important scientific significance, but also an important reference to current social and political problems. This concerns both the strictly research dimension and the methodological-theoretical dimension. The book is scholarly and specialised, aimed primarily at geographers, although it may also find a potential audience among sociologists, historians, or cultural studies scholars"[1]. It is worth mentioning that many authors referred to the rich research output of Marek Sobczyński in their texts.

Seventy is a beautiful age, but for a modern scientist it is actually only the threshold of maturity. In any case, it is a good time not only to look back and reflect on the achievements of these years, but to set ourselves further research challenges. This is all the more true as the Professor, who still has an extraordinary ability to record past times and explored places, has retained so much of the qualities of a young researcher, whose head is constantly buzzing with ideas, and whose appetite for further scientific work has not diminished (fig. 5). Just like in the old days, he can be moved by the beauty of the world, and it is possible that his dreams are still youthful… We look forward to the Professor's further scientific achievements. This 15th volume of *Region and Regionalism* is certainly a harbinger of this remarkable activity.

[1] Excerpts from the book's editorial review (University of Lodz Publishing House and author's archives).

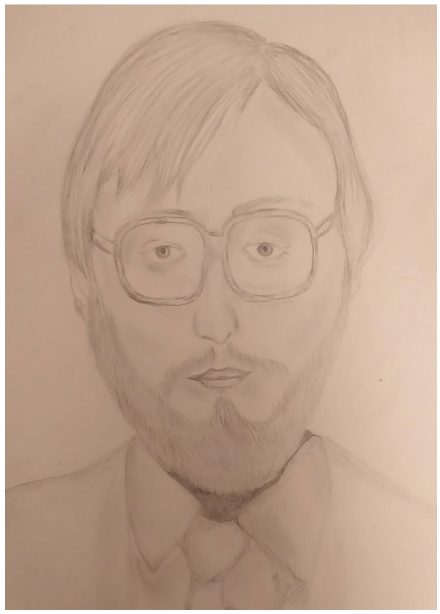

Fig. 5. Professor Marek Sobczyński, geographer (drawing by Ida Rykała)

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Marek SOBCZYŃSKI
ID https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1066-3687
University of Lodz
Faculty of Geographical Sciences
Department of Political and Historical Geography
and Regional Studies

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THE INTERNATIONAL 'LODZ' CONFERENCES ON POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY FROM A THIRTY-SIX-YEAR PERSPECTIVE

The book *Politische Geographie* by Friedrich Ratzel, published in 1897 in Munich and Leipzig, marked the beginning of a new geographical discipline – political geography. At that time, the western part of present-day Poland was part of Germany, so geopolitical thought faced no barriers there. In the Austro-Hungarian partition in Galicia, where the only Polish universities of the time (Cracow and Lvov) were located, German-language literature was quickly assimilated. However, in the Russian partition, where no Polish university operated, the barrier of the political border and the lack of knowledge of Western civilization's languages, delayed the development of political geography. Following the establishment of the Polish state in 1918, political geography emerged in several academic canters (Cracow, Lvov, Poznań, Warsaw, and Vilnius). However, personal conflicts between leading researchers hindered the formation of a unified Polish national school of geopolitical thought.

After the Second World War, it was only possible to practice political geography until 1949. The discrediting of this field in Nazi Germany and the inclusion of Poland in the Soviet Union's sphere of influence, as a result of the Yalta and Potsdam conferences, made it politically impossible to pursue this discipline of geography. In communist propaganda, political geography (often not distinguished from geopolitics) was treated as a tool of Western politics, and geographers who sought to engage with this subject were accused of holding reactionary attitudes towards the socialist system or even of promoting Nazi ideologies.

In such conditions, not only in Poland but throughout the entire so-called Eastern Bloc – comprising Central and South-eastern European countries placed under the Soviet Union's sphere of influence (behind the Iron Curtain) – the practice of political geography and geopolitics was completely abandoned for several decades (Sobczyński 2008: 189). This situation persisted until 1989, when the Soviet protective system over the Eastern Bloc countries collapsed. An exception

was Poland, where in August 1980, massive strikes by shipyard workers, miners, and the questioning of the legitimacy of communist party rule occurred. As a result of the agreements between the striking workers, led by Lech Wałęsa, and the communist government, signed at the Gdańsk Shipyard on August 31, 1980, a 15-month period of relative political "thaw" and partial restoration of democracy began in Poland. This period ended on December 13, 1981, with the communist authorities imposing martial law across the entire country.

During this period of relative freedom (1980–81), there were also changes in the organization of science in Poland. At the University of Lodz, a reorganization of the institutional structures took place, and on April 1, 1981, at the initiative of Professor Marek Koter, a new unit was established with "political geography" in its name (Department of Political and Regional Economic Geography). In this department, research in the fields of political and historical geography was undertaken, and students were educated in the political geography specialization. The introduction of martial law in December 1981 reversed many trends, weakened social bonds, and marginalized the influence of the democratic opposition for almost a decade, but paradoxically, it did not change the organizational structure of the university (Koter 1994: 5). The only hindrance was the operation of communist preventive censorship, which often interfered with content submitted for publication, though it did not entirely negate the essence of political geography research.

In this socio-political context in Poland, at the Department of Political and Regional Economic Geography at the University of Lodz, it was decided in 1986, on the initiative of M. Koter and under his leadership, to organize the first political geography conference in Poland and in the entire Eastern Bloc (Koter 1994: 5). This conference took place in Lodz and Wieluń from October 6–8, 1988, just a year before the major political changes in Poland and other communist countries, which led to the overthrow of communism and the restoration of democracy. From the outset, the project was designed not as a one-time event but as a recurring conference, organized every two years, exploring various research areas in political geography. This initiative proved to be long-lasting, continuing for 36 years and resulting in the organization of 18 subsequent conferences (up to 2023).

The conference was intended to be international, with the goal of confronting Polish geopolitical research with that of foreign scholars, particularly those from Western institutions (Koter 1994: 5). At that time, Lodz was the only centre in Poland exploring political geography. After the political transformation in the early 1990s, interest in political geography also emerged in other geographical centres in Poland, including Warsaw, Poznań, Gdańsk, Cracow, Wrocław, and Opole. The organizers were particularly eager to attract researchers from Western countries, both from the Anglo-Saxon and Francophone schools, which had a long-standing tradition in political geography research. As M. Koter wrote:

The merits of the conferences were to present and discuss the geographical--political problems of a country starting with the outer framework of its territory, i.e. frontiers and boundaries of the state, through the specifics of border zones (conceived both in categories of the state's peripheries and areas of cultural convergence) and problems of ethnic and national minorities to the internal structure of the country (Koter 1994: 6).

* * *

The theme proposed for the first conference was *Boundaries and frontiers – social, political and economic problems*, reflecting the research being conducted at the time at the Department on Polish relic boundaries (Kałuski 1989) (fig. 1). Invitations were extended to selected political geographers from the Western countries, based on Professor M. Koter's personal academic contacts, while within Poland, all academic geographical centres were invited.

Fig. 1. Opening of the 1st 'Lodz' Conference 1988 by Marek Koter
Source: from archives of the Department of Political and Historical Geography and Regional Studies University of Lodz

This event, significant in the history of Polish political geography, featured presentations by representatives from several Western universities: the University of Strathclyde (Tony Martin), the Rotterdam-Omstreken College in Delft (Jan Kalkwiek), the University of Örebro (Lennart Stenman), and Ankara University (Erdoğan Akkan). From other socialist countries, only three individuals attended: from the University of Ljubljana (Vladimir Klemenčič), from the University

of Budapest (Március Matheika), and from Vilnius University in Lithuania, which was still part of the USSR (Stasys Vaitekūnas).

It is worth mentioning that in Slovenia, which formally remained part of the Socialist Yugoslav Federation until June 25, 1991, political geography research was initiated around the same time as in Poland. Geopolitics was also practiced in the USSR, though not in the form of open scientific research. Instead, it was conducted as a secret activity by security services and selected academic institutions, such as the Institute for US and Canadian Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which was likely linked to the KGB and, aside from scientific work, engaged in various forms of espionage. Broader studies in political geography and geopolitics were undertaken in independent Russia after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991.

During the 1st 'Lodz' Conference a particularly important presentation was delivered by the main organizer of the conference, M. Koter, on the topic *The esence of frontiers, boundaries, and borderlands: some general remarks*, in which these categories were defined for the first time in Polish literature (Koter 2015).

Over 25 people participated in the 1st International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, during which 14 papers were presented. The proceedings were not divided into thematic sections; each presenter had half an hour for their presentation. On the first day of the conference, the first two sessions were held at the Institute of Socio-Economic Geography and Spatial Organization of the University of Lodz, located at 21 Tadeusz Kościuszko Avenue in Lodz, in the Nissen Rosenblum tenement house, built in 1896. At that time, before the digital era, the only equipment available to support the speaker was a slide projector and a wall map.

On the second day of the conference, participants were transported from Lodz over 100 km southwest to Wieluń, where they met with the city authorities. Following this, three more sessions were held at the Regional Museum (fig. 2). After the sessions concluded, the participants were transported 20 km southeast of Wieluń to the village of Kamion on the Warta River, where accommodations were arranged, and guests were invited to a banquet. Kamion village, located in the Załęcze Landscape Park, has a very old spatial layout, known as a multi-road village.

It is worth mentioning that although the conferences carried the sobriquet 'Lodz'—since the idea originated in Lodz geographical center, home to the Department, which was always the main organizer throughout the history of these conferences; the proceedings only took place in Lodz one more time, during the 10th edition in 2006. The principle was to hold the sessions in locations related to the theme of each subsequent conference, often on the border between Poland and its neighbours, usually in collaboration with a scientific institution from the neighbouring country. It was also customary to offer participants academic field trips around the conference venue, which often involved crossing national borders, a significant organizational challenge in the pre-Schengen era.

Fig. 2. 1st ‘Lodz’ Conference in Political Geography 1988, session in Wieluń Regional Museum, on the right photo in the centre from left: V. Klemenčič and E. Akkan
Source: from archives of the Department

During the 1st International ‘Lodz’ Conference on Political Geography, on the third day, after the morning session (again in Wieluń) and lunch, participants embarked on a study trip along the relic Polish-German border on the Prosna River. The purpose was to present the research findings on the remnants of this historical border in the cultural landscape, conducted by Marek Sobczyński. To complement the study tour, a scientific guide richly illustrated with maps was prepared (Sobczyński, Jaroszczak, Kunka 1988). The participants returned to Lodz late in the evening.

* * *

The 2nd International ‘Lodz’ Conference on Political Geography took place in Białowieża, Podlasia, from October 3 to 5, 1990, with 26 participants and 15 papers presented. The theme of the conference was *Minority problems within borderlands*. Białowieża is located in the heart of one of the last remaining areas of untouched natural forest in Europe (Białowieża National Park). It is also inhabited by a Belarusian national minority and situated near the border with Belarus, which at that time was still part of the USSR, making the border in that place impassable (fig. 3).

Poland was already in its third year of political and economic transformation, but the economy was still in decline. This was evident during the conference when the power went out at the accommodation venue during the banquet, which then took place by candlelight. Additionally, the autumn of that year was cold, and the rooms had no heating. The positive experiences from the first ‘Lodz’ conference in 1988 led some participants to return, and many of them continued to attend subsequent conferences in this series, sometimes participating in over a dozen of them.

