SILESIA AGGLOMERATION – IDENTITY IN TRANSITION
Supranational Identifications in Multi-Cultural Europe*

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INTRODUCTION

Silesia has always been a challenge for scientists as well as politicians, most importantly however – its people. Not many analysts and practitioners succeeded in coping with this challenge. Strategic character of this land made its inhabitants hostages to geopolitical interests of states representing different cultures, languages and religions. Remaining at the front line of (what Samuel Huntington would call) civilizations, Silesia was exposed to this long-lasting process which resulted in specific type of identity, which the author dares call hybrid identity. It also resulted in a number of paradoxes, like for example unique model of modernization

based on industrial infrastructure development accompanied by adequate work culture and civilizational patterns from one side, and from the other side closing Silesian communities in tribalism and traditionalism (Nijakowski 2007, 7).

Consequently, Silesia is one of the most interesting socio-cultural laboratories in Europe.

Undoubtedly, Silesia is a cultural borderland. Silesian ethnic – national discourses have always been very controversial. Sometimes they were an element of ideological game of wider political systems, and sometimes even sciences – like for example German versus Polish science (Kokot 1973, 7)

Today we observe interesting phenomena of awakening the regional ideology. Revitalization of regional identity in Upper Silesia was a social process with clear political connotations. Before 1989 any free political / public discourse was banned by communist regime.

Sudden "appearance" of 173 000[1] Silesian nation reveals that a number of social phenomenon were not critically observed, intellectually reflected or were simply ignored (Szmeja 2005, 158). This number is many times smaller than the real one, as not many Silesian were aware of the fact that it is possible to declare Silesian nationality, not many of those who wanted to declare so, were allowed to, consequently only those who were a part of a mobilised social group assertively managed to persuade the person conducting the census to write down Silesian nationality.

The representatives of Upper Silesian Association claim that people living in today's Silesia may identify with Polish, German[2] or Silesian nation, and the Silesian identity may be the basic one form them. This is the result of unique Silesian culture, grown from complicated history ethnic group located in the sphere of various political and social influences.

W h a t   i s   S i l e s i a   a n d   w h o   a r e   S i l e s i a n s   t h e n ?

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[1] According to official cenzus, practically this number needs to be multiplied as it is claimed by many analysts. Only few decided to claim their belonging to Silesian nation, others were not allowed to by the person carrying the census.

[2] It should also be remembered that there are also Czech Silesians, who face dilemmas of Czech, German, Polish or Silesian identifications.

New Popular Encyclopedia (PWN Warsaw 1997), volume 6, page 341, claims that "Silesians are inhabitants of Silesia (…) Far cultural difference of Silesia and its complicated history created strong feeling of ethnical separation, which in XIX and XX century developed into feeling of belonging to Polish community or German one, or separate regional identity". This basic definition reveals too much simplistic picture of identifications especially having as a point of reference the nation and following the terror of dichotomy problem.

Silesia, a heavily industrialized agglomeration (coal basin) in South Poland represents unique combination of features. Being very rich in natural resources, it has been intensively exploited for one and a half century – at the present is environmentally, economically and socially degraded (as some claim devastated) area. According to the new (optimistic) trend it is recommended to see the above mentioned problems as challenges. Consequently, looking for strategies of modernization, it is necessary to recognize prerequisites of cultural and identity nature that should be taken into account when programming the development of the agglomeration.

Silesia, its people, as well as main characteristics of their culture have always been rooted in mining and related industries. It is an important component of Silesians' self-identity. The purpose of the study would be to examine the so far, current and forthcoming transition process (its social, economic and cultural dimension) from the perspective of the local, Silesian identity. This would help to answer the question if the recognized Silesian culture of work – can it be a major fundament of building the identity of the agglomeration in the post-industrial era. Author identifies the major components of Silesian cultural identity and its correlations to undergoing changes and transition.

So ambitiously set tusk is a risky one due to the unpreciseness of key terms like identity, ethnicity, nation, transition etc. It is a problem from one side – the inflation of this terminology, on the other side the discourse is rich and richer widenining its scope and scale.

THEORETICAL VEHICLES

Searching theoretical resources for such an analysis must bring a lot of doubts and frustrations. Just reviewing the literature on identity, ethnicity, social change, transformation results in idenifying a large number of theories implied, depending on the authors' background and study priorities.

Debating on borderland identity in transition, in the particular Silesian case, would require to explore several debates ranging from political economy theories, through post-communism, transitology, social capital, social change, some aspects of migration studies, marginalization, to cultural and civilizational change. Those theories come from many disciplines: economy, social sciences, anthropology, migration studies, and many others. Such investigation could not succeed unless it is not interdisciplinary, searching for explanatory power of sociology, history, cultural anthropology, ethnography as well as international relations, law, political science and transition studies. Consequently – in the scale of a paper, it is possible only to synthetise on theoretical perspectives pointing the most important ones and highlighting their conclusions. This results in this paper being cathegorised as a discussion paper rather than a research paper, however it hides the potential for further developing in many parts.

The key question, at this phase, would be: which theories? And the answer is – depending on what we want to explain or interpret. As it is underlined by one of the most recognised Polish sociologists – Piotr Sztompka, just post-communist transition in this part of Europe is an entirely unique process, without any precedent in history. No received theory could *ex definitione* be of any use in understanding and interpreting it.

The trouble is that theory-construction is a prolonged endeavour, with no assured result, whereas some intellectual orientation in the chaos of changes is an urgent and pressing need.

Fortunately the assumption of uniqueness is wrong. There are enough non-unique aspects of post-communist transition to make existing sociological theories applicable (Sztompka 1995, 57).

