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## GERMAN MINORITY LEADERS IN GDAŃSK POMERANIA AFTER 1989

The topic of the German minority in post-war Poland and in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Republic of Poland (after 1989) has been widely explored in Polish sociology<sup>1</sup> but, so far, the German minority in the Gdańsk Pomerania region as the subject and object of analyses has been present only against the background of other studies.

The aim of this article is to present the socio-demographic structure of German minority associations in selected localities in northern Poland after 1989 and national-ethnic identity of their leaders. The source of results presented in this article is the author's own research which was an in-depth case study. Having filled the gap in previous sociological research on Germans in other regions of Poland, that study is the first sociological monograph on the German minority in Gdańsk Pomerania.<sup>2</sup>

The analysed German minority associations operate in the Pomorskie voivodship, part of the Kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship, part of the Warmińsko-mazurskie voivodship, and in the northern part of the Wielkopolskie voivodship. The location

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<sup>1</sup> E.g. D. Berlińska (1999), *Mniejszość niemiecka na Śląsku Opolskim w poszukiwaniu tożsamości*, Opole; B. Domagała (1993), *Socjologiczna charakterystyka liderów mniejszości niemieckiej na Warmii i Mazurach*, "Przeгляд Zachodni" No. 3; idem, *Mniejszość niemiecka na Warmii i Mazurach – narodziny organizacji*, in: B. Domagała i A. Sakson (eds) (1998), *Tożsamość kulturowa społeczeństwa Warmii i Mazur*, Olsztyn; C. Herrmann (1997), *Die deutsche Minderheit in Ermland und Masuren. Studie zur aktuellen Situation*, Allenstein; L. Janiszewski (1993), *Mniejszość niemiecka a Polacy na Pomorzu Szczecińskim. Szkic socjologiczny*, Szczecin; Z. Kurcz (1994), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo" No. 4; idem (1994), *Przywódcy mniejszości niemieckiej na Śląsku o sobie i swoich zbiorowościach*, "Pogranicze. Studia Społeczne" Vol. IV, Białystok; idem (1993), *Przywódcy mniejszości niemieckiej na Śląsku o sobie i swoich zbiorowościach*, "Przeгляд Zachodni" No. 3; idem (1995), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce*, Wrocław; idem, *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce: geneza, struktury, oczekiwania*, in: Z. Kurcz (ed.) (1997), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce*, Wrocław; A. Sakson, *Socjologiczna charakterystyka mniejszości niemieckiej w Polsce ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem Wielkopolski w latach 1945/89-1993*, in: A. Sakson (ed.) (1994), *Polska – Niemcy – mniejszość niemiecka w Wielkopolsce. Przeszłość i teraźniejszość*, Poznań; idem, *Geneza i struktura społeczna mniejszości niemieckiej w Wielkopolsce*, in: Z. Kurcz i W. Misiak (eds) (1994), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce i Polacy w Niemczech*, Wrocław; M. Szmeja, *Polacy, Niemcy czy Ślązacy? Rozważania o zmienności identyfikacji narodowej Ślązaków*, in: Z. Kurcz i W. Misiak (eds) (1994), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce...*

<sup>2</sup> M. Lemańczyk (2012), *Tożsamość narodowa liderów mniejszości niemieckiej w wybranych miejscowościach Polski Północnej* (to be published doctoral thesis supervised by Prof. Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński), Poznań, pp. 540.

of associations studied largely coincides with the territory of the former West Prussia province (1878-1920) and the former Free City of Danzig (FCD, 1920-1939). Having considered historical administrative changes, the research covered the area from Gdańsk to Toruń and from Iława to Złotów. Historical and geographical names have changed. Aiming to clearly explain nationality issues and processes, the author uses the name Gdańsk Pomerania (Pomorze Gdańskie) to refer to the post WW2 situation. In each case, however, the former areas of the Western Prussia province and the Free City of Danzig have been considered.

The associations in question have their registered seats in the following towns: Gdańsk, Gdynia, Tczew, Chojnice, Malbork, Sztum, Kwidzyn, Elbląg, Toruń, Grudziądz, Łasin, Lidzbark Welski, Nowe Miasto Lubawskie, and Iława. For historical and institutional reasons, the research covered also three minority centres in the territory of the former province of Pomerania, i.e. Bytów, Lębork, Wierzychucin, as well as Bydgoszcz and Złotów, which was considered necessary to fully portray developments in the German minority in the discussed area.

In total, from September 2006 to March 2009, the author conducted a research among 160 leaders of nineteen German minority centres.

The focus of the research, i.e. German association leaders, included both formal and informal leaders as well as persons actively participating in the ethnic life of associations who have never been and are not members of their Boards. The last of the aforementioned categories includes persons who have an impact on the functioning of the minority. Some act as informal members of an association board and prefer not to demonstrate their involvement externally for social or professional reasons. There are also informal leaders. The main criterion, however, has been one's formal function in the board or its lack.