In 1990, papers were presented by representatives of Western universities, including the University of Basel (Werner Galluser), the University of Trier (Walter Sperling), Örebro University (Lennart Stenman), the Rotterdam-Omstreken College of Delft (Jan Kalkwiek), and the University of Strathclyde (Tony Martin). Additionally, representatives from former socialist countries, which, like Poland, were undergoing political transformation, also presented papers. These included scholars from the University of Ljubljana (Vladimir Klemenčič, along with two young researchers Milan Bufon and Jernej Zupančič), Comenius University in Bratislava (Vladimir Slavik), and Tbilisi State University (David Chipashvili) in Georgia (which was still part of the USSR) (Kałuski 1991). The group of speakers was complemented by representatives from Polish geographical centers (from Cracow and Warsaw) as well as the Department of Political and Regional Economic Geography at the University of Lodz.

Fig. 3. 2nd 'Lodz' Conference in Political Geography 1990,
field trip to vicinity of Białowieża
On the left photo: from the left: Marika Pirveli, Vladimir Klemenčič, Vladimir Slavik, Jan Kalkwiek, Jernej Župančič, Marek Koter; On the right photo: from the left: M. Koter, Elwira Grabowska, Zbigniew Rykiel, Andrzej Zborowski, Werner Galluser, Lennart Stenman, Maria Soja
Source: from archives of the Department

A very important paper was presented by the head of the Department, M. Koter, who in his presentation titled *Ethnic minorities in a geographical context*, proposed a taxonomy of phenomena related to minorities living in borderlands and a methodology for their study (Koter 1993). One of the speakers was Jan Maksymiuk, a representative of the Belarusian national minority and editor of the newspaper "Niwa", published in Belarusian in Białystok, who discussed the issues faced by the national minority living in the borderland during the ongoing political changes. Conference participants also had the opportunity to meet with the local authorities and a broader group of representatives from the Belarusian minority.

After the first day of sessions, the participants went on a tour of the Białowieża Forest National Park organized by the park’s administration. In addition to the forest’s impressive tree stands, they had the opportunity to observe European bison living in the wild. On the morning of the second day of the conference, a study trip was conducted through the northern part of the historic region of Podlasia, where participants visited villages inhabited by Tatar and Belarusian national minorities. They also toured religious sites and cemeteries of these minority groups, including mosques and Muslim cemeteries (mizars), as well as Orthodox churches. On the third day of the conference, after lunch, the participants embarked on another study trip, this time through the southern part of the region.

After returning from the study tour, the conference proceedings were summarized – a tradition of holding a final discussion would continue throughout the entire series of these conferences. Following the summary, the participants attended a farewell banquet.

In all the conferences of the discussed series, participants had the option to travel by bus from Lodz to the conference venue. Typically, they would depart the day before the scheduled start of the conference and return to Lodz on the day after the sessions concluded, using the same bus provided by the organizers. Along the way, they could transfer to convenient train or flight connections. As a result, the entire conference trip usually spanned up to five days.

During the meeting in Białowieża, a proposal was made to publish the proceedings of the first two ‘Lodz’ conferences in an academic publication in Glasgow, United Kingdom. The organizers compiled the materials submitted by the authors and sent them to Scotland. Unfortunately, the book, which was supposed to document the outcomes of the first two conferences, was never published, and the submitted materials were never returned to the organizers.

* * *

The 3rd International ‘Lodz’ Conference on Political Geography took place from September 30 to October 2, 1992, at the “Vantur” training and recreational center in Księże Młyny on the Warta River, near the artificial Jeziorsko reservoir in Central Poland. The conference’s theme was *Inner borders. Region and Regionalism* (Kunka 1993) (fig. 4). It gathered around 30 participants who presented 18 papers. Among the attendees were 11 international guests, including representatives from: the Rotterdam-Omstreken College of Delft (J. Kalkwiek), the University of Rennes (Guy Baudelle), the University of Ljubljana (V. Klemenčič, J. Zupančič), the University of Trier (W. Sperling), the Bristol Polytechnic (Anthony Walker), the University of Karlstad (L. Stenman), the University of Bratislava (V. Slavik), the University of Yerevan (Anahit and Level Valesyan) from newly independent Armenia, and the University of Königsberg (Gennadiy Fedorov) from newly

independent Russia. Polish geographical centers were represented by authors from Cracow, Warsaw, Opole, and Poznań. The key paper for future developments, titled *Region and Regionalism – Some General Remarks*, was presented by representatives of the organizers, M. Koter and Andrzej Suliborski, in which several important concepts related to regionalization were defined, and a methodology for their study was proposed (Koter, Suliborski 1994).

Fig. 4. 3rd 'Lodz' Conference in Political Geography 1992. Session in Księże Młyny
From the left: W. Wilczyński, R. Matykowski, S. Kałuski, A. Zborowski, M. Soja
Source: from archives of the Department

The conference was attended for the first time by Krystian Heffner, the Director of the Silesian Institute in Opole, who proposed collaboration in organizing future conferences and publishing a periodical containing their proceedings, which had not been achieved for the first two conferences. Since then, K. Heffner has been a participant and co-organizer of all the subsequent fifteen conferences.

The first issue of the periodical, which was published in Lodz and Opole, was titled after the third 'Lodz' conference "Region and Regionalism". This title later became the name of an entire English-language publication series (biannuals), which, starting in 1994, released 15 issues across 23 volumes over the next 30 years. The first issue of the periodical "Region and Regionalism" edited by M. Koter (1994) and titled *Inner Divisions* (186 pages), was published in 1994 (fig. 5). The multi-coloured striped cover of this publication series was designed by Opole-based graphic artist Marek Jastrzębski. The cover was considered very avant-garde for its time but quickly became the symbol of the publication due to its distinctiveness and the repetition of the pattern, making it easily recognizable from afar. The first two issues featured a similar design dominated by dark green,

while later issues became more colourful, with the colours changing in subsequent editions. The publisher of the biannual "Region and Regionalism" was the Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies in Lodz and the Silesian Institute in Opole.

On the second day of the conference, a full-day study trip took place across Greater Poland, visiting sites connected with the origins of the Polish statehood (Gniezno, Strzelno, Kruszwica, Biskupin) (fig. 5). In the afternoon of the third day, there was a study trip to the south, along the Jeziorsko Reservoir, to Poland's oldest city, Kalisz, and the Renaissance castle of the Leszczyński family in Gołuchów. Just as two years earlier in Białowieża, participants in Gołuchów's castle park could also observe European bison (*Bos bonasus*), whose population in Poland is the largest in the world.

Fig. 5. 3rd 'Lodz' Conference in Political Geography 1992. On the left photo cover of the first number of "R&R". On the right photo, field trip to ancient archaeological reservation Biskupin

From the left: S. Kałuski, V. Klemenčič; M. Soja, A. Zborowski, T. Marszał, M. Koter, K. Heffner, Z. Rykiel, R. Matykowski, M. Sobczyński, T. Kunka, J. Župančič, L. Stenman, E. Grabowska, J. Kalkwiek, M. Kulesza, W. Michalski, V. Slavik. Crouching at the front A. Walker, A. Wosiak

Source: from archives of the Department

* * *

The 4th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography set new trends. In addition to the Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies at the University of Lodz, the Silesian Institute in Opole also served as an organizer, and for the first time, a foreign co-organizer was involved – the University of Ostrava (Czechia). The conference took place at the "Wodnik" recreational center

in the village of Szczedrzyk, located by the artificial Turawskie Lake in the Opole region, as well as at the Institute of Geography at the University of Ostrava, from September 28 to 30, 1994.

Starting with this 4th 'Lodz' Conference, September became the permanent and standard time for the event. The conference themes built upon those of the previous 3rd 'Lodz' Conference, continuing to focus on *Region and Regionalism*, but now with an emphasis on *Social and Political Aspects*. For the first time during a 'Lodz' conference, the proceedings were divided into five thematic sessions: *Theoretical and macroscale issues*; *Regional problems in ethnic cultural aspects*; *Regionalism and regionalisation*; *Transborder cooperations and Euroregions*; *Political, Socio-economical, Territorial questions*.

During the conference, several important papers were presented. M. Koter defined the geographical-historical region, discussing its origins and development factors. André-Louis Sanguin (University of Angers) presented the process of the disappearance of borders in Western Europe, which was just beginning at that time. J. Kalkwiek spoke about decentralization and regionalization in Europe, while Anna Trono (University of Lecce) illustrated the transformation of Italy from regionalism to federalism. Frank Carter (University of London) discussed the role of national minorities in Bulgaria, Yosseph Shilhav (Bar-Ilan University) addressed territorial issues and regionalism in Israel, J. Zupančič and Peter Repolusk presented regionalism on the Istrian Peninsula, and L. Stenman discussed the Värmland region in Sweden (Koter 1995). In addition to representatives from Lodz, Polish geographical centers were represented by geographers from: Cracow, Kielce, Opole, Sosnowiec, Toruń and Warsaw.

During the Ostrava session, the presentations were primarily given by Czech geographers from the University of Ostrava. Radim Prokop discussed the issue of ethnic diversity in the Český Těšín region, while Jaroslav Vencálek spoke about the relationships between the economy and demography in the regions of Cieszyn Silesia and Northern Moravia. Slovak geographer Vladimir Baran from the University of Banská Bystrica addressed regionalisms in his country. The conference also saw participation from representatives of Russia. Igor Uskalov and Irina Malakha from the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow discussed the regionalization of migration in Russia and the former USSR, while Valentina Zhideleva (University of Syktyvkar) presented on the development of northern regions of Russia, including the Komi Republic.

The traditional full-day study trip on the second day of the 'Lodz' conference, for the first time, crossed an international border (with the Czech Republic). Additionally, it was the first time that the trip included not only sightseeing but also a session of the conference proceedings, which was held in Ostrava. There was also a half-day excursion to Opole, combined with a visit to the headquarters of the co-organizer, the Silesian Institute, and a meeting with its academic staff.

Crossing the border led to an unexpected situation because the group chose a newly opened border crossing, one of many that had been established along the borders of former Eastern Bloc countries after the political transformation. The Czech border guard encountered an Israeli passport for the first time and had to obtain permission from Prague to allow the citizen to cross the border, which resulted in bus waiting for over an hour.

Selected papers from the presentations were published in issue no. 2 of the periodical “Region and Regionalism” (212 pages), edited by M. Koter and published in Łódź–Opole (Koter 1995).

* * *

The 5th International ‘Lodz’ Conference on Political Geography focused on the topic *Borderlands and transborder regions – geographical, social, and political problems*. It took place from September 18 to 20, 1996, with the same organizing institutions as the previous 4th conference. The proceedings were held at the “Turnia” recreational center in Wisła, located in the Silesian Beskids.

The conference was attended by approximately 55 participants, including 24 international attendees from 16 countries, making it one of the largest ‘Lodz’ conferences in history (fig. 6). A total of 42 papers were presented, the highest number ever for this conference series. Polish geographical centers were represented by 31 participants from: Cracow, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kielce, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Sosnowiec, Szczecin, Warsaw, Wrocław.

International guests came in large numbers from Hungary (15 people from Pécs, Szeged, and Békéscsaba), the United Kingdom (3 people from London and Brighton), Ukraine (6 people from Kyiv and Lviv), and also from the Czech Republic (5 people from Ostrava), Slovakia (2 people from Bratislava), Bulgaria (Sofia), Georgia (Tbilisi), Italy (Trieste), Sweden (Karlstad), Germany (Leipzig), the Netherlands (Rotterdam), France (Angers), Israel (Jerusalem), Austria (Innsbruck), and for the first time, the United States (William Stanley from the University of South Carolina, who later became a frequent participant, attending a total of 9 conferences), as well as Jan Wendt from the University of Gdańsk (who participated in 11 conferences). Notably, there was no representative from Slovenia, marking the only instance of their absence in the history of the ‘Lodz’ conferences.