Under the general label of transition, it is possible to distinguish three phases. The first, historically located in the 80. may be called the heroic and romantic phase. This is the period of growing contestation, emerging democratic opposition, new forms of social self-organization, and slow decay of economic and political foundations of real socialism (theories of collective behaviour and social movements, legitimation and de-legitimation, re-emerging civil society). The second phase dated around 1989 may be called the euphoric, revolutionary period (theories of dual sovereignty). Third phase – now, which produces the strongest feeling of hoplessness and reveals the inadequacy of standard theoretical tools – the pragmatic period of systemic transformation (Sztompka, 1995, 58).

The present paper advances theoretical propositions regarding the relationship between transition and identity (its individual and social dimension). Therefore equally justifiable would be, for example, theories of social capital and its development. Rich conteptualisations of Pierre Bourdieu, Rober Putnam, James Coleman, Francis Fukuyama, George Soros and many others would be specially applicable to exmine the developments in post-soviet societies, where specific conditions of real-socialism, made individuals tighten the bonds based on trust and mutuality within family or friends circles. At the same time ignoring the public sphere with all the consequences of constituting negative social capital. It was Portes (1998) who indicated four types of negative social capital:

(1) exclusion – access to different type of goods / commodities is provided only for certain social network. „WE"
(2) „too strong" social capital may lead to over-exploitation of some group members
(3) strong ties funding the social capital may generate rights infringement – individual freedom may be sacryficed for group solidarity or loyaty
(4) „race to the bottom" – periphery groups function sometimes in opposition to dominant group, this often reveals tendencies to block promotion of group members outside of the periphery group (dependencies, particular norms).

It is also possible to conceptualise negative social capital as a low qualities of social capital. This could explain many difficulties of identity

building, community life in Poland in general. In this understanding low social capital – existent in *homo sovieticus* type of mentality – would consist of:

- Strong materialism generating relations mainly of transactional nature,
- Weak institutions of social life (beside family and nation),
- Weak local communities,
- Poor quality of relation networks not helping (in extreme conditions – unabling) effectiev flow of infrmation,
- Not effective social control of activities of groups and individuals (especially those negative and pathological),
- Lack of trust atmosphere – potentially leading to the general culture of distrust,
- Lack of positive norms for collective actions,
- Not paying attention to ethcal norms (lack of collective ethos),
- Negative experience of co-operation in the past,
- No disposition to social activities,
- Lack of competencies in team-work,
- Ineffective or poor quality socialisation (civic, political, economic).

The theoretical conceptualisations of (negative) social capital certainly represent efficient explanatory power to research some aspects of feeling of belonging and identity building prcesses. However additionally an applicable theory could be also the theory of social balance (its major representative: Harold Sounders). Recently employed mostly in migration studies, it can be also useful as a theoretical vehicle for the present deliberations as the consequences of social change often are compared to those generated by migration. A person who finds himself/herself in a situation of clash of intensions (scale of living) and real conditions (standard of living) becomes a potential migrant. In other words this clash generates tensions relieved by migration. Other scholars (for example: Hoffman-Novotny) answer the question how those tensions are relieved/discharged. An individual may be „balanced" (configuration of status) within one system, however he/she may suffer tensions created by low postition (undervalued/unpriviliged) of the whole system or sub-

system. If the indvidual assumes there is no real possibility to change the status of the systsm, he/she may find the migration strategy the most optimal. An individual may suffer tensions for the structure within sub-system. If the perception of chances for changing the unpriviliged position is believed to be low, then – changing the *status quo* will become the priority.

The above sketch of selected theoretical conteptulisations show the addequacy of various scholarly perspectives (from different disciplines) that can be appplied when researching identity issues in transition context.

HISTORY – ORIGINS OF THE DIALOG OF CULTURES

The origins of settlement on the territory of today's Silesia reach thousends of years before. Polish historians tend to justify the Polishness of this land by the claim that when the Polish statehood was established (end of X century) it was inhabited by Slavonic population.

German sources justify "Schlesien's" Germaness reffering to its earlier and later history, when this land was massively inhabited by ethnic Germans and shaped by German culture. For centuries, analysts of Silesian history could not escape the trap of Polish-German dychotomy, most probably due to the high politicization of this discourse. The dominant group, to which Silesia (historically) belonged to had never had any doubts about the roots of its culture. In the first half of the 20th century the chancellor of German Reich Gustav Bauer in 1919 underlined: „Upper Silesian culture is fully German" (after: Nowosielska 2006, 100).

After the second World War, when in Poland the official policy claimed the homogenious nation and unitarian state it was argued by many scholars that „In historical times this land was inhabited by Slavonic people, Polish – in further historical development." (Kokot 1973, 10). In fact the trajectories of Silesian historical developments are much more complicated to be captured in this terror of dychotomy. It is however quite obvious in the works of more independent authors, who studied Silesian relations. For example American scholar, who ran his research project in Silesia – Richard Hartshorne, who claimed in between the Wars period that "Upper Silesia, though Polish in

language is German in culture."(Hartshorne 1993, 208). This citation revels perfectly the complicated character of ethnical and cultural relations in Silesia. In result, even the etymology of the term Silesia is controversial: German sources derive it from the name of a tribe Silings (ger. Silingen, pol. Silingowie) – in fact, of German ethniciy Polish sources derive it from the name of the river Slęża, which gave the name to the region and its population.

Authors of "Silesian History" (Czpliński, Kaszuba, Wąs, Zerelik 2002) refer to prehistoric times and claim that between 8500 to 5600 before Christ, hunters from Hedermasser were active on today's Silesia teritory. The semi-nomadic culture was present here still in 4th millenium b.C. Before the Slavonic population appeared on those lands, it was inhabitted by Scyts, Celts, Wandals, Avars (Bahlcke 2001, 22–23). And Slavonic population was not present in Silesia untill 7th c. of our age (Czapliński, Kaszuba, Wąs, Zerelik 2002, 33–34).