The basic theoretical concept followed while examining the identity of leaders, is John Milton Yinger's concept of ethnic identity which is synonymous with ethnicity.<sup>3</sup> In Yinger's concept, identity has three main aspects which are also constitutive for an ethnic group. They are: the perception of members of a given group by others as ethnically different, self-awareness of ethnic distinctness, and the group ethnic activity.<sup>4</sup> That basic theoretical concept is supplemented by other ones which are necessary to explain the national identity issue, including the concept of cultural valence, core values and inter-group relations.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> J. M. Yinger (1994), *Ethnicity. Source of strength? Source of conflict?*, Albany-New York.

<sup>4</sup> "The definition of an ethnic group (...) has three ingredients: 1. The group is perceived by others in the society to be different in some combination of the following traits: language, religion, race, and ancestral homeland with its related culture; 2. the members also perceive themselves as different; and 3. they participate in shared activities built around their (real or mythical) common origin and culture." *Ibidem*, pp. 4. and B. Synak (1998), *Kaszubska tożsamość. Ciągłość i zmiana: studium socjologiczne*, Gdańsk, p. 56.

<sup>5</sup> A. Kłoskowska (1996), *Kultury narodowe u korzeni*, Warszawa, p. 112; J. J. Smolicz (2000), *Współkultury Australii*, Warszawa, p. 202; G. W. Allport (1954), *The Nature of Prejudice*, Reading, Mass.

Several research methods and techniques and other sources of data were used in the research, supplementing one another and, simultaneously, providing different perspectives of relevant phenomena. They included field research, participant observation, a questionnaire, focus group interviews, and content analyses. In social sciences, such an approach is referred to as *triangulation*<sup>6</sup>.

#### CHARACTERISTICS OF SOCIAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC STRUCTURE OF GERMAN MINORITY ASSOCIATIONS

The determination of the size and socio-demographic composition of German minority associations both in Gdańsk Pomerania and in the other regions of Poland is a difficult task. Difficulties are due to several factors e.g. the lack of up-to-date data in the form of member lists, rotation of association members, internal group transformations, and the manners of determining associations' membership.

Some information follows from available calculations based on various methods of data collection and interpretation, different definitions of "the German minority" and varying access to information sources, i.e. social research, results of National Censuses of Population and Housing from 2002 and 2011, annual reports of the Central Statistical Office, as well as documents of German minority associations.<sup>7</sup> In the article, the author intentionally does not include a detailed standard analysis of the data on the professional structure and economic situation of respondents which, from their perspective, are sensitive and easily traceable.

Zbigniew Kurcz's data was recognised as the starting point. He calculated that in 1996 (i.e. prior to the administration reform of 1999), the German minority in Poland had approximately 300 thousand members affiliated to almost seventy associations.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> N. K. Denzin N. K. and Lincoln Y. S., *Introduction: Entering the field of qualitative research*, in: N. K. Denzin N. K. & Y. S. Lincoln (eds) (1994), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, London, pp. 1-17. [Polish translation: *Wprowadzenie. Dziedzina i praktyka badań jakościowych*, in: K. Podemski (ed.) (2009), *Metody badań jakościowych*, Vol. 1, Warszawa, pp. 26-27]; U. Flick (1992), *Triangulation Revisited – Strategy of or Alternative to Validation of Qualitative Data*, "Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior" No. 22, pp. 175-197; idem (1998), *Triangulation – Geltungsbegründung oder Erkenntniszuwachs*, "Zeitschrift für Soziologie der Erziehung und Sozialization" No. 18, pp. 443-447; idem (2008), *Triangulation. Eine Einführung*, 2. Aufl., Wiesbaden; M. Hammersley, P. Atkinson (1995) *Ethnography: principles in practice*, New York [Polish translation: *Metody badań terenowych*, Poznań, 2000, pp. 235-238; D. Silverman (2000), *Doing Qualitative Research. A Practical Handbook*, London [Polish translation: *Prowadzenie badań jakościowych*, Warszawa, 2008].

<sup>7</sup> The published results of the 2011 National Census do not contain a detailed analysis of declarations concerning nationality, ethnicity, language, citizenship, the distribution of sex, age, and education of persons declaring the German nationality by voivodships and communes [smallest administrative units]. Therefore, the author makes comparisons on the basis of results of the 2002 National Census, [http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/LUD\\_ludnosc\\_stan\\_str\\_dem\\_spo\\_NSP2011.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/LUD_ludnosc_stan_str_dem_spo_NSP2011.pdf) [accessed: 5.05.2013].

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Z. Kurcz (1994), *Mniejszość niemiecka...*, p. 149.

In the light of results of the 2002 National Census, out of the total of 38,230,080 inhabitants of Poland, 152,897 people declared their German nationality and 147,094 of whom declared also their Polish citizenship. That was the German minority of 2002. The highest number of declarations of German nationality, i.e. 134,930 (91.73% of all respondents who declared German nationality) was in southern voivodships, i.e. in the Opolskie and Śląskie ones.