The proceedings were divided into six thematic sections. On the first day of the conference, sessions on *Specificy and problems of borderlands*, and *Transborder cooperation* took place. Between the sessions on that day, participants went on a study trip to Cieszyn. On the third day, sessions on *Euroregions – policy in borderlands*, *Demographic and ethnic problems in borderlands*, *Problems of the borderland cities*, and *Tourism and ecological policy in borderlands* were held. Speakers at this and subsequent conferences had 15 minutes to present their papers,

and each session concluded with a discussion. The conference traditionally ended with a final discussion, during which the achievements of the current conference were summarized and suggestions for the topics of future conferences were made.

Fig. 6. 5th 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography 1996 in Wisła
Source: from archives of the Department

Particularly significant presentations included Maksym Maksymchuk's classification of Ukrainian borderlands (Maksymchuk 1998), K. Heffner, discussion of demographic processes on the Polish-Czech border (Heffner 1998), and M. Koter, proposed a classification of borderland populations (Koter 1998).

On the second day of the conference, there was an all-day study trip to the Cieszyn Silesia region on both the Polish and Czech sides, as well as to Slovakia (Čadca region). Participants visited Bielsko-Biała and Třinec, where they were received by local authorities, and Jablunkov, where they met with representatives of the Polish minority in the Czech Republic at the Polish House. Crossing three successive national borders was time-consuming and demonstrated the still-weak integration of the borderlands (Lijewski 1997: 212).

The results of the 5th 'Lodz' Conference were published in a comprehensive (296 pages) issue of the periodical "Region and Regionalism", edited by M. Koter and K. Heffner, which was released in 1998 (Koter, Heffner 1998).

* * *

The 6th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography was dedicated to the theme of *Multicultural regions and cities*. It was held from September 16 to 18, 1998, at the seaside resort of Krynica Morska on the Vistula Spit, right by the border with Russia (Königsberg Oblast) (Koter, Heffner 1999: 5). In addition to

the two established institutions, the Department of Regional Development Geography at the University of Gdańsk was invited to organize the event (headed by Tadeusz Palmowski). In this edition of the ‘Lodz’ Conferences, it was for the first time recorded in the calendar of the World Political Map Commission of the International Geographical Union. Subsequent conferences in this series were held under the patronage of this Commission, which soon changed its name to the IGU Commission on Political Geography.

The conference was attended by 42 participants, including 19 from abroad. Thanks to a grant from the Batory Foundation, a broader participation of guests from former Eastern Bloc countries was possible, with partial subsidies for their stay. Eleven participants from Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Lithuania, Slovenia, Ukraine, and Hungary benefited from this support. Representatives from Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, and the United Kingdom also attended.

For the first time, Marie-France Gaunard-Anderson from the University of Lorraine in Metz participated in the ‘Lodz’ conference, and she would later attend the conference many times (a total of 10). Polish geographical centers were represented by speakers from: Cracow, Gdańsk, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Słupsk, Szczecin, and Wrocław. In total, 26 papers were presented.

The sessions were divided into five thematic categories: *Multiculturalism – new ethnic and social processes*; *New political and spatial concepts of the shape of Europaean regional structures*; *Multicultural regions in regional structures of Europe. Europa Baltica*; *Regions in ethnic and cultural borderlands – new centres of multicultural development or zones of confrontation?*; *Multiculturalism as a model of socioeconomic development of cities*.

Notable presentations included K. Heffner’s paper on the position of multi-ethnic regions in Polish regionalization concepts (Heffner 1999). Several presentations focused on the multiethnic and multicultural aspects of city development: Lodz (M. Koter), Wrocław (Barbara Miszewska 1999), Cracow (Grażyna Prawelska-Skrzypek and Ewa Bogacz 1999), Szczecin (Beata Meyer 1999), and Central Poland cities (Kulesza 1999). For the first time, Wojciech Janicki from Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin participated in the ‘Lodz’ Conference, becoming a frequent attendee (a total of 10 conferences). After the sessions, the traditional summarizing discussion took place.

On the second day of the conference, participants enjoyed a study trip to Frombork to visit sites associated with Nicolaus Copernicus. Along the way, participants met with local authorities in Nowy Dwór, members of the Nowodworski Club, and representatives of the Ukrainian minority. They learned about the economic characteristics of the region, which is a depression, and visited sites related to the Dutch (Mennonite) minority and the Żuławy Museum. They also toured Elbląg. On the third day, there was an all-day study trip to Żuławy, Malbork, Gdańsk, and Gdynia, where participants were received by the city’s deputy mayor at the City Hall.

The results of the 6th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography were mostly published in issue no. 4 of "Region and Regionalism" (224 pp.) (Koter, Heffner 1999).

* * *

The 7th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, titled *Changing role of border areas and regional policies*, took place from September 13 to 15, 2000, in Bogatynia and Zgorzelec/Görlitz in Germany (Solga 2001). This time, the Institute of Earth Sciences in Leipzig was invited to co-organize the event. There were 42 participants, including 19 from abroad, and 39 papers were presented. The conference and accommodations were hosted at the „Energetyk" Hotel in Bogatynia. The arrival of guests from former Eastern Bloc countries was once again sponsored by the Batory Foundation.

For the first time, Marek Sobczyński, who had previously served as the scientific secretary at past conferences, became the main organizer of the 'Lodz' conference. The former chairman of the Organizing Committee, M. Koter, was honoured as the patron of the conference after 15 years in this role. M. Sobczyński continued as the chairman of the Organizing Committee until the end of the conference series in 2023. In the Organizing Committee of the 7th 'Lodz' Conference, the Silesian Institute was represented by K. Heffner, and the Institute of Earth Sciences in Leipzig by Frieder Leistner.

The conference was attended by representatives from 15 countries (Bulgaria, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Russia, Slovenia, Sweden, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom) as well as from Polish geographical centres (Cracow, Gdańsk, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Szczecin and Wrocław).

The conference was attended by Vladimir Kolosov from the Russian Academy of Sciences, who was the chairman of the IGU Commission on Political Geography (from 1996 to 2004) and became the IGU President in 2012, continuing to support the 'Lodz' Conference series in that role. For the first time, Alexandru Ilieş from the University of Oradea in Romania participated in the 'Lodz' Conference and became a frequent attendee of subsequent meetings.

From this conference onwards, a practice was introduced where the chairperson for each session was designated in advance from among the participants. In previous conferences, the session chair was appointed ad hoc, often being the chairman of the Organizing Committee or its members.

The proceedings of the 7th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography were divided into five sessions: *State policy in border zones* (chaired by V. Kolosov); *Role of borderlands in developing an international co-operation* (M. Koter); *Cultural dimension of borderlands* (K. Heffner); *Problems of Polish*

–*German borderlands* (this session was held during a study trip to the Polish-German border, at the town hall in Görlitz, and was chaired by W. Stanley); *Borderlands of the former socialist countries and border local initiatives* (J. Zupančič).

On the second day of the conference, participants embarked on a study trip to the German side of the border region. During this trip, one session of the conference was held in Görlitz, where they also met with the city's authorities. In Zittau, there was a meeting with Gerhard Watterott, the head of the Euroregion Nysa-Nisse-Neise Office. The group toured both border cities and visited the Marienthal Monastery in Ostritz, a canter of Virgin Mary's religious cult.

On the third day, in the afternoon, participants had a meeting with the authorities of Bogatynia and the management of the Turów lignite mine and power plant. They then toured Gościszów, Lwówek Śląski, Lubomierz, Gryfów Śląski, Złotniki Lubańskie, and the Czocha Castle, and made purchases at the night market in Zawidów on the Czech side of the border.

Materials collected during the conference were largely published, after peer review, in issue no. 5 of "Region and Regionalism" (258 pages) (Koter, Heffner 2001).

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The 8th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, titled *Role of ethnic minorities in the border regions* took place from September 11 to 13, 2002, in Krynica-Zdrój and Bardejov (Slovakia). Given that the conference was held on the border with Slovakia, the Institute of Geography at the University of Prešov was invited to co-organize the event, with Robert Ištok serving as the main organizer on the Slovak side. The conference sessions were held at the „Geovita" Hotel in Krynica-Zdrój (Kałuski 2003).

The conference hosted 39 participants, including 13 from abroad, who presented a total of 29 papers. Compared to several previous conferences, the number of foreign guests was slightly lower. Attendees represented 13 countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Czechia, Georgia, Hungary, Israel, the Netherlands, Poland, Republic of South Africa, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the United States, as well as Polish geographical centers: Cracow, Gdańsk, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Rzeszów, Słupsk, Sosnowiec, Warsaw, and Wrocław.

The proceedings were divided into seven thematic sessions: *Minorities and borderlands. General issues* (chairman Eran Razin); *Borderlands as niches for relict small nations* (Julian Minghi); *Borderlands as zones of cultural interpenetrating of neighbouring nations* (M. Koter); *Minorities and crossborder co-operation in Alpen-Adria Region* (W. Stanley); *Borderland minorities in Slovak and Czech Republics* (session took place in the town hall of Bardejov, Slovakia, and was chaired by Vladimir Baar); *Borderland minorities as a factor of transborder*

co-operation (K. Heffner); *Borderlands as asylum for war and political refuges and other issues* (J. Zupančič).

For the first time, presentations were allowed in Slovak or Polish, provided that a full text of the presentation in English was distributed to all participants.

Traditionally, the first day of the 'Lodz' Conference was devoted entirely to sessions, while the second day was reserved for a study trip along the route Krynica – Piwniczna – Stara Ľubovňa – Bardejov. In Bardejov, one session was held in the town hall, followed by a meeting with the city's administration. After lunch, participants toured the Bardejovske Kupele spa and returned to Krynica-Zdrój via Zdynia – Kwiatoń – Grybów.

On the third day, following the summary of the conference, another excursion around Krynica-Zdrój and its surroundings took place. For the first time at the 'Lodz' Conference, the summary was not done through a general discussion among all participants but through presentations by the most distinguished guests invited by the organizers, a practice that became the norm in subsequent conferences. The summary of the 8th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography was provided by M. Koter, J. Minghi, W. Stanley, Ernst Steinicke, and Eran Razin.

The conference materials were published in issue no. 6 of "Region and Regionalism" in 2005. Due to the rich content of the conference, it was released in two volumes: vol. 1 (156 pages) (Koter, Heffner 2003) and vol. 2 (182 pages) (Heffner, Sobczyński 2003). This practice of dividing each subsequent issue of the series into two volumes continued until 2017.

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The 9th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, titled *Role of the borderlands in the united Europe*, took place from September 15 to 17, 2004, in Wigry and Vištitis (Lithuania). This time, the Institute of Geology and Geography in Vilnius, Lithuania, was invited to collaborate on its organization (Gaunard-Anderson, Kałuski 2005). The Lithuanian side was represented by Ričardas Baubinas, Vidmantas Daugirdas, and Donatas Burneika.