In 8th c. one can find Carolinian Europe influences in Silesia. In 9th c. it belonged to the Great Moravia and in 10th century to Bohemia. In the years 990–1138 Silesia was a part of a Polsih state, later falling (partly or fully) into diferent forms of dependancy on the Habsburgs' and the Hochenzollerns' – in other words – Austrian and Prussian domain.

This simple tracking of Silesian origins shows the multicultural, multiethnical nature of this land and its people. From the very cradle it witnessed a dialog of cultures and such cities like Wrocław (Breslau) are described as 'microcosmos' – for example by recognised British historian Norman Davies, emphasizing that it is constructed of a rich mixture of cultural contextes – it could not be another way, taking into account the localization of Silesia on the borderland of German and Slavonic worlds. Some authors see it in this way: "German 'Drang nach Osten' made moving Poland more and more to the East, which out-rooted the state from its ethnic base"(Kokot 1973, 13). Surprisingly even contemporary historians, journalists and politicians present three exclusive rationalities: Polish, German or Czech, treating Silesian identities themes in casual, banal, selective and tendentious way (Faruga 2004, 5).

Certainly 19th and 20th century seem to be crucially important for the formation of modern identities in this region. Modern German nation and state was formed in 19th century with all the consequences of Ger-

manisation policy at the peripheries of Reich. At the same time Poland was not present on 19th century maps and had very specific path of formation of a nation at that time.[3]

Also today's face of Silesia was shaped predominantly by 19th century. This statement is specially true for Upper Silesia, which is the main object of considertion in this paper. 19th century in Upper Silesia meant – intensive developmen of industry. At the very beginning of 20th century 49% of population was employed in industry. Together with civilization progress – industrialization and urbanization was accompanied by cultural phenomenon affecting mental structures and ways of life of Silesians. "Employed in industry had regular and regularly growing incomes, plus a growing budget of free time for private disposal" (after: Smolińska Lubina 2004, 18). This had important implications for ways of life, family strauctures and far reaching consequences in many other dimensions of social and economic life. Certainly, in pre-industrial era, there was present a country, popular culture. At the end of 19th century in Upper Silesia, the dominant was plebeian culture (after: Smolińska Lubina 2004, 5). Together with the process of industrialisation and urbanization, also growing atomization, anonymousness, weakening the mechanisms of social control took place. Consequently Silesia was the arena for the dialog of the old with the new, accompanied with the traditional ethnical discourses. Norms of traditional (folk) country life versus norms of plebeian (city) life[4] overlapped with national identifications.

Therefore late 19th century and beginning of 20th century must have been very much interesting from the point of view of division lines created in the society. In newly born (after 1918) Polish state, the Polishness of Silesia was equally in-discussable and intensively promoted – in the process of Polonization (Piotrowski 2006, 125).

However in the more objective eyes of, menioned above Richard Hartshorne it is described as a borderland (bordercorner) where Germans,

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[3] Also ethnographic and ethnologic scientific traditions reach the break of 19th/20th century, and interest in urban culture even later – just half of 20th century.

[4] Truly city ways of life, which were present in Central Europe only in metropolis, in Silesia were commonly available, like at that time in Nord Rhein – Westhpalen.

Poles, Czechs and Slovaks met and mix. When the author in 1933 described the population in Upper Silesia and its differences form non-Silesian Poles, he claimed:

> Here the population has in many respects more in common with that of Westphalia, the Black Country of Englan, or the Pittsburgh area than with its neighboring rural districts.
>
> (…) The total impression of all these differences is such that anyone traveling ten miles across this cultural landscape boundary between Silesia and old Poland, feels that he has traveled far than from Chicago to Silesia (Hartshorne 1933).

In other sections:

> The Polish spoken in Silesia differs greatly from Standard Polish, as it would be expected in an area separated from Poland for over seven centuries and ruled by people of different tongues. Some Moravian and many German words are used with Polish endings and many old Polish words are found which are absolete elsewhere (like in Canadian French).
>
> (…) In such elements of social culture of the whole population (…) as education, social character and standards, living conditions, etc. there is marked cleavage between Silesian Poles and those of Galicia and former Russian Poland. The pre-war frontier remains as the boundry between the area of nearly universal education and that of high illiteracy, between the countries in which the cleanliness is considered essential and those where dirt and insects are easily accepted, between the areas where beggary is a regular profession (Hartshorne 1933, 207–208).

About the division lines established in Upper Silesia after 1921:

> For the individual inhabitants of this almost continuous urban district countless connections have been disrupted. Thousands of workers in mines and factories became foreigners with no right of citizenship in

the place of their work and obliged to pass border inspection daily on their way to and from their homes (Hartshorne 1933, 213).

Richard Hartshorne about recommended belonging of this land:

Likewise it is claimed the industrial district should be included with the country with which

It was originally developed on the basis of sources of capital, technical equipment and management and which provided, in comparison with present Poland, the greater markets for the coal, iron and zinc (Hartshorne 1933, 213).

On the Polish side, at that time it is claimed that Silesia is given back its Polishness.

After WW II during communist regime (to a large extent also in post-1989 Poland) the concept of a 'unitarian' Poland was dominant. In consequence, the feeling of marginalisation was increasing among Silesians (accompanied by economic drivers), which resulted in massive emigration, mainly to Germany. This concept of unitarian nation as a simplistic manipulation of national concept resulted in such a massie exodus of people that it is sometimes argued that more native Silesians live in Nordrhein Westfalen then in Silesia. In 1956 in West Germany two were at least three commercial newspapers/magazins distrbuted among Silesians: Schlesische Rundschau, Unsere Oberschlesien. Whereas in commuist Poland it was not possible. After 1989 a lot of white spots of Central European history was filled, however Silesia and Silesians are still "unknown planet" for the Polish and the German.