In the area in focus, the size of the German minority in 2002 was as follows: 2,016 people in the Pomorskie voivodship, 636 people in the Kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship, 4,311 people in the Warmińsko-mazurskie voivodship (the author studied four organisations there), and 820 people in the Wielkopolskie voivodship (the author studied one organisation having its registered seat in that voivodship, i.e. the one based in Złotów).<sup>9</sup>

However, the results of the 2011 National Census, in which, for the first time, it was possible to declare double national and ethnic identity revealed a decline in German self-identification. In total, out of 38,511,800 people actually living in Poland, about 842 thousand (2.19%) persons declared both their Polish identity and some other national and ethnic identity, of whom 147,816 declared their German identity (63,847 declared both German and Polish identities, and 44,549 – only the German one).<sup>10</sup>

However, the data on the area in question indicate an increase in German identity declarations, i.e. 4,830 people in the Pomorskie voivodship, 2,507 people in the Kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship, 4,843 people in the Warmińsko-mazurskie voivodship, and 3,421 people in the Wielkopolskie voivodship.<sup>11</sup>

The results of the author's research, in which national and ethnic self-identifications were considered in an institutional context, are different. However, since not all persons of German origin are members of German minority associations, we may conclude that the observed differences reflect the tendency that despite declaring his or her German affiliation, some people are not members of any German minority association.

According to the 2001 accounts of the German Minority Association (Związek Mniejszości Niemieckiej, ZMN) in Gdańsk, associations of the German minority in the Pomorskie voivodship had 5,706 members, 4,500 of whom belonged to the ZMN.<sup>12</sup> According to calculations of the author, German minority associations in the Kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship had approximately 1,700 members in 2001. Four

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<sup>9</sup> L. M. Nijakowski, *Status grup etnicznych oraz mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych w Polsce w świetle wyników Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego z 2002 roku*, in: L. Adamczuk, S. Łodziński (eds) (2006), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce w świetle Narodowego Spisu Powszechnego z 2002 roku*, Warszawa, p. 155.

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/LUD\\_ludnosc\\_stan\\_str\\_dem\\_spo\\_NSP2011.pdf](http://www.stat.gov.pl/cps/rde/xbcr/gus/LUD_ludnosc_stan_str_dem_spo_NSP2011.pdf) [accessed: 5.05.2013.]

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Financial records of the German Minority Association in Gdańsk.

organisations surveyed in the Warmińsko-mazurskie voivodship had 907 members in total, i.e. the association in Elbląg had 391 members (as of 2002), the association in Iława had 256 members, the one in Lidzbark Welski had 200 members, and the association in Nowe Miasto Lubawskie had 60 members. The association in Złotów in the Wielkopolskie voivodship had slightly more than 100 members.

In total, according to the data on 2001-2002 provided by the leaders, German minority associations in the area being examined had about 7,460 members (excluding the association in Słupsk which is outside the area in question).

According to the data of the Union of German Social and Cultural Associations (ZNSSK, *Verband der deutschen sozial-kulturellen Gesellschaften in Polen*, VdG) on 2011<sup>13</sup>, German minority associations in the Pomorskie voivodship alone has 8,005 members (including the association in Słupsk with 1,627 members). In the Kujawsko-pomorskie voivodship there are 2,652 members, in the Warmińsko-mazurskie voivodship there are 369 members (the association in Elbląg), and the association in Złotów has about 100 members.

Considering the rapid socio-demographic processes which, at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century, affected the examined associations and declarations about a decreasing membership, the above data of the VdG on 2011 should be reduced by 30%. Leaving aside the way of counting the members of German minority associations in Poland at large<sup>14</sup> by various institutions and by the German minority itself, it can be cautiously estimated that in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the associations in the Pomorskie voivodship had 3,000-3,500 members, and all German associations in the area in question had 5,000-5,500 members.

The current age, sex, and education profiles of members of the German minority associations in the area reveal regional differences if compared to results of the 2002 National Census.

What is clearly noticeable is the much higher percentage of female members, which, in the opinion of the author, is 60%. In fact, results of the 2002 National Census indicate a slightly higher percentage of women than men, i.e. 51.4% and 48.6% respectively, a higher percentage of people aged over 60 (33.3%), and a very high percentage of people with primary education (both completed and not) and vocational education, i.e. 75.9% in total. In the associations surveyed, the percentage of people aged over 60 years was much higher than in the 2002 Census data. According to the author's estimates, people over 60 years old constitute over 60% of the German minority and the oldest generation aged over 70 years prevails. This huge difference is due to the marginal membership of the middle-aged generation (aged 40-59 years) and of children and the youth (aged under 39 years). On the national scale,

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<sup>13</sup> Simulation of changes in the VdG statutes of 8 March 2013, Opole.

<sup>14</sup> That refers to different approaches adopted by associations towards including various categories of members in their statistics, i.e. active members, their families (including members of purely Polish origin) and persons who have never been involved in ethnic activities of associations after having paid their membership fee.

according to the 2002 Census, the percentage of population aged up to 39 years was 42.9% in total, and of people aged 40-59 years it was 20.8%. Thus the share of the youngest and middle-aged generations in the German minority is jointly 63.7%. The national data is different because of the higher percentage of the youngest and middle-aged generation members of associations in southern Poland.