The conference took place in the Polish-Lithuanian-Russian border region, where the Polish side of the border is inhabited by a Lithuanian minority. Notably, just four and half months earlier, both Poland and Lithuania had joined the European Union (on May 1, 2004). The conference was held at the 17th-century Camaldolese Monastery. At that time, the church within the complex served a sacred function, while the monastery and hermitages were used as hotel facilities by the Creative Work Center of the Ministry of Culture and Art. Six years later, in 2010, the entire property was returned to the Roman Catholic Church and resumed its original monastic function.

One session was held in Lithuania, by Lake Vištitis, in the village of Čižiškiai, at the Camping "Viktorija" tourist center, about 50 meters from the Lithuanian--Russian border, which runs through the lake.

The conference was attended by 48 participants, including 20 from abroad, and 38 papers were presented. Guests came from 11 countries: Austria, Czechia, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Additionally, representatives from Polish geographical centers were present, including: Cracow, Katowice, Lodz, Opole, Słupsk, and Warsaw.

The proceedings were divided into seven thematic sessions: *Borderlands as areas stimulating integration processes* (chairman M. Koter); *The role of the Polish lands in the process of European integration* (J. Zupančič); *Polish Eastern fringe after the extension of the European Union* (W. Stanley); *Eastern borderland of the European Union and Eastern policy of the EU* (K. Heffner); *The role of the Lithuanian lands in the process of European integration* (session was held in Čižiškiai, Lithuania, and was chaired by Vladimir Baar); *Euroregions, cross--border co-operation and processes of European integration* (session in two parts chaired by Zbigniew Rykiel and Roman Szul); *The Role of Inner (Ethnic, Religious, Cultural) Borderlands in Contemporary Integration Processes* (Milan Bufon). The proceedings were concluded by a panel discussion introduced by a group of invited experts: W. Stanley, J. Župančič, Z. Rykiel and R. Szul.

Since some of the conference participants arrived in Wigry by a bus organized by the hosts from Lodz, elements of the study trip were already carried out along the way, including visits to the castle in Pułtusk and the village of Gabowe Grądy, inhabited by a religious minority of Old Believers.

On the second day of the conference, a full-day study trip was conducted along the route Sejny – border checkpoint Ogrodniki – Lazdijai – Kapčiamiestis – Kalvarija – Vištytis, where the fifth session of the conference was held. The hosts from Vilnius provided lunch and then showed the guests the Lithuanian--Russian border to the north of Lake Vištitis, where a minor adjustment to the border line in favor of Lithuania was made by the border treaty of 1997. On the way back, two critical points were visited: the junction of the borders of Poland, Lithuania, and Belarus, where Soviet fortifications from the so-called 'friendship' border with Poland still remained along the Marycha River.

Additionally, the second tripoint of the Poland-Lithuania-Russia border was visited, where the territory was separated by barbed wire fences, while the Poland--Lithuania border was not yet protected. This was before the Schengen Agreement came into effect in Poland and Lithuania on December 21, 2007.

On the third day of the conference, in the afternoon, another study trip took place to Sejny, where participants had a meeting with members of the Lithuanian minority and the cultural organization "Borderland" Centre of Arts, Cultures, and Nations.

The materials from the 9th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography were published in 2005 as two volumes in issue no. 7 of "Region and Regionalism": vol. 1 (230 pages) (Koter, Sobczyński 2005) and vol. 2 (208 pages) (Koter, Heffner 2005).

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After eighteen years, the 10th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography returned to Lodz, coinciding with the jubilee of the initiator of this conferences and long-time main organizer, Marek Koter. In addition to the traditional two institutions (the Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies at the University of Lodz and the Silesian Institute in Opole), the Lodz Branch of the Polish Geographical Society was also a co-organizer.

Due to M. Sobczyński's appointment to the Steering Committee of the IGU Commission on Political Geography for the 2004–2012 term, the 'Lodz' Conferences was held under the patronage of this Commission and was recorded in its calendar and reports.

The proceedings were held at the Faculty of Geographical Sciences, which had been located in the *Collegium Geographicum* – a building that was formerly a silk spinning mill owned by Moses Klajman from 1907 – at 31 Stefana Kopcińskiego Street, adapted for university use in 1999. The conference took place from September 19 to 21, 2006.

There were 45 participants, including 16 from abroad, and 24 papers were presented. Representatives came from 9 countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, France, Georgia, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia, as well as six Polish geographical centers: Cracow, Lodz, Lublin, Olsztyn, Opole, and Warsaw.

During the opening of the conference, M. Sobczyński presented the achievements of the Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies in the field of Polish political geography (Sobczyński 2007) and introduced the scientific profile of the initiator of these conferences, M. Koter, along with his contributions to the development of political geography (Araszkiewicz, Sobczyński 2007) (fig. 7).

The proceedings were divided into six thematic sessions: *Multicultural regions in the context of European integration* (chairman M. Koter) (fig. 8); *Multicultural cities in the context of European integration* (R. Szul); *Europe of homelands or Europe of regions? Dilemmas of regional policy in the European Union* (Tadeusz Siwek); *The role of regional policy of the European Union in moderating regional and transborder conflicts* (M. Bufon); *The policy of old and new members of the European Union and candidate countries* (J. Zupančič); *Multidimensional nature of regions (historical, cultural, economic, administrative, ethnic, religious, etc.) versus unity of the European space* (V. Baar).

Fig. 7. 10th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Lodz 2006, opening of the confernce by organizers M. Sobczyński (left) and K. Heffner (right)
Source: from archives of the Department

Fig. 8. ‘Lodz’ Conference in Lodz 2006, M. Koter presents his paper (left), auditorium (right)
Source: from archives of the Department

On the first day of the conference, in the afternoon, a study tour of Lodz guided by Magdalena Baranowska-Deptuła was conducted, focusing on the city’s development history in the 19th century, when it was one of the most dynamically growing industrial centres in Europe (fig. 9). In the evening, guests were invited to a formal banquet held in the historic interiors of the “U Spadkobierców” Club.

On the second day, after the conference sessions, participants explored various sites in Lodz related to its multicultural character, including the Jewish cemetery, the Radegast Station, Księży Młyn, the Museum of Cinematography, and temples of different denominations.

Fig. 9. 10th 'Lodz' Conference in Lodz 2006, M. Baranowska-Deptuła leads a field trip around Lodz (left), group photo of participants in Satromiejski Park under the monument of Moses (right)

Source: from archives of the Department

The summaries of the conference on the third day were provided by the participants with the longest tenure in the 'Lodz' Conferences, who were invited by the organizers: M. Koter, K. Heffner, R. Szul, V. Baar, and J. Župančič (fig. 10).

The materials from the 10th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography were published in issue no. 8 of "Region and Regionalism" in two volumes: vol. 1 (182 pages) (Heffner, Sobczyński 2007) and vol. 2 (172 pages) (Koter, Heffner 2007).

Fig. 10. 10th 'Lodz' Conference in Lodz 2006, summarising session, from the left: R. Szul, V. Baar, J. Župančič, M. Koter, K. Heffner

Source: from archives of the Department

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The 11th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography titled *Historical regions divided by the borders* took place from September 17 to 19, 2008, in Świnoujście on the island of Usedom and in Cape Arkona (Germany) on the island of Rügen, in the historic region of Pomerania, which was divided by a political border after 1945. This border only recently ceased to be a barrier for tourist movement due to Poland's entry into the Schengen Area. This time, the conference was organized by two traditional institutions, represented on the Organizing Committee by M. Sobczyński (Lodz) and K. Heffner (Opole). The 11th 'Lodz' Conference was the last one attended by its initiator, M. Koter, who retired at that time. The conference sessions and accommodation for participants were held at the "Afrodyta" Hotel in the seaside district of Świnoujście. The opening session was attended by the Dean of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences at the University of Lodz, Tadeusz Marszał, and the President of the Czech Geographical Society, Tadeusz Siwek. The conference was attended by 43 participants, including 17 from abroad, and 35 papers were presented.

Representatives from 17 countries participated in the conference: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Hungary, Israel, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, as well as from 11 Polish geographical centers: Cracow, Katowice, Lodz, Lublin, Olsztyn, Opole, Rzeszów, Toruń, Warsaw, Wrocław, and Wschowa.

The proceedings were organized into six thematic sessions: *Historical regions divided by the borders – general problems* (chairman K. Heffner); *Historical regions divided by the borders – regional issue: Alpen-Adria Region* (M. Koter); *Historical regions divided by the borders – regional issue: Central Europe* (J. Župančič); *Historical regions divided by the borders – regional issue: other regions of the World* (T. Siwek); *Role of divided or multicultural cities in historical regions* (R. Szul); *Historical regions – cultural heritage and relict boundaries* (Jan Markusse) (fig. 11).

The first day of the conference concluded with a formal banquet in the historic interiors of Fort Anioła (Fort of Angel) in Świnoujście, where participants had the opportunity to explore defense technology relics related to the 19th-century history of Pomerania.

The second day of the conference was entirely dedicated to a field trip to Germany, covering the historic region of Pomerania from Świnoujście across the entire island of Usedom (Peenemünde), Greifswald, Stralsund, and the island of Rügen, including the Jasmund National Park (cliffs) and the historic Slavic settlement at Cape Arkona. The organizers prepared a scientific guide about the sites visited, available in both Polish and English.


Fig. 11. 11th 'Lodz' Conference in Lodz 2008
left photo: opening the conference, right photo: the paticipants visit the open Polish-German border in Świnoujście, Grunwaldzka str.
Source: from archives of the Department

On the third day of the conference, due to the large number of presentations, parallel sessions were held for the first time in the history of the 'Lodz' Conferences. After the sessions, a second field trip took place, following the route: Świnoujście – Zalesie – Wapnica (Turquoise Lake) – Wolin – Kamień Pomorski – Dziwnów – Grodno – Międzyzdroje – Świnoujście.

For the traditional conference summary, led by Tadeusz Marszał, the following participants were invited: J. Markusse, T. Siwek, R. Szul, Ryszard Żelichowski, and J. Župančič. The evening of the third day was dedicated to informal social activities among the participants, held at the "Afrodyta" Hotel and included seaside walks along the now undivided by a state border beach.

The peer-reviewed conference materials were published in issue no. 9 of the periodical "Region and Regionalism", vol. 1 (250 pages) (Sobczyński 2009) and vol. 2 (292 pages) (Heffner 2009).


Fig. 12. 11th 'Lodz' Conference in Świnoujście 2008
on the left photo field study tour to Rugia Island in Germany, Cape Arkona, village Witt, from the left: A. Rykała, M. Sobczyński, R. Szul; on the right photo the participants of the conference at the cathedral in Kamień Pomorski
Source: from archives of the Department (photo. W. Janicki)

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The 12th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, titled *Historical regions in the structures of European Union*, took place from September 22 to 24, 2010, on the Polish-Czech Silesian border in Głubczyce and Opava (Czechia). In addition to the two traditional organizers, the University of Silesia in Opava (Czechia) and the Lodz Branch of the Polish Geographical Society were invited to collaborate. The conference received the honorary patronage of the Commission on Political Geography of the International Geographical Union. For the first time in the history of the 'Lodz' conferences, an official scientific secretary was introduced, a position subsequently held by professors from the Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies at the University of Lodz. During the 12th 'Lodz' Conference, this role was fulfilled by Andrzej Rykała.

The participants of the conference were accommodated at the "Domino" Hotel in Głubczyce, which also hosted the Polish part of the sessions. Two of the sessions were held at the University of Silesia in Opava.