In the case of Silesia, it is justified to talk about a peripheral identity, defined in relation to dominant group (usually nation)[5]. However majority of elements of Silesian identity are neutral and non-confrontational. It is worth noticing here the basic value in Silesian culture – work. Work understood as an activity which bring as a result valuable goods and itself

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[5] Silesians as borderland nation or ethnic group.

is a value because its fills almost utterly the life of the people and becomes its essence.

> The Silesians treat their work and profession as an important value, which exist in close relations to religious believes: "pray and work" (Śmiełowska 1998, 137–138).

The analysis of a typical characteristics of an average Pole and an average European reveal that those stereotypes had some common features, however among the differences was work: the stereotype of an European included a respect for work, the stereotype of a Pole – did not (Grabowska 2002, 15). Certainly the role of historical memory is very intriguing one in the case of Silesia (a heuristic problem). Transfer, interpretation and re-interpretation of historical facts shape today's Silesian identity. Some leaders of Silesian region – for example Kazimierz Kutz – claim that Upper Silesia is treated by its dominant group as a colony.

ADAPTIVE IDENTITY?

Identity can be understood as a collection of qualities (characteristics) ensuring the individual or group to remain the same in a changing environment. Some of those qualities (characteristics) are given by birth, some are developed with the process of growing up and socialization. The sense of identity allows the individual to function in various collective configurations, at the same time holding subjective conviction on its own uniqueness and unrepeated ness. Collective identity provides the sense of belonging to a group by its symbols, history, heritage.[6]

However it is important to point here that we live in the era of questioning the old identities for the new ones, pluralism of both individual and collective identities, their diffusion. Therefore the concept of identity has two different, though interrelated, aspects. First, an answer to the question,

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[6] Identity understood as individual and collective identification towards imagined groups.

"Who am I?" stresses the elements of continuity, permanence, the feeling of "being the same". However this answer also implicitly contains the answer to the question, "Who am I not?," pointing to the distinction between ingroup and outgroup, between "us" and "them". Anita Jacobson-Widding calls these two aspects of identity, correspondingly, the "sameness" and "distinctiveness". In the case of national identity, the "sameness" is shaped by the totality of national history, by unique experiences of the nation, transmitted from one generation to another. The sense of 'distinctiveness' can be analysed as a complex product of contacts and interactions, cooperation and conflicts with the representatives of other nations (Marody 2000, 148–149).

In another perspective, identity can be understood as a synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions. Personal identity refers to the goals, values, and beliefs that an individual adopts and holds. Social identity refers both to the group with which one identifies, including its self-identified ideals, mores, labels, and conventions but also the extent to which this identification leads one to favor the 'ingroup' (i.e., the group to which one perceives oneself as belonging) and to distance oneself from 'outgroups' (Marilyn, Montgomery, Briones 2006, 6). The identity of an ethnic group or of a nation is not something given once for ever – on the contrary, it is smething that might be lost or shaped, sometimes even intentiously (Berlińska 1998, 22–23).

Ethnical identity is not univocal category – as many sort of identifications one may define it at two levels: as a correlation of group identity (social identity) and as an individual feature. In general the term 'identity' has a numbers of meanings. Even within – so called – modernist approaches, there are a number of approaches to identity (i.e., personal and social), and within a given approach, multiple aspects of identity may be identified (i.e., sexual and vocational personal identities; ethnic and class-based social identities). The satisfactory definition of identity should include both personal and social components (Marilyn, Montgomery, Briones 2006, 4).

The word "identity" has been used in a number of ways and to refer to a number of concepts. Conceptions of identity range from developmental arguments that identity is a normative process and a necessary prerequisite to being able to make way in the world to postmodern arguments that

the concept of identity means almost nothing at all, because the essence of who one is is constantly influx and cannot be defined as anything in particular (Schwartz, Marilyn, Montgomery, Briones 2006, 1–3). Identity is seen in this research as a process, dynamic category undergoing continuous interactions, both on individual as well as group level, influenced by important determinants of social, political, economic and cultural nature.[7] To precise what ethnic identity is, it is possible to conceptualise it in relation to such key categories like nation, or by the contrast to the category of race (to which it is often mistaken for). In Webster Unabridged Dictionary, the word "race" is defined as "any of major biological divisions of mankind, distingueshed by color or texture of hair, color of skin and eyes, stature and bodily proportions, etc. In the definition of ethnicity, by contrast, nothing is mentioned about biology; rather ethnicity is said to designate *any of the basic divisions or groups of mankind, as distinguished by customs, characteristics, language, etc.* (After: Alvoff 2004, 103).

As far as the category of nation is concerned, one may identify in the literature the so called objective nation building factors, like: language community, territory, own state, common economy as well as subjective factors comprising of religion, common historical experience, cultural traditions or leaders' and ideologists' actions. Such combinations of factors determining nation building process result in every specific nation being built in its specific way.[8]

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[7] Identities can be nested, conceived of as concentric circles or Russian Matruska dolls, one inside the next. My identity as a Silesian is nested in my Polish identity, which is again nested in my Europeanness. We find the 'Russian Matruska doll' model of European and other identities on both the level of e lites and of ordinary people. This model suggests some hierarchy between people's sense of belonging and loyalties. European and other identities pertaining to territorially defined entities. Thomass Risse claims that identity and integration can be nested into each other so that "Europe" forms the outer boundary, while one's region or nation-state constitutes the core.

[8] On the other side, one also has to keep in mind that the presented above collection of objective and subjective factors affecting the nation (and national identity) building process have not been always an effective prerequisite in constituting a nation or a national state, for example: cultural unity of Arab world does not seem to increase probability of building one nation and state, despite of appearing from time to time pan-Arabic tendencies.

Another important context of present deliberations is the fact that in today's world we observe a situation in which, nation state is, somehow, in defence.[9] Modern state (often perceived through the prism of its bureaucracy) does not create community, which would be able to generate (higher) motivation, civic qualities based on moral ties and sense of belonging (Piekarski 2002, 37).