Estimates concerning education of the German minority members in the area examined are similar to the results of the 2002 National Census. People with primary education (both completed and not) and with vocational education strongly prevail, i.e. in total they constitute 70-75% of that population. The share of people with secondary education can be estimated to be 20-25%, and of people with higher education to be no more than 5%.

#### “US” AND “THEM” IN SPECIFIC POMERANIAN CONDITIONS OF THE CULTURAL BORDERLAND

Relations between national groups in Gdańsk Pomerania and their evolution are an effect of complex socio-political and identity-related factors.

The perception of the German minority has undoubtedly been influenced by social and political transformations in Poland after 1989 and the overall climate favourable to national identity issues.

Old social ties in Gdańsk Pomerania transformed in effect of post-WW2 mass migrations, boosting *cultural synergy* based on the interaction (cooperation and competition) of cultural systems composed of various elements.<sup>15</sup>

In the context of the post-migration society being discussed<sup>16</sup>, three major cultures – Polish, German, and Kashubian – coexist and variously shape their mutual relations.

In addition, the coexistence model of groups having different ethno-cultural and national heritage is (and was) to a large extent dependent on the individual and collective sense of identity based on self-awareness of distinctness<sup>17</sup>, that is on the sensed “we-they” and “us - the others” distinctions. Distance and otherness (strangeness) were rightly differentiated by Georg Simmel who argued that “distance means that he, who is close by, is far, and strangeness means that he, who also is far, is actually near. For, to be a stranger is naturally a very positive relation; it is a specific form of interaction.”<sup>18</sup> It may be concluded that the sense of “familiarity” and “strangeness” in the area discussed was determined by the fact that “That the different custom is not understood in its subjective meaning since the cultural key to it is

<sup>15</sup> M. Golka (2010), *Imiona wielokulturowości*, Warszawa, p. 137.

<sup>16</sup> A. Sakson, *Specyfika procesów społeczno-kulturowych społeczeństw postmigracyjnych*, in: B. Domagała and A. Sakson (eds), *Tożsamość kulturowa*, pp. 7-11.

<sup>17</sup> F. Znaniecki (2001), *Socjologia wychowania*, Warszawa, pp. 23-26.

<sup>18</sup> G. Simmel (1950), *The Stranger*, in: *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, New York 1950, p. 402 [Polish translation: G. Simmel, *Obcy*, in: idem (1975), *Socjologia*, Warszawa, p. 505].

lacking, is almost as decisive as the peculiarity of the custom as such.”<sup>19</sup> The above phenomena are therefore connected with the feeling of distance both in the socio-cultural and emotional sense.

It needs to be underlined that under specific Pomeranian conditions of the cultural borderland, the attitude of the incumbent population of different cultural origins was generally positive. For example, directly after WW2, German inhabitants of Pomerania were culturally closer to native Polish inhabitants than Polish immigrants of other cultural background. Similar conditions were in Poznań after WW1, which was confirmed in sociological research on antagonism towards strangers among inhabitants of Poznań carried out by Florian Znaniecki in 1920.<sup>20</sup>

Mutual relations between Poles and the German minority in the culturally diversified region of Pomerania were shaped by partial integration, partial acculturation and antagonism. Additionally, it is important to recognise a concurrent opposite process of dissimilation, i.e. the renaissance of ethnicity and the continuation of its power.<sup>21</sup>

It follows that in all processes mentioned, the key factor is the sense of national (and ethnic) identity, both individual and collective. It is in the borderland where two opposite trends collide, determining the direction of self-identification processes. On the one hand, increasingly often individuals experience the sense of anomy, alienation from society, “one-dimensionality”, and, to an extent, the vanishing of traditional values and norms. On the other hand, we observe a basic human tendency towards “anchoring”, maintaining bonds with ancestors and cultural roots, and building local ties. In result, individuals increasingly often search for a coherent image of themselves, a relatively stable self-identification, including their national and ethnic identity.

In case of leaders of the German minority in Gdańsk Pomerania, the ways in which they construe their identities are particularly interesting, constituting a sort of kaleidoscope of individual and group self-identifications and experiences. The multi-dimensional and different identity of German minority leaders reflects the borderland nature of the area in question. The differentiation occurs both at the level of self-identification and in the attitude towards native values such as the German language and collective memory, and in visions of the German minority functioning in the future. In many cases, that has far-reaching consequences for the group cohesion and ethnic activities of its members, and also for the image of the German minority among Poles.

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<sup>19</sup> M. Weber (1978), *Economy and Society: An Outline of Interpretive Sociology*, Oakland, CA, p. 387 [Polish translation: (2002), *Gospodarka i społeczeństwo. Zarys socjologii rozumiejącej*, Warszawa, p. 307].

<sup>20</sup> F. Znaniecki (1930), *Studia nad antagonizmem do obcych*, “Przegląd Socjologiczny” Vol. I, pp. 171-172.

<sup>21</sup> J. M. Yinger (1994), *Ethnicity...*, pp. 41-67; idem, *Toward a theory of assimilation and dissimilation*, “Ethnic and Racial Studies” Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 249-264; J. Mucha (2006), *Stosunki etniczne we współczesnej myśli socjologicznej*, Warszawa, p. 227.