The conference was attended by 31 participants, including only 10 from abroad, and 18 papers were presented. A total of 7 countries were represented: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Czechia, Israel, Italy, Poland, Romania, and Slovenia, along with Polish geographical centers from Cracow, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Sosnowiec, Tomaszów Mazowiecki, Warsaw, and Wrocław.

The proceedings were divided into 6 thematic sessions: *Historical divisions of the territory in different states of the world. General problems* (chairman R. Żelichowski); *Historical regions in West European EU member states* (Jan Wendt); *Historical regions on the Eastern borderland of the EU* (Alessandro Vitale); *Historical regions in Central Europe* (T. Siwek); *Historical region of Silesia* (J. Zupančič); *Historical regions in Alpen-Adria Region* (Gideon Biger) (fig. 13).

Fig. 13. 12th 'Lodz' Conference in Głubczyce and Opava 2010
on the left photo from the left: K. Heffner, M. Sobczyński, R. Żelichowski, G. Biger and A. Rykała; on the right photo from tle left: A. Rączaszek, Z. Szczerek, V. Kopeček, T. Siwek

Source: from archives of the Department

The first day of the conference was traditionally dedicated entirely to sessions, and in the evening, during a formal banquet, the participants were welcomed by Tadeusz Marszał, Dean of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences at the University of Lodz (fig. 14).

Fig. 14. 12th 'Lodz' Conference in Głubczyce and Opava 2010
before the dinner on the left photo from the left: H. Żelichowska, R. Żelichowski, A. Araszkiewicz; on the right photo from tle left: B. Solga, K. Heffner, V. Kopeček, K. Leśniewska

Source: from archives of the Department

On the second day of the conference, a field trip was organized through the southern part of Opole Silesia and the Silesian region of Opava in the Czech Republic, following the route: Głubczyce – Osobłoga – Prudnik – Jarnołtówek – Głuchołazy – Nysa – Otmuchów – Bílá Voda (Czechia) – Javorník – Jeseník – Kralova Studánka – Bruntál – Krnov – Głubczyce. The organizers prepared a scientific guide in English for this excursion. The beautiful autumn weather and the rich cultural heritage of the Silesian region made this trip successful.

On the third day of the conference, the proceedings moved to the Czech Republic, specifically to the historic Senate Hall of the University of Silesia in Opava, where the participants were welcomed by Dušan Janák, Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs, on behalf of the university. After the sessions concluded, the conference participants continued their field trip, visiting the historical capital of Czech Silesia, Opava, as well as the town of Hrádek on the border with Moravia.

During the closing session of the 12th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, Jernej Župančič from Ljubljana (a participant of 17 conferences) and Gideon Biger from Tel Aviv remarked that the 'Lodz' Conferences are among the most important regular meetings for European political geographers.

The peer-reviewed papers presented at the 12th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography were published in two volumes, issue no. 10 of "Region and Regionalism", vol. 1 (156 pages) (Sobczyński, Rykała 2011) and vol. 2 (222 pages) (K. Heffner 2011).

* * *

The 13th International ‘Lodz’ Conference on Political Geography, titled *The Eastern dimension of the united Europe* took place from September 12 to 14, 2012, in Chełm, Poland, and Lutsk, Ukraine. The co-organization of this conference was proposed to the Lodz Branch of the Polish Geographical Society and the Department of International Relations at the State Higher Vocational School (SHVS) in Chełm, represented by Maria Marczewska-Rytko and Andrzej Wawryniuk. Additionally, the Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University in Lutsk, Ukraine, was also a co-organizer, represented by Natalia Kotsan (Musiaka 2012). The scientific secretary of the conference was Marek Barwiński.

The new co-organizers introduced a somewhat different format to the 13th ‘Lodz’ Conference, transforming it from an intimate event into a large media spectacle, following the “eastern celebrity” scenario. This was reflected in the sessions held in large auditoriums, speeches by university and city authorities, and the presence of television cameras. In Poland, the conference was hosted at the premises of the State Higher Vocational School in Chełm, where the guests were welcomed not only by the traditional organizers (M. Sobczyński, K. Heffner), but also by the Rector of SHVS in Chełm, Józef Zając (fig. 15), the Dean of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences at the University of Lodz, T. Marszał, the Consul General of Ukraine in Lublin, Valdislav Kanevskiy, and the Chairman of the Chełm City Council, Zygmunt Gardziński.

Fig. 15. 13th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Chełm and Lutsk 2012
on the left photo: opening of the conference by Rector of the State Higher Vocational School in Chełm J. Zając; on the right photo: auditorium, in the first row are sitting: from the right H. Żelichowska, S. Kałuski, R. Żelichowski, R. Szul, in the second row: J. Wendt, M. Bufon

Source: from archives of the Department

The conference was attended by 51 participants (one of the larger conference in the series), of whom 23 were international guests, and 25 papers were presented. Attendees came from 10 countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Romania, Slovenia, Ukraine, and the United States, as well as from Polish geographical centers in Chełm, Gdańsk, Katowice, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Warsaw, and Wrocław. The sessions were held in large halls at the universities in Chełm and Lutsk, where the presentations were attended by large groups of university staff and students, allowing more than 150 people to participate in the proceedings.

The conference was divided into six thematic sessions: *Eastern politics of the European Union* (chairman W. Stanley); *Historical dimension of the East-West relations in Europe* (Milan Buffon); *Relation between EU member-countries and East European region* (G. Biger); *Economical conditions of the East-West relations in Europe* (R. Szul); *European integration processes from the Ukrainian perspective* (three moderators N. Kotsan, K. Heffner and M. Sobczyński); *National and religious diversification and EU-EE relations* (R. Żelichowski).

On the first day of the conference, two sessions were held simultaneously in the afternoon due to the large number of presentations. After the sessions concluded, participants took part in a walking tour of Chełm. They visited the city's chalk underground tunnels, Castle Hill, and the airport belonging to the State Higher Vocational School, which is the only institution of its kind in the country that offers an aviation courses. In the evening, a formal banquet was held at the "Kozak" Hotel restaurant in Chełm.

On the second day of the conference, participants were invited on a full-day study trip to Lutsk, Ukraine. The organizers prepared a scientific guidebook in English for the occasion. In Lutsk, the sessions took place in the main library building of the Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University (fig. 16). The proceedings were given a highly formal and elaborate character. The guests were welcomed by the Vice-Rector of the University in Lutsk, the Dean of the Faculty of International Relations, and the Director of the Polish Institute. After the sessions and lunch at the student cafeteria, a tour of Lutsk was organized, including a visit to the 14th-century Lubart's Castle. It is worth noting that Lutsk was part of Poland until 1939, and it was incorporated into the USSR under the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact. The beautiful autumn weather contributed to the success of the trip.

On the third day of the conference, participants embarked on another scientific study trip to the southern Podlasie region, which lies on the Polish-Ukrainian and Polish-Belarusian border. The day began with a visit to Włodawa, where participants met with city and county officials and toured the Pauline Monastery and the synagogue. The next stop was the Orthodox Monastery in Jabłeczna, followed by a visit to the Bug River, which marks the Polish-Belarusian border in this area.

A unique site in Europe that was visited is the only Neouniate church in Poland, located in Kostomłoty. After lunch at the Monastery of the Missionary Oblates in Kodeń, the final, sixth session of the conference was held in the monastery’s halls (fig. 17).

Fig. 16. 13th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Chełm and Lutsk 2012
on the left photo: presidium of the Lutsk’ session from the left: R. Żelichowski, M. Sobczyński. N. Kotsan, on the right photo: auditorium in Lutsk
Source: from archives of the Department

Fig. 17. 13th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Chełm and Lutsk 2012, field study trip
on the left photo in Lutsk Castle, from the left A. Wawryniuk, K. Heffner, W. Stanley, on the right photo M. Barwiński at the Polish-Belarus border on the Bug river
Source: from archives of the Department

The conference traditionally concluded with a summary panel discussion moderated by T. Marszał, featuring several invited participants: G. Biger, M. Bufon, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, K. Heffner, M. Sobczyński, W. Stanley, R. Żelichowski, and J. Župančič.

The presentation materials from the 13th ‘Lodz’ Conference, along with the submitted Ukrainian texts, were thoroughly reviewed and published in two volumes of the journal “Region and Regionalism”, vol. 1 (248 pages) (Sobczyński, Barwiński 2013) and vol. 2 (264 pages) (Heffner 2013).

* * *

The 14th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, focused on the topic of *Geographical-political aspects of the transborder conservation of natural and cultural heritage*, took place from August 15 to17, 2014, in Łopuszna, a historic region of Spisz/Spiš, which is divided by the Polish-Slovak border (Leśniewska 2014). This conference was entirely different from previous 'Lodz' conferences, being held in August for the first and only time. This timing was chosen because the largest international geographical event in post-war Poland was set to begin the day after its conclusion – the Regional Conference of the International Geographical Union (IGU) in Cracow, held from August 18 to 22, 2014, on the theme *Changes – challenges – responsibility*. As a result, the 'Lodz' Conference became a pre-congress meeting of the IGU's Commission on Political Geography. A similar meeting in Czorsztyn (in Spisz), was organized by Marek Więckowski for the IGU's Commission on Tourism, Leisure, and Global Change. On the final day of both conferences, participants from both events gathered in Łopuszna for a joint session of the two IGU Commissions.

The organizing institutions were the traditional academic centers from Lodz and Opole, along with the aforementioned IGU commissions. The scientific secretary of the 14th conference was Andrzej Rykała. The venue for accommodation and sessions was the "Natanael" Recreation and Rehabilitation Center in Łopuszna.

The 14th 'Lodz' Conference was attended by 65 participants, making it the largest conference in the series, including 35 international guests, and 32 papers were presented. Representatives from 21 countries were present: Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Brazil, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Japan, Latvia, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Republic of South Africa, Slovenia, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States, as well as from Polish geographical centres: Gdańsk, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Sosnowiec, Warsaw, and Wrocław.

During the conference opening and the welcome address by M. Sobczyński and K. Heffner, a moment of silence was announced to honour the memory of Mariusz Kulesza, Head of the Department of Political Geography and Regional Studies at the University of Lodz, who had participated in a total of 11 'Lodz' conferences and was scheduled to attend this one but sadly passed away just a week prior.

The sessions were divided into six thematic sections: *Integration vs peripherality – changes in border regions* (chairman – K. Heffner); *Contemporary changes in border regions – new challenges for political geography* (J. Wendt); *Geopolitics of borders and borderlands in globalised World* (J. Zupančič); *Transborder conservation of natural and cultural heritage between the EU member and*

not-member countries (A. Vitale); *Contemporary practice in the field of the conservation of natural and cultural heritage all over the World* (R. Szul); *The role of Euroregions in the transborder heritage conservation* (joint session of the two IGU'S Commissions chaired by G. Biger).

On the first day of the conference, which was entirely dedicated to sessions, an evening dinner was held in an old forge, featuring traditional folk cuisine.

On the second day participants went on a full-day study trip to Slovakia exploring the historic Spiš region, with K. Heffner (Opole) and Łukasz Musiaka (Łódź) as the guides. The itinerary for the nearly 300 km route covered: Łopuszna – Białka Tatrzańska – Jurgów – Ždiar (Slovakia) – Tatranská Lomnica – Stary Smokovec – Poprad – Spišská Nová Ves – Levoča – Spišské Podhradie – Lipany – Stará Ľubovňa – Spišská Stará Ves – Sromowce (Poland) – Łopuszna (fig. 18).