In such a case, it is important to ask – if the nation state can be still a point of reference and to what a degree can it expect citizens' loyalty? Additionally one should ask: do we still live in a modern world of nation states and equally nation societies? Or do we yet exist (unexpectedly?) in a post-national world, in which different rules of the game are valid? When such modern states and its societies were building like Germany or Italy in second part of 19th c., the act of political union was chronologically before the shift of identity (from Prussian, Lombardian – to German or Italian). Nation, Volk, Demos – they are concepts created of subjective element (socio-psychological) rooted on objective (organic) conditions. Subjective components may be found in sense of social community, shared lot, collective identity, generating loyalty. They are present in the following elements (not necessarily all of them): language, history, cultural habits, sensitiveness and (however after the experience of 20th c. these elements must be treated with special care) – common ethnicity and religion. Different authors prefer different combination of above mentioned elements. But a relative high level of homogeneity of selected elements is usually a key point of most identity theories. Empirically is also often a key criterion of exclusion or inclusion (Weiler 2005, 92).

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[9] However one can also identify a political nation – community created mainly by (historically) common political system. For political nation the most important are political structures. But it is also possible to identify three different types of nations and nationalisms: ethnical, cultural and political. First – emphasizes important features of ethnical group: language, religion, pedigree, history. Cultural nation is associated with specific cultural creation. Political one is rooted in civic society and is going to be discussed further in detail. Sometimes it is possible to observe the co-existance of these conceptualisations of nations within one social structure which has interesting consequences, especially in modern migrant countries.

This view, that may be called: differentiated (variable) demos (variable geometry) allows the citizens to see themselves as belonging to two demos, based on two different subjective determinants of identification. I can be a Pole or a German – in a narrow meaning of strong organic and cultural sense of identity. At the same time I am an European, a loyal citizen of Europe sharing supranational similarities, choosing the same values that grow beyond ethnic and national differences" (Weiler 2005, 102). Worth mentioning in this concept is the avoidance of building hierarchy of different identity reference. There is no first, main, leading or prime identification, but rather closer and wider demos.

Post-national world is characterised by multi-culturalism, which – in the field of identities and identifications – allows the individual to define his/her own identity based on birth, religion or simply psychological dispositions.

Post-industrial society is also characterised by de-standardization of social life. Up-keeping social ties (also – most importantly – within family) is a matter of choice rather than necessity. As a result of such a tendency, an individual becomes more independent and emancipated. The emancipation processes in economic, social and even intellectual sphere bring about stronger sense of autonomy, generating at the same time accelerating need for freedom and degeneration of authorities. This means traditionally understood identities are in crisis, especially when young people are concerned. This results in interesting consequences, especially when observing migration processes, especially those migrants, who (usually) chose as a destination economically developed countries, meaning those offering better life quality possibilities. Observations show that counter-intuitively, economic emancipation is accompanied with conflict of values which prolongs and intensifies identity crisis. Surprisingly this experience is also shared by second generation of migrants, mostly young people, namely those who should have already gone through the process of assimilation or integration (see also: Miluska 2006). Other types of identities in post-modern societies may be called: "life without choice" or "negative choice identities". Both of them mean accord for marginalisation and lack of participation in performing social roles (characteristic for this phase of age). Quite often such an attitude may be strengthened by contacts with individuals having the same characteristic.

In Silesian case, it is possible to conceptualise on facultative identifica-tions. "Voluntarist/facultative of regional identifications in Poland is a consequence of centralist policy of unitarian nation, a concept of ethni-cally homogenic citizens.

The (Polish) national identity seem to be so "expansionist" that it practically excludes any necessity for the existence of any other alternative (competitive) identifications towards non-national groups – creating the discomfort of conflict of identities.

Silesian identity is an identity "by choice" – it is not necessary for the fulfillment of the feeling of belonging. This is *a priori* guaranteed by national identity. Silesian identity requires manifestation to stab through the official unity of dominant group – contemporary Polish.

It is important to remember that the selection of criteria for ethnic uniquness separateness is not purly academic game (imagined ethnicity). The categorization criteria are important in ethnical discourse and some-times are politically driven. The same in Silesia: the division line Polish – German is nor base neither the only one. For example the autochthons in Opole Silesia had first contact with Polish newcomers just after 1945 (Nijakowski 2002, 116).

For centuries we observed an ethnic group functioning at the peripher-ies of a nation. This functioning was extremely dynamic because of freuent nations/civilizations clashes, which resulted instable ethnical balance (Frusztacki 1998, 14).

Aditionally there were other important dimensions of conflict in Silesia, contemporarily it is (Nijakowski 2002):
- mining and steel industry restructurization
- ecological devastation – the need for recultivation
- health care problems
- housing deficit and poor quality of housing substance
- poor educational system
- poverty.

Undoubtedly, contemporary people living in Silesia do not constitute one group bonded with primary ties (the influx of newcomers, migration phenomenon, etc.). This could be true in non-urban parts of Silesia, certainly not in industrial Upper Silesia.

In this region the intensification of nation building (Polish or German) processes is dated at the end of 17th century. Firstly it meant opening and emancipation of Silesians from parish communities, and then secondarily – after the Spring of the Nations and unification of Germany – this Silesian phenomenon collided with dichotomy "Polishness vs. Germaness" (Nijakowski 2004).

Consequently Silesian identity was forced to be a sort of adaptive identity. According to Seth J. Schwartz's Marylin J. Montgomery and Ervin Briones definition of an adaptive "identity", it includes two components (Schwartz, Montgomery, Briones 2006, 7):

(a) a coherent personal identity, signifying a set of goals, values, and beliefs that are internally consistent with one another and that are employed and manifested similarly across situations

(b) a coherent social identity (including cultural identity) that is internally consistent, fl exible enough to support changes that occur as a result of acculturation without losing its internal consistency and workability, and that generates positive feelings about the group(s) to which one perceives oneself as belonging.