In the research on the national (and ethnic) identity of leaders of the German minority, two of its broad dimensions were considered, i.e. the subjective and objective one.<sup>22</sup>

The subjective criteria of the assessment of identity included: self-identification of respondents and the cultural valence which influenced it, the sense of bonds with the motherland, acceptance of values, awareness of being a member of a group and its distinctness, and awareness of being perceived as ethnically different by others, i.e. the looking – glass identity.

The objective dimension of identity includes its formal (natal) aspect and the behavioural one.<sup>23</sup> Factors of natal nature which were taken into consideration included: place of birth of respondents and their ancestors, the period of stay a given territory, and the descent of the spouse. Behavioural factors included: the motivation for establishing a German minority organisation and joining it, the ability to speak the German language and the use of that language as well as participation in the group ethnic activities.

The subject of analysis is an aspect of the leaders' identity, namely their national (and ethnic) self-identification and cultural valence.

#### NATIONAL (AND ETHNIC) SELF-IDENTIFICATION OF LEADERS OF THE GERMAN MINORITY

The area under discussion is characterised by the coexistence of groups of various cultural, national and ethnic origins. What is particularly interesting is the self-identification content, i.e. the way and the context in which the leaders construe their own sense of national identity.

While doing research on ethnic identification, the researcher may observe mutually excluding or competing identifications, identifications of growing and decreasing importance for an individual at a given moment, and other combinations which are compatible to a varying extent and make the identity structure more complex.<sup>24</sup>

Antonina Kłoskowska is of a similar opinion, writing that in an analysis of global identity, in addition to national identification, also one's adoption of national culture and its recognition as one's own, i.e. cultural valence, should be considered.<sup>25</sup> The degree of valence variation depends therefore on basic socio-demographic variables such as education, profession and the socio-cultural status of one's family.

Kłoskowska identifies four potential kinds of national identification: uniform (integral) identification, double identification, uncertain identification, and cosmopolitan identification. She also distinguishes among four kinds of cultural valence:

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<sup>22</sup> B. Synak (1998), *op. cit.*, p. 52.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53.

<sup>24</sup> J. M. Yinger (1994), *Ethnicity...*, p. 144.

<sup>25</sup> A. Kłoskowska (1996), *op. cit.*, p. 112.

univalence, bivalence, ambivalence, and polyvalence. Most of those kinds converge, depending on a moment in one's life and a situation. Most probably, the vacuously true variants include such pairs as double identification and univalence, cosmopolitanism and univalence, and integral identification and ambivalence.<sup>26</sup>

The research on the identity of German minority leaders in Gdańsk Pomerania demonstrates that combinations of the above kinds with varying saturation level do occur. There are individuals who identify themselves with two ethnic or national groups and feel cultural ambivalence. Those are the people between two worlds who are not able to fully reconcile the two realities. There are also persons with double awareness<sup>27</sup> who have overcome the anxiety and burdens of that duality and use it creatively. That phenomenon can be compared to a three-dimensional vision, while most of us use only one "ethnic eye"<sup>28</sup>.

It must be underlined that the co-existence of national and ethnic identifications is not a contradictory phenomenon because identifications take place at different reference levels. Nevertheless, the bond between the (collective) group and individual identifications may be loose, constituting a "dime store ethnicity"<sup>29</sup>, an ethnicity which is symbolic<sup>30</sup>, situational (under certain conditions), or more permanent and authentic. Recalling the concept of Florian Znaniecki, the above phenomenon should be studied taking into consideration the "humanistic coefficient" or, as Clifford Geertz argued, applying a "thick description"<sup>31</sup>.

The survey conducted by the author as well as earlier analyses by researchers focusing on the German minority point to the impact of objective factors on the systematisation of the category of national (and ethnic) identification of respondents. Those factors are related to complex nationality-related processes in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, i.e. the pre-WW2 de-Germanisation, the *Eindeutschung* policy during WW2, processes of "national" verification and rehabilitation, and the general situation of people of German origin in the post-WW2 period.<sup>32</sup> In addition, the

<sup>26</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 129.

<sup>27</sup> W. E. B. DuBois (1953), *The Souls of Black Folk*, Greenwich. After J. M. Yinger (1994), *Ethnicity...*, p. 146.

<sup>28</sup> J. M. Yinger (1994), *Ethnicity...*, p. 146.

<sup>29</sup> H. F. Stein, R. F. Hill (1977), *The Ethnic Imperative: Examining the New White Ethnic Movement*, Pennsylvania State UP, after J. M. Yinger (1994), *Ethnicity...*, p. 148; B. Synak (1998), *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>30</sup> H. J. Gans, *Symbolic ethnicity: the future of ethnic groups and cultures in America*, "Ethnic and Racial Studies" 2 January 1979, after J. M. Yinger (1994), *Ethnicity...*, p. 148; also B. Synak (1998), *op. cit.*, p. 56.