Fig. 18. 14th 'Lodz' Conference in Łopuszna and Spiš 2014, participant of the conference during the field study trip to Slovakian part of Spiš, from the left are standing: J. Kłos, T. Wiskulski, D. Bar-Kołelis, T. Marszał, E. Marszał, E. Orłowska, G. Biger, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, M. Sobczyński, S. Gladanac-Violante, A. Kruś, T. Figlus, A. Rykała, Ł. Musiaka, R. Żelichowski, squatting in the first row from the left: R. Szul, K. Leśniewska, J. Župančič, A. Violante, B. Rogelj, A. Vitale, M. Baranowska-Deptuła

Source: from archives of the Department

On the third day before noon, a historical joint session of two IGU Commissions, the Commission on Tourism, Leisure and Global Change and the Commission on Political Geography, took place, moderated by Gideon Biger from Tel Aviv. As usual, the conference concluded with a panel discussion moderated by T. Marszał, with contributions from: G. Biger, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, K. Heffner, Jan Kłos, R. Szul, R. Żelichowski, and J. Župančič.

After the conference sessions, a second study trip was organized through the Polish part of the historical Spisz region, covering over 100 km: Łopuszna – Dębno – Frydman – Czorsztyn – Niedzica – Łapsze – Trybsz – Nowa Biała – Łopuszna. Participants visited the birthplace of the renowned Polish philosopher, Father Józef Tischner, in Łopuszna, the UNESCO-listed wooden church in Dębno, the castles in Czorsztyn and Niedzica, the historic Spisz village of Trybsz, and the Białka River Gorge near Nowa Biała.

On the morning of August 18, following the conference, the organizers' coach transported participants to Cracow for the opening of the IGU Regional Conference.

During the conference in Łopuszna, a new Commission on Political and Historical Geography of the Polish Geographical Society was established, which soon gathered over 30 members from all geographical centers in the country.

The materials collected during the conference were reviewed and published in no 12 of "Region and Regionalism", vol. 1 (238 pages) (Sobczyński, Rykała 2015) and vol. 2 (146 pages) (Heffner 2015).

* * *

The 15th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, titled *Borderlands of nations, nations of borderlands*, was held on September 14 to 16, 2016, at the Polish-Czech-German border in Złotniki Lubańskie and Bautzen (Germany). The secretary of the conference was M. Barwiński, and the Organizing Committee included traditional members (M. Sobczyński, K. Heffner) as well as a new co-organizer, Brygida Solga from the Silesian Institute in Opole. In addition to the two traditional organizing institutions, the Commission on Political and Historical Geography of the Polish Geographical Society and another foreign partner, Maćica Serbska in Bautzen, were invited to collaborate (Zdyb 2016). The conference sessions were held at the "Złoty Sen" Training and Recreation Resort in Złotniki Lubańskie, located by the artificial Lake Złotnickie, and at the Sorbian House, the headquarters of Maćica Serbska in Bautzen.

A total of 36 participants attended the conference, including 11 from abroad, and 30 papers were presented. Representatives from seven countries were present: Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, and Ukraine, along with representatives from Polish geographical centers: Gdańsk, Katowice, Lodz, Lublin, Olsztyn, Opole, Słupsk, Warsaw, and Wrocław. After welcoming the guests (M. Sobczyński, K. Heffner), a moment of silence was announced to honor the memory of Krzysztof R. Mazurski (Wrocław University of Science and Technology), a frequent participant of the 'Lodz' Conferences who passed away in March 2016.

The sessions were divided into seven thematic sessions: *Minorities in the borderlands. General issues* (chairman K. Heffner); *Minorities on the fringes of countries* (J. Župančič); *Contemporary realities of the territorial peripherality and national and religious minorities in a such areas* (R. Szul); *Borderlands of nations and religions* (A. Vitale); *Polish policy towards national and ethnic minorities* (session in two parts J. Kłos, J. Wendt); *Chosen problems of minorities in Poland* (Joanna Szczepankiewicz-Battek); *Sorbian minority in Germany* (Zoltán Hajdú) (fig. 19).

Fig. 19. 15th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Złotniki Lubańskie and Bautzen 2016 sessions in “Zoty Sen” resort, on the left photo: from the left Marek Battek and Alessandro Vitale, the right photo: auditorium

Source: from archives of the Department

On the first day of the conference, after lunch, the sessions were again split into parallel sessions to accommodate all the presenters. For the first time in the history of the ‘Lodz’ Conference, one of these sessions was conducted entirely in Polish. After a full day of sessions in the evening the participants attended a banquet in the “Złoty Sen” restaurant by Lake Złotnickie.

The entire second day of the conference was dedicated to a study trip through Upper Lusatia in Germany, a historical borderland region inhabited by the West Slavic Sorbian people (fig. 20). As per tradition, the organizers prepared a scientific guidebook in English. The over 200 km long scientific tour was led by J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek, K. Heffner, and Dietrich Šołta from Leipzig University (Germany). The route was as follows: Złotniki Lubańskie – Leśna – Platerówka – Sulików – Radomierzyce – Hagenwerder (Germany) – Bernstadt – Berthelsdorf – Herrnhut – Lobau – Bautzen – Crostwitz – Panschwitz-Kuckau – Rosenthal – Ralbitz – Schmochtitz – Kleinwelka – Goerlitz – Zgorzelec (Poland) – Henryków Lubański – Lubań – Leśna – Złotniki Lubańskie. The participants learned about the folk culture of the Sorbs, visited the Moravian Brethren religious center in

Herrnhut, a local ethnographic museum, the Sorbian House in Bautzen, the monastery in Panschwitz-Kuckau, the religious site of Cyril and Methodius in Schmochtitz, and the Sorbian minority school in Crostwitz.

In Bautzen, a session was held in the Sorbian House. The participants were welcomed by Jurij Łušćanski, the chairman of Maćica Serbska in Bautzen, who also served as a co-organizer of the conference. During the session, most of the presentations were delivered by representatives of Maćica Serbska. Dietrich Šołta discussed the issues facing the Sorbian national minority in Germany and the role of Maćica Serbska in preserving the national heritage of the Sorbs. J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek (from WSB University in Wrocław) spoke about the geographical range of the two Sorbian languages. The German presenters delivered their papers in either Sorbian or Polish, and K. Heffner provided simultaneous summaries in English. During the study tour in Schmochtitz and Panschwitz-Kuckau, Catholic priest Gerat Wornar gave a lecture on the role of Cyril and Methodius in the Christianization of Upper Lusatia, Pope John Paul II's views on this issue, and the religious life of Catholics and Protestants in the region.

Fig. 20. 15th 'Lodz' Conference in Złotniki Lubańskie and Bautzen 2016, sessions in Sorbian House in Bautzen, the left photo, from the left: D. Šołta, K. Heffner, Z. Hajdu, on the right photo: auditorium, from the left, in the first row: J. Kłos, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, in the second row: K. Krawiec-Złotkowska, J. Župančič, R. Szul, I. Lewandowska, E. Marszał, in the third row: A. Rączaszek, A. Araszkiewicz, A. Kruś, H. Powęska, in the fourth row: M. Barwiński, Ł. Musiaka, A. Majewska, O. Sikora, T. Figlus, M.-A. Spinelli, A. Rykała, A.Vitale

Source: from archives of the Department

The third day of the conference began with another study trip through Lower Silesia, covering a route of over 100 km: Złotniki Lubańskie – Złoty Potok – Gryfów Śląski – Lwówek Śląski – Bolesławiec – Osiecznica – Nowogrodziec – Lubań – Leśna – Czocha Castle – Złotniki Lubańskie. The tour was led by J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek and Marek Battek. The participants familiarized them-

selves with religious sites in Gryfów Śląski, Lwówek Śląski, and Bolesławiec, visited a decorative ceramics factory, a mineralogical museum, and the castles Kliczków and Czocha (fig. 21).

Fig. 21. 15th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Złotniki Lubańskie and Bautzen 2016, the left photo: the Sorbian Hosue in Bautzen, the right photo: the organizers rest at the Złotnickie Lake, from the right A. Araszkiewicz, Ł. Musiaka, M. Barwiński

Source: from archives of the Department

Upon returning to Złotniki Lubańskie, a traditional panel session summarizing the conference, moderated by T. Marszał, was held. The discussion featured long-time participants: M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, K. Heffner, R. Szul, A. Vitale, and J. Župančič. The organizers greatly valued the feedback, which positioned the ‘Lodz’ conferences among the world’s leading political geography conferences, due to the selection of current topics, the gathering of prominent researchers from various academic centers worldwide, the open interdisciplinary nature, the less formal course of the proceedings, the friendly atmosphere conducive to free exchange of sometimes very different views, the high academic standards, and the interesting study tour programs that closely aligned with the conference themes. There was also a suggestion to transform the “Region and Regionalism” publication series into a journal (annual) with an international editorial board, but this proved unfeasible in the context of the scientific policy implemented by the right-wing populist party Law and Justice.

After the conference proceedings concluded, a general meeting of the members of the Commission on Political and Historical Geography of the Polish Geographical Society was held. In the evening, a farewell barbecue was held near the gallows tower at the „Złoty Sen” resort in Złotniki Lubańskie.

The peer-reviewed results of this conference were published in no. 13 of the “Region and Regionalism” series, again in two volumes: vol. 1 (256 pages) (Sobczyński, Barwiński 2017), vol. 2 (196 pages) (Heffner, Solga 2017).

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The 16th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, titled *Role of the state in the era of globalization*, took place from September 12 to 14, 2018, in Skorzęcin, in a historical region in Greater Poland. The conference took place at the Hotel "Biały" located by Lake Białe, and was organized by the traditional institutions in Lodz and Opole, along with the Commission on Political and Historical Geography of the Polish Geographical Society. Andrzej Rykała served as the scientific secretary of the conference.

This particular event had special significance, as it was held in Greater Poland, the cradle of Polish statehood, to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Poland's independence in 1918 and the centenary of the Polish Geographical Society's activities. The location was carefully chosen to showcase the historical roots of the Polish state to both international guests and participants unfamiliar with the area.

The conference attracted 33 participants, including 9 from abroad, and featured 17 presentations. Attendees represented seven countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Slovenia, and the United States, along with representatives from various Polish academic centers such as Gdańsk, Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Słupsk, Sosnowiec, Warsaw, and Wrocław.

The conference began with the organizers (M. Sobczyński, K. Heffner) welcoming the participants and announced a moment of silence in memory of Marek Battek from the Wrocław University of Science and Technology, a participant in previous conferences who had recently passed away. M. Sobczyński delivered an introductory lecture about the core area of Polish statehood, describing the formation of the Polan state and its evolution into Poland.

The discussions were organized into five thematic sessions: *The role of the State in the contemporary World* (chairman K. Heffner); *Meanders of Polish independence* (J. Zupančič); *Challenges facing the State* (J. Wendt); *Main trends in contemporary state policies towards minorities* (W. Stanley); *Problems of borders and borderlands in the globalization era* (R. Żelichowski) (fig. 22).

As per tradition, the conference concluded with a panel session moderated by T. Marszał and K. Heffner, with contributions from J. Zupančič, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, Z. Hajdu, and J. Kłos.

The conference also included study tours. The first day's tour took place on the way from Lodz to Skorzęcin, visiting sites related to the early Polish statehood, such as the castle in Łęczyca, the Romanesque collegiate church and prehistoric hillfort in Tum, the Romanesque rotunda and church in Strzelno, and historical landmarks in Konin, Kruszwica, and the modern-day religious sanctuary in Licheń.