IDENTITY IN MOTION

Remarks upon contemporary transformations of identity need to be started with some reflections on developments connected with the changing nature of national identities, especially in today's Poland.[10] If we want to address the problems of unitarian state, then we have to ponder upon transformations of national identity as well. Polish romantic features of identity, often described as anti-pragmatic undergo deep transformations at present.

Intensifying the everyday contacts of Poles with representatives/citizens of other nations (mainly of economical nature) will promptly set aside the romantic elements of our identity. In general, the above discussed components of identity could be a foundation for individual or collective

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[10] The dynamics of reproduction or establishing of regional consciousness in Poland.

identity, depending on ones psychological dispositions. Such relativism is highly comfortable, especially from the point of view of defining individual and collective identities. At the same time it is also applicable from the point of view of trans-culturalism concept.

The concept of trans-culturalism suggests that todays' cultures should be seen as culture networks, tied, interrelated and complex nets, as consequences of migration, communication systems, economic and political global processes. One of the consequences is hybridization of cultures and lack of clear borders between cultures.[11] What are the mechanisms of trans-culturalism that affect identity?

Today's transferring identity from generation to generation is heavily affected by mass culture. Especially effective tool in this regard is media that is uncontrolled, chaotic, fast, blurred, disordered. The today's world tendencies are Among others: trans-cultural processes refer to all dimensions of social life. They are present within and across nations, ethnic groups, culture lines, etc. Apart from "closed societies" the world is one big border land (including states with so called strong culture: Islamic culture). Secondly, trans-cultural processes refer also to individuals, therefore personalities of individuals also can be characterized as so called border land identities, where different influences are crossed and mixed (Almost each of us is a cultural hybrid). Last but not least – the above mentioned increase assimilative-ness of new values, but also makes an individual more transferable. An individual more and more easily and more and more fast takes over new values, abandons them, captures new ones, and new identity.

The new competence of adaptation has also its side effect, and to some extent it is its own reason, which is the superficiality of the internalized values. We do not suffer from the fast pace of trans-culturalism mechanisms as the captured cultures (as well as the smuggled values) are more and more indifferent. We are cultural smugglers.

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[11] The character of borderland depends on the type of border, certainly this correlation is also actual the other way, it is the type of borderland that defines the type of border.

Siegmunt Baumann claims that today we observe the necessity of constant building, re-building and up-dating our identities. This is one of the major uniting factors not only in the scale of Europe, but also in the scale of the whole world. Present social hierarchy does not constitute a stable structure with stable positions. Instability of all, or majority of identities. One of the indicators of individuals' position within the hier-archy, an element of promotion, as a measure of success is the level of freedom in choosing identity and ability to keep it according to one's wishes.

The process of identity building is not a steer-able one. It cannot be controlled, stimulated or limited. Social reality undergoes constant changes and some of them are not event noticeable. It is also impossible to see the humans' undertaking at the beginning of the process identity building. No-one would even dare to point the starting point of this phenomenon. This does not mean that this process is not affected by social actors.

In-deterministic character of social change makes it hardly predictable. Planning such processes is both useless and impossible[12]. Social change, especially when has relative deep character is a form of society building – work in progress.

CHANGE – TRANSFORMATION

As it was staed above, society is more often perceived as a network rather than structure (certainly not unity). The same in the case of nation or identity concepts. The idea of community in the scale of a state also

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[12] Rapidly undergoing social change may however bring about results similar to so called trauma. Cultural trauma appears when basic and constituting values, norms are questioned. The new facts and environment seems incompatible with the so far cultural stakes. Cultural trauma appears also as a result being implemented into a new culture (for example as an emigrant or a refugee) or transition from, for example, communist system to capitalist one – radical change of social and economic life pre-conditions. Trauma appears also when old ways of life get confronted with the new ones (Niedźwiedzki 2003, 41–42). Therefore social change, and the necessity of reconstruction of identity resembles migration.

seems to be more and more empty (Bauman 2007, 9). The social world undergoes permanent changes, some of them even un-noticeably. Some changes come naturally, it is difficult to see some socialactrs' activity in their genesis. Others are initiated in order to change the socio-economic reality, for example to adjust to observed developments trends.

Social processes (at least partly) have in-deterministic character, especially modernization developments where multiple factors impact and determine humans' behavior in unpredictable way. Planning such processes is practically impossible (Niedźwiedzki 2006, 34–37). The successful social change (just like successful migration) requires reconstruction of social identity in new environment. It is based on the process of interaction with people met in the new circumstances. Individuals (or groups) loosing their position and economic status in the social change, try to position themselves in the new structural setting. Sometimes it means for them social exclusion or marginalisation accompanied with poverty, feeling of economic and social deprivation, inequality in the access to goods and services, discrimination and segregation. Social change – especially when it is deep and large in its scale – is a form of a society building, rebuilding its structuresn (Niedźwiedzki 2006, 40). Reconstruction of social identity is unavoidable in such circumstances.

In this part of the deliberations it is important to refer to the concept of modernity and modernization.

Modernity may be understood in many different ways:
- as a project (or projects – competing, permanently updated, reformulated, etc.)
- as a spontaneous process
- as an era "modernity' that is followed by post-modernity or late modernity (Kochanowicz 2006, 108).

Modernization is always associated with progress, technical, material, moral, etc. However every change carries the potential of a risk of being a change to the worse or even when it s a change for better – it is accompanied by some costs and risks (not necessarily fairly distributed).

In this sense, undoubtedly Poland has become a society of two speeds (a metaphor borrowed from another discipline). Large, however statistically difficult to measure, deals with the new reality relatively good. For

others the new world has become too strange and too difficult to accept (poverty, unemployment, exclusion) (Kochanowicz 2006, 115). The transformation, under the Washington consensus logic, was implemented in Poland in accordance to liberal norms. Also in the West, critiques of state intervention, market volatility and global economic crisis since the early 1970s contributed to the undermining of transition state – led approaches (Pickles 1998). Collapse of the Soviet system – the perceived crisis of centralized planning, together with the failure of noe-liberal marketisation to construct capitalism (Pickles 1998, 25).