<sup>31</sup> F. Znaniecki (1988), *Wstęp do socjologii*, Warszawa; C. Geertz (1973), *Thick Description. Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture*, in: idem, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*. New York, pp. 3-30 [Polish translation: *Opis gęsty – w stronę interpretatywnej teorii kultury*, in: *Badanie kultury. Elementy teorii antropologicznej*, Warszawa 2003, pp. 35-58], and idem (1973), *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* [Polish translation: *Interpretacja kultur. Wybrane eseje*, Seria Cultura, Kraków 2005, pp. 17-47].

<sup>32</sup> D. Berlińska (1989), *Spoleczne uwarunkowania ruchu mniejszości niemieckiej na Śląsku Opol-*

definition of ethnicity as a syndrome of symptomatic features has changed as well, moving from the imposed (inherited) ethnicity to identification being a matter of an individual's choice.

On the basis of the typology of people constituting the German minority in Poland and focusing on identity-territory structure, the following categories of members of that minority have been identified in the Pomeranian context: 1) "ethnic Germans" in western and eastern borderlands (i.e. citizens of the Reich within the borders from before 1939); 2) *Danzigers* in the territory of the former Free City of Danzig (German citizenship was given them after connecting of the city to the German Reich); 3) autochthons in Kashubia and Kociewie; 4) German immigrants and their descendants (who came from outside the area examined, most frequently from the neighbouring former Prussian provinces); 5) Poles of German descent (who lived in the Pomorskie voivodship in the interwar period); and 6) Poles interested in German culture and language.<sup>33</sup>

The semi-structured in-depth interview used and the applied methods of analysis provide estimated data which, to an extent, draws a more detailed picture of leaders' self-identification.

The determination of the number of "ethnic Germans" is most difficult, and, for various reasons, presidents or chairpersons of associations studied do not venture to give the figures. In the light of comments collected, it can be concluded that less than 20 respondents belong to the category of "ethnic Germans". They are citizens of Germany and of German descent, members of the Evangelical-Augsburg (Protestant) Church who, for various reasons, have not left for Germany. Some of them do not declare openly their religion, treating it as part of their private life. Some attend services at Evangelical churches close to their homes e.g. in Słupsk (service in German and Polish), Lębork (in Polish), and in Sopot (in Polish). Others, due to the lack of opportunity to attend a service in German at a nearby Evangelical church, attend services in the Polish language at Roman Catholic churches, or, in the German language, at St. John Church in Gdańsk.

The declared identity of people belonging to the above category geographically overlaps with areas annexed to the Reich in 1939 (i.e. the Free City of Danzig, Bytów, Lębork, Wierzchucino, Kwidzyn, Sztum, and Iława). The kind of their national self-identification can be qualified as an integral one. However, their cultural

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*skim: (próba diagnozy w świetle badań socjologicznych)*, Opole; B. Domagała (1996), *Mniejszość niemiecka na Warmii i Mazurach: rodowód kulturowy, organizacja, tożsamość*, Olsztyn; Z. Kurcz (1994), *Mniejszość niemiecka...*, Z. Kurcz (1997), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce: geneza...*; C. Obracht-Prondużyński (2002), *Kaszubi. Między dyskryminacją a regionalną podmiotowością*, Gdańsk, pp. 135-220; A. Sakson (1990), *Mazurzy – społeczność pogranicza*, Poznań.

<sup>33</sup> A. Sakson (1994), *Socjologiczna charakterystyka...*, pp. 141-155; idem (1994), *Geneza i struktura społeczna...*, pp. 57-63; idem (1991), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem mniejszości niemieckiej*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo" No. 4, pp. 185-201; Z. Kurcz (1997), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce: geneza...*, p. 97; idem (1991), *Kształtowanie się mniejszości niemieckiej na Śląsku*, "Kultura i Społeczeństwo" No. 2; idem (1997), *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce...*, p. 67.

self-identification is bivalent or polyvalent. In the case of all respondents in that category, their early culturalisation took place in the German culture but their experience of adolescence and adulthood was in the Polish culture context or, in the case of people living in and near Bytów, Lębork, and Wierzychucin, also in the Kashubian culture context.

That fact is evidenced in comments of respondents:

I have always felt that I am a German and I have never tried to hide it. I have never flaunted it either but I have been “deciphered” at work due to my conduct and performance. I also have German citizenship. Once I even tried to reconstruct the genealogical tree of my family, and I know my true German roots so well as few people do [...] and not some alleged roots like that once someone had the proverbial German shepherd [...]

Madam, I am a German. My family was all German. But [...] my all adulthood, my 50 years in the People’s Republic of Poland, and that is why I know the Polish language and culture too. Because I had to finish school and get a degree. My native language, however, is German so I think in German too. It was my own defence that I had to learn Polish in order to function within the Polish society. And the fact that I live here and not in Germany is due to a complicated private situation. Anyway, neither I nor anyone else has any doubts about me being a German, because I have documents proving it. [...] I am a German, but [...] I am not trying to make anyone happy against their will or forcefully argue that it is something what everyone must learn or cultivate.