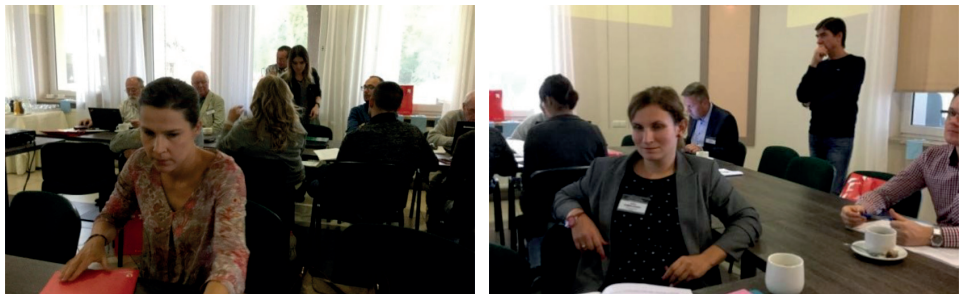

Fig. 22. 16th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Skorzęcin 2018, session in Hotel “Biały”, on the left photo: in the foreground S. Dołzbłasz, under the widows from the left: T. Marszał, K. Heffner, Z. Hajdu, A. Majewska, P. Orlewski, W. Stanley, on the right photo in the foreground M. Chmielewska, behind the table from the left: M. Barwiński, A. Rykała. T. Figlus

Source: from archives of the Department

The second day featured a full-day study trip through central Greater Poland, with participants following a route that included Skorzęcin, Poznań (with visits to Ostrów Tumski, the cathedral, and the Archaeological Museum “Genius Loci”), Rogalin (palace and gardens with ancient oaks), and Kórnik (castle tour). On the third day, another study trip focused on northern Greater Poland, visiting Gniezno (the cathedral and the Museum of the Origins of the Polish State) and Ostrów Lednicki (archaeological reserve) (fig. 23).

Fig. 23. 16th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Skorzęcin 2018, participants during the field trip in Ostrów Lednicki: from the left: A. Majewska, T. Figlus, M. Chmielewska, J. Kłos, R. Żelichowski, H. Żelichowska, W. Stanley, J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek, K. Heffner, J. Župančič, Z. Hajdu, A. Kruś, M. Sobczyński, M. Cepil, S. Dołzbłasz, M. Barwiński, P. Orlewski, M. Musiaka, S. Gladanac-Violante, M.-A. Spinelli, L. Maldera, C. Montagnoli, A. Rykała, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, T. Marszał, A. Violente

Source: from archives of the Department

The evening after the third day's study trip saw the Commission on Political and Historical Geography of the Polish Geographical Society hold a reporting and election meeting. On the return journey to Lodz, participants visited the former Cistercian monastery in Ląd on the Warta River.

Due to the new scientific policy of Poland's authoritarian government under the Law and Justice Party, it was not possible to publish the conference proceedings in the "Region and Regionalism" series. Consequently, the conference's outcomes were published in the journal "Studies in Political and Historical Geography", issue no. 8 (256 pages), with the subtitle *Region and regionalism: The role of the state in the era of globalization* (Sobczyński, Heffner 2019).

* * *

The 17th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography, themed *Rivers in the lives of nations in their economy and politics*, took place from September 16 to 18, 2020, in Kostrzyn nad Odrą and Frankfurt (Oder), spanning both sides of the Polish-German border. The conference aimed to highlight the significance of rivers in regional development, focusing particularly on the Oder River, which serves as both an economic axis and a state border. In addition to the traditional organizers, the event was co-organized with the Center B/Orders in Motion of the European University "Viadrina" in Frankfurt (Oder), with Peter Ulrich representing the German co-organizer and Andrzej Rykała serving as the scientific secretary.

The conference was held under challenging circumstances due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making it one of the few in-person events of its kind during that period. The decision to proceed with the conference as scheduled proved to be the right one, as it did not result in any COVID-19 infections. However, the pandemic prevented participation from several regular international attendees, particularly those from Italy, the United States, Israel, Hungary, and Ukraine, due to border closures. The event was held at the Hotel "Bastion" in Kostrzyn. Initially, there were plans to conduct one session at the "Viadrina" University in Frankfurt (Oder), but the university's authorities prohibited access to academic buildings due to the pandemic, so all sessions were held in Poland.

The pandemic significantly reduced participation, with only 24 attendees – the lowest since the first 'Lodz' conference in 1988. Among them, only five were from abroad, and 16 papers were presented. Participants represented six countries: Belarus, Croatia, France, Germany, Poland, and Slovenia. Polish participants came from Katowice, Lodz, Olsztyn, Opole, Słupsk, Warsaw, and Wrocław.

During the conference's opening, led by the organizer M. Sobczyński, a minute of silence was announced in memory of former conference participants Vidmantas Daugirdas from the Institute of Geology and Geography in Vilnius, Lithuania

(who passed away in 2019), and Piotr Eberhardt from the Institute of Geography and Spatial Organization of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, who had passed away just a few days before the conference in September 2020.

The conference discussions were organized into five thematic sessions: *The spirit of the river in regional identification* (chairman M. Więckowski); *The influence of the river on the formation of the settlement system* (J. Zupančič); *The role of the Elbe and the Vistula in the social and economic life of Germany and Poland* (M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson); *The role of the river in managing the state and its economy* (R. Szul); *The role of the Oder in the social and economic life of Germany and Poland* (K. Heffner) (fig. 24).

The traditional conference summary was conducted in a panel session moderated by K. Heffner, with contributions from J. Zupančič, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, R. Szul, and M. Sobczyński.

Fig. 24. 17th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Kostrzyn nad Odrą and Frankfurt/Oder 2020, on the left photo place of the conference Hotel “Bastion” on the very Polish-German border, on the right photo opening session: are sitting from the left: A. Rykała, M. Więckowski, R. Szul, at the back stands M. Barwiński

Source: from archives of the Department

The first day of the conference was dedicated entirely to discussions. During the evening’s formal dinner, K. Heffner, on behalf of the organizers, expressed gratitude to the participants for attending the 17th ‘Lodz’ Conference despite the challenging, even dramatic, circumstances of the global pandemic.

On the second day, participants were invited to a full-day study trip through the Eberswalde Urstromtal and the Lower Oder Valley, guided by J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek. The organizers prepared an English-language scientific guidebook for the study trips. The route included stops at Kostrzyn, Cedynia (site of the 972 AD battle), Krajnik Dolny, Schwedt (Germany), Lower Oder Valley National Park, Angermünde, Niederfinow (visit to the boat lift), Eberswalde, Chorin (monastery visit), Bad Freienwalde, Märkische Schweiz, Frankfurt (Oder), Słubice (Poland), and back to Kostrzyn (fig. 25).

Fig. 25. 17th 'Lodz' Conference in Kostrzyn nad Odrą and Frankfurt/Oder 2020, field trip to Polish-German borderland, on the left photo from the left: K. Heffner, I. Lewandowska, M. Sobczyński; on the right photo from the left: J. Župančič, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson (evidence of pandemic situation)

Source: from archives of the Department

In the evening, after returning from the study trip, members of the Commission on Political and Historical Geography of the Polish Geographical Society held a general assembly.

On the third day, discussions continued until noon, followed by another study trip along the Oder Valley, again led by J. Szczepankiewicz-Battek. The route covered Kostrzyn – Słubice – Frankfurt (Oder) – Neuzelle (monastery and historic brewery visit) – Ratzdorf (where the Lusatian Neisse River meets the Oder) – Frankfurt (Oder) – Słubice (Oder riverfront visit), ending back in Kostrzyn (fig. 26).

The conference proceedings were successfully published in the revived "Region and Regionalism" series, this time as volume no. 14 (168 pages) (Sobczyński, Heffner, Rykała, Solga 2022).

Fig. 26. 17th 'Lodz' Conference in Kostrzyn nad Odrą and Frankfurt/Oder 2020, participants during field trip in Frankfurt/Oder on the border bridge, from the left: P. Orlewski, M.Barwiński, R. Szul, M. Sobczyński, K. Krawiec-Złotkowska, A. Majewska, M. Cepil, I. Lewandowska, J. Župančič, E. Szul, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson

Source: from archives of the Department

* * *

In 2021, the Department of Political, Historical Geography and Regional Studies at the University of Lodz, along with the Silesian Institute in Opole and the Commission on Political and Historical Geography, began organizing the 18th International ‘Lodz’ Conference on Political Geography. The theme for this conference was *Borderlands of nations, religions and culture in the face of civilization changes*. The scientific secretary was M. Barwiński. The chosen location for the conference was the Warmia and Masuria region, and the Department of Polish History at the University of Warmia and Masuria in Olsztyn was invited to co-organize the event. Unfortunately, for the first time in the conference’s history, the proposed co-organizing institution withdrew after several months of collaboration, complicating the organization process.

In February 2022, Central Europe faced another dramatic political event as Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Approximately 2 million Ukrainian citizens fled to Poland, which was perceived as a frontline state. The number of registrations for the conference, scheduled for September 14 to 16, 2022, in Święta Lipka, on the historical borderland of Warmia and Masuria, was very low (fewer than 10 people). Additionally, the budget set at the end of 2021 became unrealistic due to the economic crisis triggered by the loss of fuel and energy sources imported from Russia, which led to a multiple increase in fuel prices during the summer of 2022. The hotel could not estimate food costs as inflation neared 18%.

Fig. 27. 18th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Święta Lipka, 2023, on the left photo opening the conference by K. Heffner, from the left: S. Dołżbłasz, A. Latocha-Wites, M. Barwiński, M. Sobczyński, on the right photo aditorium in Hotel “Taurus”

Source: photo. A. Majewska

These circumstances led the organizers, for the first time in thirty-four years, to decide to postpone the 18th International ‘Lodz’ Conference on Political Geography to the following year. During the COVID-19 pandemic, many conferences had been postponed or canceled. The conference took place from September

18 to 21, 2023, at the planned location, Hotel "Taurus" in Święta Lipka (fig. 27). The conference theme remained unchanged. However, among the organizers, there was a growing awareness that the format of the International 'Lodz' Conferences on Political Geography had run its course, and they were preparing to organize the last conference in this series.

Only 19 people participated in the conference, with just three from abroad. Fourteen papers were presented. Several announced participants canceled at the last minute. Representatives from four countries attended: Czechia, France, Poland, and Slovenia, along with participants from Polish centers in Lodz, Lublin, Opole, Słupsk, and Wrocław.

The conference was opened by M. Sobczyński, chairman of the Organizing Committee, who, on behalf of the organizers, recalled the three-and-a-half-decade tradition of organizing the 'Lodz' Conferences on Political Geography and paid tribute to their originator, the former head of the Department, Marek Koter. A map was presented showing the locations of all 18 conferences, along with statistics on the number of participants, presentations, the geographical distribution of attendees, and the time spent in discussions (fig. 28). The guests were then welcomed by the second main organizer, K. Heffner.

The proceedings of the 18th International 'Lodz' Conference on Political Geography were divided into three thematic sessions: *General considerations from a global perspective* (chairman K. Heffner); *Local considerations from a Central European and Polish perspectives* (session in two parts chaired by M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson and J. Zupančič); *Miscellanea in the given topic* (J. Kłos) (fig. 27).

Due to the decision to end the series of 'Lodz' Conferences on Political Geography, the traditional summary session – usually conducted by the longest-standing participants in the conference cycle – was not held, as there was no expectation of identifying topics or issues for a future conference.