Broadly, the new political economy stresses three concepts. First, economic systems are discursively and socially constituted and governed by socio-political institutions. Second, rather than coordination occurring through formal market relations and state interventions, economic systems have always depended on a multiplicity of (self) organizing principles and mechanisms, such as industrial networks. Third, these diverse organizing principles of socio-economic systems mean that there can never exist one-way pathways to economic change, but that social systems evolve in a path-dependant manner in which practices shape the options for future strategies and development (Pickles 1998, 26).

Consequently, it is more and more difficult to talk about the linear trajectory of modernity development therefore many scholars (for example Samuel Eisenstadt) suggest the multiple modernity concepts. There is no one modernity model with one defined path to reach it. Modernity itself is full of paradoxes and contradictions, conflicts and tensions (Krasnodębski 2006, 119–120). One of the paradoxes of post-Soviet development has been reliance on a neo-liberal agenda (shock therapy) based on the traditional separation of state and market, with the emphasis on unleashing the power of the market (Pickles 1998, 26).

Socio-economic change is driven by people (agents) in negotiation (interaction) with formal and informal institutions (structures) and change is the output of neither voluntarist design nor structural determinism. The economic life of firms and markets is territorially embedded in social and cultural relations and dependent upon: processes of cognition (different forms of rationality); culture (different forms of shared understanding or collective consciousness); social structure (networks of interpersonal

relationship); and politics (the way in which economic institutions are shaped by the state, class forces, etc.) (after: Pickles 1998, 31). In fact, the collapse of the Soviet system was closely connected with the exhaustion of this extensive model of development. The inability to intensify production, even with the increase of foreign loans to purchase more advanced western technologies. Crucially, the emergence of anti-regulatory processes from tangled social practices was bound up in the distinctive (dis)organization and contradictory structuring the space. CEE governments have neither the financial nor the political capital for strong interventions in regional or industrial policy, it is to the patterns of foreign direct investment and their effects on regional development (see also Begg, Pickles 1998, 116–117).

TRAUMA AND MARGINALISATION

The liberal shock therapy, without efficient social shelter from the state (or wider – public) institutions very often resulted in marginalisation of individuals and whole social groups. Marginalisation of indivisuals and groups during and after social change may be caused by experiencing trauma. Trauma – in Piotr Sztompka's understanding is a type of social subjectivity pathology. It is more likely to come when social change is rapid and fast, radical and deep, it comes unexpectedly and imposed from outside (Sztompka 2003, 41).

The phenomenon of trauma is determined by culture. It depends on cultural competences and social identity of those groups and individuals. These elements decide on the possibilities of interpretation and building of reactions to undergoing processes. For example the unemployment can act as a typical traumatic phenomenon, especially for the working clas remembering full employment (policy and) reality in communist times (Niedźwiedzki 2003, 41)

Cultural trauma appears usually when processes undergoing in social environment neglect basic and fundamental values, constituting the culture. The new facts are interpreted as unjust, incompatible with the fundamentals. Cultural trauma may happen when an individual finds

himself in social contacts with people coming from different cultural background (for example as a consequence of migration). However also taking into account the transformation from communism to capitalism, the new system is radically different socially and culturally. Trauma may also appear together with unequal (imbalanced unequal, uneven) development of specific culture sectors. As a result of meetings, interactions with those carrying differences, the shock may be compared with meeting those (interacting with those) other types of cultures (Niedźwiedzki, 2003, 41–42).

Marginalisation may be understood as the lack of participation[13] (individuals or groups) in the spheres of life, in which – according to established criteria and rules – the participation is expected. Maginalisation[14] in one of the sub-systems does not automatically involve marginalisation in other spheres. However there is a tendency to accumulate spheres in which an indivdual does not participate (for example: being jobless limis one's access to culture, some areas ofconsumption, security, etc.). In general marginalisation and the feeling of alienation are more natural in poor social capital community. It may be understood as lack of participation[15] (individuals or groups) in the spheres of life, in which – according to established criteria and rules – the participation is expected.

INTERNAL MIGRANTS –
IN THE CONTEXT OF IDENTITY BUILDING PROCESS

Deep social change means (for the people living in transforming society) the necessity for reconstruction of so-far social identity. From the point of view of identification consequences it resembles migration. Just like migration it also requires adjusting to new rules and norms of behav-

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[13] Participation – fulfilling social roles in certain systems and sub-systems (family, political system, production).

[14] Marginalised groups should not be treated as categories places outside of social strucuture – they are an element of it.

[15] Participation – fulfilling social roles in certain systems and sub-systems (family, political system, production).

ior (Niedźwiedzki 2003, 70). People do not move geographically[16] – in the case of migration, in the migration project fails, people still have the opportunity to comeback to the old place. In social change – transition process is not reversible – there is no way back (Niedźwiedzki 2003, 72)

Migration belongs to this type of social processes that is connected with reconstruction of social identity[17]. Migration, connected with changing place of living, means – for many – transfer to culturally strange world and is connected with radical decision meaning participation in the process of desocialization and new socialization leading to absorption of new norms, values, social relations, habits, etc. Shmuel N. Eisenstadt paid special attention to time, as one of major determinants of social integration of the migrants as well as participating in more and more fields of social life. Eisenstadt analyzed certain levels of identification of the migrants with the welcoming society. He pointed a number of phases in the process ofmigrants' integration:

- phase "adaptive integration", characterized with demonstrating the competence to perform the basic social roles, connected with participation in the social life,
- phase "instrumental integration", is related with participation of the new migrants into the economic life, which makes it possible for them to answer their existential needs themselves,
- phase "identification and solidarity" – the migrant becomes aware of being a member of the welcoming society. Accepting the system of values of the welcoming society is typical for this phase,
- phase "cultural integration" accepting symbolic culture, internalisation of norms, patterns of behaviour.