German inhabitants of Gdańsk (*Danzigers*) are a special case of self-identification, i.e. a combination of German national identity and national affiliation, specifically, the local Gdańsk affiliation. The subjective bond with a territory which is manifested in the so-called local patriotism is the local identity most advanced.<sup>34</sup>

Basically, all *Danzigers* surveyed exhibit the integral kind of national identification and cultural bivalence, less frequently polyvalence. In the light of the research, they appear not to have assimilated psychologically and, partly, culturally. Their integration at the structural level was for them a matter of adaptation.

It should be added that the examined group of *Danzigers* is internally diversified in terms of origin and partly in terms of religion. Most frequently, they are descendants of German immigrants from the Kingdom of Prussia who had settled in Gdańsk. They are also descendants of immigrants from the then neighbouring Prussian provinces, who, in the context of provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, opted for Germany and Kashubians migrating from Western Prussia and Western Pomerania, and for Poles migrating from the Kingdom of Poland and neighbouring Prussian provinces. Most *Danzigers* are Roman Catholics and some are Protestants. It is difficult, however, to precisely determine the religious composition of that group because respondents have not been willing to declare their membership in religious groups

<sup>34</sup> A. Sakson, *Odzyskiwanie Ziem Odzyskanych – przemiany tożsamości lokalnej i regionalnej mieszkalców Ziem Zachodnich i Północnych a rewindykacyjne postulaty niemieckich środowisk ziomkowskich*, in: A. Sakson (ed.) (2006), *Ziemie Odzyskane/ Ziemie Zachodnie i Północne 1945-2005. 60 lat w granicach państwa polskiego*, Poznań, p. 268.

or preferred to conceal the fact that they are Protestants. This can be illustrated with the following comments:

I am a citizen of Gdańsk but also a German, so I am a *Danziger*. During the war I did [...] have [...] only the German citizenship and did not been qualified in any other way. My mother's roots were in Gdańsk for generations, and my father was born in Pelplin. Because my grandfather lived in Pelplin, had his property there, and then he sold it and moved to Gdańsk-Wrzeszcz and lived at Dworcowa Street. [...] My grandfather was an *Ostpreuße*, and my grandmother was a *Danziger*. It was not a Polish family in any sense.

I am a German. I was born in Gdańsk before the war just like my mother, grandmother, and the rest of my family. I had some family in Kashubia as well because we visited our aunt abroad [...]. That was what we used to say. My parents had passports of the Free City and I have documents confirming that I am a German.

In the light of the research, the largest group of members of the German minority are, in the opinion of the author, autochthones, i.e. Kashubians. It needs to be underlined that self-identification categories of that group are also diversified internally. This is due to the fact that there are Kashubians living in areas which belonged to Germany until 1939, and Kashubians living in the region which was part of the inter-war Pomorskie voivodship.

According to the author, Kashubians make at least 50% of all people surveyed and they live mainly in Kashubia, Gdynia and Gdańsk. A marginal percentage of respondents who identify themselves with Kashubians are descendants of migrants from Kashubia who live now in the Kociewie region and in the south-eastern part of the Pomorskie voivodship (i.e. in poviats of Kwidzyn, Sztum and, partly, Malbork).

Their national and ethnic self-identifications are characterised by fluidity and instability typical of borderland groups. On the one hand, their identity is ambivalent and, on the other, it is bivalent or polyvalent. Thus, the results of the reported research correspond with opinion of Polish sociologists arguing that the native population has a large share in the German minority.<sup>35</sup>

In the awareness of those respondents, two national identifications, i.e. the Polish and the German one, clash with, compete against, or complement each other and the Kashubian ethnic identification overlaps. From declarations of respondents it follows that almost half of them have their German citizenship confirmed by the German Federal Office of Administration (*Bundesverwaltungsamt*) while the other half either do not have relevant documents confirming their German origin or have not tried to obtain such documents at all.

<sup>35</sup> D. Berlińska (1989), *Spoleczne uwarunkowania...*; B. Domagała, *Mniejszość niemiecka na Warmii i Mazurach. Organizacja i ideologia*, in: Z. Kurcz and W. Misiak (eds) (1994), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce...*; idem (1996), *Mniejszość niemiecka na Warmii i Mazurach: rodowód...*; Z. Kurcz (1997), *Mniejszość niemiecka w Polsce: geneza...*; A. Sakson, *Procesy integracji i dezintegracji społecznej na Ziemiach Zachodnich i Północnych Polski po 1945 roku*, in: A. Sakson (ed.) (1996), *Pomorze – trudna ojczyzna? Kształtowanie się nowej tożsamości 1945-1995*, Poznań; M. Szejma, *Dlaczego Ślązacy z Opolszczyzny nie chcą być Polakami?* in: Z. Kurcz (ed.) (1997), *Mniejszości narodowe...*

In that situation, the leaders surveyed refer to themselves as: “both a German and a Pole, but also a Kashubian” or “a half German, a half Pole and a Kashubian”, or “more a German than a Pole, and a Kashubian” and “more a Pole than a German, and a Kashubian” (Table 1). It is worth noting that the Kashubian identification is the core of all categories. It, however, remains in the background. It surfaces in the context of national identification only.