During the closing session, M. Sobczyński explained the reasons behind the decision to discontinue the organization of the 'Lodz' Conferences. He cited changes in the Polish government's scientific policy, which led to the department losing the necessary funding for researchers to participate in conferences. Additionally, the authorities refused to recognize the value of the periodicals published by the department, namely "Region and Regionalism" and „Studia z Geografii Politycznej i Historycznej" ("Study on Political and Historical Geography"). This refusal, which was politically motivated rather than based on the content's merit, resulted in these journals being excluded from the list of rated journals, effectively destroying both the periodicals and the conference. M. Sobczyński also noted that the conference format had lost its appeal among its international participants, whose numbers had been declining for several years, likely due to the pandemic and the war.

Fig. 28. Locations of all eighteen ‘Lodz’ Conferences
Source: own work

After the conference concluded, participants took a short walk to the nearby Sanctuary of Our Lady in Święta Lipka, where they had the opportunity to listen to and watch the moving organs during a brief concert, followed by a tour of the church and its surroundings guided by Magdalena Baranowska-Deptuła (fig. 29). Some participants also took a walk to the stone border posts separating the historical regions of Masuria and Warmia. On the evening of the first day, a barbecue was held in the hotel gardens for the conference participants.

The second day featured an all-day field trip through the cities of Masuria and Warmia, with the goal of showcasing cities that had been rebuilt to varying degrees after wartime destruction. Examples of well-rebuilt cities included Lidzbark Warmiński and Olsztyn, while Reszel had been somewhat less restored, and in Bisztynek, the reconstruction was almost completely abandoned, with the old buildings only partially replaced by socialist-realist and modernist structures. The remaining old buildings were those that had not been destroyed during the war. The tour followed the route: Św. Lipka – Reszel – Bisztynek – Lidzbark Warmiński – Olsztyn – Św. Lipka, focusing mainly on anthropogenic structures, castles, churches, and old towns of the visited cities.

Fig. 29. 18th ‘Lodz’ Conference in Święta Lipka, 2023, field trip to Sanctuary of Our Lady in Święta Lipka, from the left: T. Figlus, J. Kłos, W. Janicki, M.-F. Gaunard-Anderson, J. Župančič, S. Dołzbłasz, A. Latocha-Wites, J. Močičkova, K. Krawiec-Złotkowska, M. Sobczyński, M. Barwiński, A. Majewska, T. Marszał, E. Marszał, A. Rykała, K. Heffner

Source: photo. A. Majewska

Upon returning to Hotel “Taurus” members of the Commission on Political and Historical Geography of the Polish Geographical Society held a report-and-election meeting, during which they elected new officers for the next term. In the evening, conference participants gathered for a farewell dinner, where discussions about the difficult decisions made and memories of past successful ‘Lodz’ conferences continued late into the night. The following day, the organizers’ bus transported participants to the train stations in Olsztyn and Warsaw, and then returned with the remaining participants to Lodz.

The materials from the final 18th ‘Lodz’ Conference were published in 2024 in the last issue, no. 15, of the periodical “Region and Regionalism” (Sobczyński, Heffner, Barwiński, Solga 2024).

* * *

Over the thirty-six years of organizing the eighteen International ‘Lodz’ Conferences on Political Geography, a total of 683 participants presented 456 papers. Among them, 270 participants were from abroad (only those registered in the ‘Lodz’ Conferences, without participants of the joint session of the

two IGU Commissions in 2014), 180 were employees of the University of Lodz (most of them are organizers), and 229 represented other Polish institutions, primarily geographical centres. In total, participants spent 55 days in conference sessions (tab. 1). The highest number of papers (42) was presented at the 5th 'Lodz' Conference, while the fewest (14) were presented at the first and the last, 18th Conference.

Table 1. Main statistics describing 'Lodz' Conferences

No	Place	Date	Pages of R&R	Papers	Participants	From Lodz	From rest of Poland	Foreign
1st	Lodz – Wieluń	6–8.10.1988	–	14	24	9	9	6
2nd	Białowieża	3–5.10.1990	–	15	26	9	7	10
3th	Księże Młyny	30.09–2.10.1992	186	18	27	10	6	11
4th	Szczedrzyk – Ostrava	28–30.09.1994	212	22	34	9	9	16
5th	Wisła – Jablunkov	18–20.09.1996	296	42	55	9	22	24
6th	Krynica Morska	16–18.09.1998	224	26	42	9	14	19
7th	Bogatynia – Görlitz	13–15.09.2000	258	39	42	13	13	19
8th	Krynica Zdr. – Bardejov	11–13.09.2002	338	31	39	10	16	13
9th	Wigry – Vištitis	15–17.09.2004	438	38	48	11	16	20
10th	Lodz	19–21.09.2006	354	24	45	18	11	16
11th	Świnoujście – Rugia	17–19.09.2008	542	35	43	10	16	17
12th	Głubczyce – Opava	22–24.09.2010	378	18	31	10	11	10
13th	Chełm – Luck	12–14.09.2012	512	25	51	12	16	23
14th	Łopuszna – Spiš	15–17.08.2014	384	32	65	8	22	35
15th	Złotniki Lub. – Bautzen	14–16.09.2016	452	30	36	11	14	11
16th	Skorzęcin	12–14.09.2018	168*	17	33	11	13	9
17th	Kostrzyn – Frankfurt	16–18.09.2020	250	16	24	10	9	5
18th	Św. Lipka	18–21.09.2023	–	14	19	7	9	3
–		55 dni	4992	456	684	186	233	267

* edited in "Studies on Political and Historical Geography".

The international participants came from 33 countries across all continents except Antarctica. The highest number of participants came from Hungary (35), Slovenia (33), Italy (23), the Czech Republic (23), Ukraine (18), France (13), Slovakia (13), the United States (13), Lithuania (11), Romania (11), Russia (11), and the United Kingdom (11) (tab. 2). The largest attendance was at the 14th 'Lodz' Conference, with 65 officially registered participants, particularly notable due to the combined session of two IGU commissions. The 5th Conference had 55 participants, and the 13th 'Lodz' Conference saw significant attendance due to open sessions held in Chełm and Łuck, involving large groups of students and staff from both universities, with over 200 people attending.

Table 2. Geographical distribution of 'Lodz' Conferences participants

Country	Person
Hungary	35
Slovenia	33
Italy and Czechia	23
Ukraine	18
France	16
Germany, Slovakia and USA	13
Lithuania, Russia, Romania and UK	11
Austria, Georgia, Israel, the Netherlands and Sweden	8
Bosnia and Herzegovina	7
Bulgaria	4
Switzerland	3
Armenia, Japan, Canada, and RSA	2
Brazil	1
China	1
Finland	1
Latvia, New Zealand, Norway, Serbia, Türkiye	1
Together*	301

* including the participants of the joint session of two IGU Commissions in 2014.

Only one person, the organizer M. Sobczyński, attended all eighteen conferences. Jernej Zupančič from the University of Ljubljana (Slovenia) participated seventeen times, while the second organizer, K. Heffner, attended sixteen times. The conference secretaries Anna Araszkiewicz, Marek Barwiński, and Andrzej

Rykała participated in fourteen conferences. T. Marszał, a former dean of the Faculty of Geographical Sciences at the University of Lodz, attended twelve times. Eleven conferences were attended by M. Koter, the concept creator and former head of the Department, M. Kulesza, the third head of the Department, and J. Wendt from the University of Gdańsk. Four other individuals participated in ten conferences (tab. 3).

Table 3. Frequency of participation of individual participants of the ‘Lodz’ Conferences

Name of the participant – his function and affiliation	No of conferences
Marek Sobczyński – organizer from Lodz	18
Jernej Zupančič – University of Ljubljana, Slovenia	17
Krystian Heffner – organizer from Opole	16
Anna Araszkiewicz – organizer from Lodz Marek Barwiński – organizer from Lodz Andrzej Rykała – organizer from Lodz	14
Tadeusz Marszał – University of Lodz, dean	12
Marek Koter – organizer from Lodz Mariusz Kulesza – organizer from Lodz **Jan Wendt** – University of Gdańsk	11
Marie-France Gaunard-Anderson – University of Metz, France **Wojciech Janicki** – University of Lublin **Joanna Szczepankiewicz-Battek** – Pomeranian University, Słupsk; WSB Merito University of Wrocław Anna Wosiak – organizer from Lodz	10
Krystyna Rembowska – organizer from Lodz **William Stanley** – University of Columbia, USA	9
Magdalena Baranowska-Deptuła – organizer from Lodz **Maria Soja** – Jagiellonian University, Cracow Andrzej Suliborski – organizer from Lodz **Roman Szul** – University of Warsaw	8
Milan Bufon – University of Trieste, Italy / Primorska University, Koper-Capodistria, Slovenia **Sandra Gladanac-Violante** – Bosnia and Herzegovina; University of Milan, Italy **Antonio Violante** – University of Milan, Italy **Ryszard Żelichowski** – Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw	7

in bold – people from outside the organizing institutions.

The conference proceedings have been published in the biennial "Region and Regionalism" since 1994, comprising 15 issues in 24 volumes, with a total of over 5,000 pages. The largest volumes were published after the 11th 'Lodz' Conference (542 pages, "Region and Regionalism" no. 9) and the 13th Conference (512 pages, R&R no. 11). The smallest single volume was published after the 16th Conference (168 pages, R&R no. 14).

The significance of the 'Lodz' Conferences extended far beyond the borders of Poland and even Europe, not only due to their pioneering nature (as the first political geography conferences in the former Eastern Bloc), but also because of their high substantive quality. For many years, the International 'Lodz' Conferences on Political Geography were held under the patronage of the IGU Commission on Political Geography and were included in the event calendars of the American Association of Geographers' Political Geography Section. The conferences typically attracted around 30–50 participants, with a maximum of 65 attendees.

The organizers of the 'Lodz' Conferences consistently worked to popularize these events, not only by announcing upcoming meetings in the calendars of political geography institutions but also by sending copies of the "Region and Regionalism" periodical to the Library of Congress in Washington.

Unfortunately, after three decades, the format of the 'Lodz' Conferences began to lose its appeal. A core group of regular participants had formed, many of whom had advanced from young assistants or doctoral students to professors and recognized authorities in their respective countries over the years. However, the conferences increasingly struggled to attract young researchers, leading to a certain stagnation. With each subsequent conference, fewer foreign guests attended, and after the COVID-19 pandemic and the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, when Poland became almost a frontline state, concerns about attending doubled.

After 2020, nearly only regular participants, many nearing retirement age, attended. The retirement of numerous international guests (J. Markusse, L. Stenmann, J. Kalkwiek, J. Minghi, W. Stanley, Ann Kennard, Barbara Despiney-Żochowska, Z. Hajdu, M. Buffon, J.-L. Sanguin) contributed to the declining attendance. The retirement of the main organizers, M. Sobczyński and K. Heffner, and the tranfer of organizational duties to a younger generation of researchers led to the difficult decision to discontinue the 'Lodz' Conferences, in their current format after thirty-six-years.

For several years, the Department of Political, Historical, and Regional Studies of the University of Lodz had also organized national conferences on historical geography in odd-numbered years. Under the leadership of M. Barwiński, it was decided to merge these two events into biennial conference every two years, with the participation of foreign guests and English-language presentations, covering both disciplines – political and historical geography. The conferences will be

permanently held in Lodz, with the next one planned for June 2025. The organizers are hopeful that some of the regular participants of the ‘Lodz’ Conferences on Political Geography will also take part in this new format.

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