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[16] "Internal Migrants" do not change the place of living geographically, but social, economic, and dimension of their environment hass changed.

[17] Through decontextualisation and recontextualisation.

CONCLUSIONS

> Silesia offers a particularly fruitful example of a disputed trans-
> national realm of memory in an ethnically heterogeneous borderland,
> in which rival groups constructed different narratives of national
> identity (Bjork, Gerwath 2007, 377).

In this study the author tackled difficult relationship between national (Polish, German) and regional culture and the developments of regional Silesian identity in the transition context. Today, in the era of post-national character of contemporary identities, we entertain friendly circumstances for regionalisms and local identities which enjoy optimal conditions for their development. It is very much different from what we observed in the past: policy of nationalistic verification – by the Germans, or post war – soviets and soviets-loyal Polish administration concept of a unitarian Poland.

At the same time we observe global trends of trans-culturalism. Indivisuals are losing their old identities and forming what is called "a new race of men". Modernized cosmopolitan model seems to be the official one. As it is put by Linda M. Alvolff:

The idea of "post-ethnic" future has again been growing in influence among theorists who seek political progress and social harmony. Rather then promoting the continued acceptance of ethnic categorization, some have argued that it would be better for individuals to think of themselves as having cosmopolitan, universalist and nonparticularist identity (Alvoff 2004, 100).

The theorists of post-ethnic world would ask how much, if at all, is racial or ethnic identity still impotant for indivudal and collective identi-fications[18], how much those post-ethnic identities are divorced from race – as a key category (Gassian 2001, 321). Silesia seems to be a good illustra-tion of a ethnically mixed backgrounds, where ethnicity passes back and forth, never cementing the identity. The revitalisation of regionalism

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[18] To what extent should ethnicity or race play a role in determining a person's iden-tity?

means new-found consciousness, resulted in – sometimes emphasises, sometimes exaggerated identity.

This needs to be put into context of trans-cultiralism of today's world, where an individual is running from one and passing into new identity. In the case of Silesia it is also important to see the wide context of socio-historical conditioning which must be brought to light, as it has implications for identity constructions. As it is put by Kazimiera and Jacek Wódz, Upper Silesia is a typical example of a borderland, where different ethnic groups and different traditions are mixed up. In the Silesian melting pot for centuries Polish, Czech-Moravian and German influences were clashing and their importance was always connected with the affiliation of this region to the wider politic-state structure. The cultural identity of this region was shaped in the long lasing history of this region – the crucial importance for the formation of the cultural face of Upper Silesia had the 19th century when first – under Prussian and the German domination the process of industrialization based on the extraction of coal and steel engineering started, favouring the influx of Germans to Upper Silesia. The cultural distance of Upper Silesia from German population was strengthen by growing national Polish awareness and culminated after the first world war in the Plebiscite and Uprisings (Wódz, Wódz 2006, 12).

Today we live in the era of post-industrialism. De-industrialisation, expressed in the decline of manufacturing employment (and share in GDP) relative to employment in other sectors, affects Silesian identity as much as industrialisation affected this land in 19th century. This can be seen in the model of family, life styles, educational systems (Smith 2006, 523–524), urban structure, architecture and many others. Such a fast transition brings about risk of alienation, marginalisation, internal migration.

Large part of Silesia's population did not managed to catch up with modernization dynamics. This can be seen in the landscape of this region and could be described as a hybrid type community. Etimologically a hybrid is an entity that would have to be classified in two separate domains, or it is an entity that one finds in one domain but would expect in another (Beckert 2006, 334–336).

Hybrid identity – originated in one context is recombined with identities from another context. The ambitions to build knowledge-intensive industrial agglomeration, coexist with 19th century type[19], traditional ways of living, consequently identifications towards primary groups (neotribalism[20]).

In general, the specifics of post-industrial societies (rejection of authorities, permanent questioning of values and traditions, etc.) is not a favorable precondition for acquiring identities. An individual, 'suppressed' with the variety of identifications' offers may live in permanent identity crisis. Much less complicated was the industrial phase of socio-economic development. Autonomy was much less valued then. Toda's Silesia is a battle field where cosmopolitansm combats provincialism, parochialism, ethnic and racial particularism, and the nerrowness of identity and vision concominant with them (Alvoff 2004, 100).

ABSTRACT

Silesia, a heavily industrialized agglomeration (coal basin) in South Poland represents unique combination of features. Being very rich in natural resources, it has been intensively exploited for one and a half century – at the present is environmentally, economically and socially degraded area. According to the new (optimistic) trend it is recommended to see the above mentioned problems as challenges. Consequently, looking for strategies of modernization, it is necessary to recognize prerequisites of cultural and identity nature that should be taken into account when programming the development of the agglomeration.

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[19] It is generally observed that in countries reaching lower level of economic development, there is also more traditional and religious values building stable identity foundations.

[20] Regional groups define themselves in purely ethnical terms, which derive that the right for membership in a group from having parents whose common origin is from a given region

Upper Silesia, its people, as well as main characteristics of their culture have always been rooted in mining and related industries. It is an important component of Silesians' self-identity.

The purpose of the proposed study would be to examine the so far, current and forthcoming transition process (its social, economic and cultural dimension) from the perspective of the local, Silesian identity. This would help to answer the question if the recognized Silesian culture of work – can it be a major fundament of building the identity of the agglomeration in the post-industrial era. Author will identify the major components of Silesian cultural identity and its correlations to undergoing changes and transition.

The study produced would also have its empirical dimension – its conclusions could act as important indications for authorities responsible for programming the revitalization of the agglomeration..

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