Table 1

*Distribution of self-identification levels among respondents*

Self-identification level	Percentage of the surveyed
“both a German and a Pole, but also a Kashubian”	about 50%
“a half German, a half Pole, and a Kashubian”	about 30%
“more a German than a Pole, and a Kashubian”	about 10%
“more a Pole than a German, and a Kashubian”	about 10%

Source: Author’s data

Each of the above sub-categories of respondents has its own specific distinctive features. To the first of those categories, i.e. “both a German and a Pole, but also a Kashubian” belong leaders for whom national identifications are compatible and complement each other, and the Kashubian identification is treated as a natural enrichment of the identity. The kind of their national self-identification, despite their Kashubian identification, can be described as a double identification. The Kashubian identification takes place at a completely different (ethnic) level, which is neither a substitute of the national identification nor its opposite. People belonging to that category are culturally bivalent and polyvalent individuals. It is difficult to assess the scale of those phenomena because the saturation level of some narrative threads varies substantially in that regard. Generally, those people perceive reality in a three-dimensional way. They can combine and use elements derived from all three cultures on daily basis, even if their familiarity with those cultures varies.

The respondents do not feel much ethnic distance to any of those cultures and thus they do not feel being a “stranger”. What is symptomatic about that subgroup of respondents is their perception of their own bi- or multiculturalism as them being privileged in comparison to the rest of the society. Another characteristic feature is that several leaders are members of the Kashubian-Pomeranian Association and that they had joined that organisation long before they became members of German minority associations. This can be illustrated with the following comments.

I feel I am a German, a Pole, and a Kashubian. After all, we have lived in Poland for so many years and we have to feel – from the nationality perspective – that we are also Poles, although in fact we are Germans. I am also a Kashubian. It happened that we have our small homeland and here there

is no other alternative. It must stay like that because one cannot isolate themselves here and feel to be a German only, because that would be unrealistic and illogical.

[...] at this moment I feel I am ... well, I have the Polish citizenship because we all had to have it, but we have always been and will be Germans. I do not know how to put it but I feel I am a Pole, a German and a Kashubian. My origin is very important to me. But we live in Kashubia and it is normal that I feel I am a Kashubian too.

The second category includes leaders who describe themselves as “a half German, a half Pole, and a Kashubian”. Their national self-identifications are the area of competition, while the Kashubian identification remains a relatively stable element of their awareness. That group considers their double national identification to be an impediment to their functioning in society, due to a compelling pressure to choose between the two nationalities and cultures. It is a category of people suspended “between the worlds”, frequently culturally ambivalent, with relatively low fluency in each language and often having only primary education. Their type of national identification can be described as the double one or, less often, as uncertain. It needs to be emphasised that they have not declared to be “neither a Pole, nor a German”. A similar mechanism of being “between the worlds” can be found in autobiographies of Silesians. A conclusion is that an individual does not fully accept any of the worlds because “he or she repels each one for a different reason”<sup>36</sup>. This can be illustrated with the following comment of one of respondents:

[...] my mother was born in Kashubia, my father came from the Reich and somehow they met here. So I do not have any choice: I must be a half blood German and a half Kashubian. And I do not hide that my mother’s family was more Polish thus I have to be a Pole too. So what is the point? It is not so easy to have such roots because I must choose all the time. And sometimes I even quarrel with myself when I am overtaken by my German or Polish part.

The third and the fourth category of respondents can be discussed together. They include people whose one national identifications is stronger and prevails, while the ethnic identification is present in the background. Those subgroups are almost of the same size. People classified as belonging to those categories describe themselves as “more a German than a Pole, and a Kashubian” or “more a Pole than a German, and a Kashubian”.

Factors that determine which of their national identifications prevails include their subjective assessment of their dominant “blood ties”, education and upbringing in the German language, and the impact of the dominant Polish culture. Thus those people have a double national identification and are characterised by cultural bivalence or, less frequently, polyvalence. The following comments are examples of the above.

<sup>36</sup> A. Kłoskowska (1996), *op. cit.*, p. 244.

[...] there were not many Poles here, we spoke only German, sometimes a bit of Kashubian because I have such family colligations on my father's side. And then Poland came, so we had to learn Polish. I learned Polish from newspapers and friends but that was hard graft. [...] What can I say? I still feel I am more a German than a Pole. But since I have German blood, it is normal, isn't it? I also somehow feel some connection with Kashubians.

[...] since I was born to a German family in Prussia, now Kashubia, I should feel I am a German. But in fact I have lived most of my life in Poland among Kashubians, and Germany had no longer been here I was little. I am more a Pole than a German. [...] I have Kashubian roots but somehow, I always keep that to myself and my family.

One of the least numerous categories of respondents, next to "ethnic Germans", are German immigrants from outside the area in question, mainly from neighbouring provinces, and their descendants. In total, a dozen or so such declarations have been identified in the survey. Those respondents have been both descendants of German colonists who had settled in the area before World War I or World War II (e.g. civil servants, soldiers and farmers), Germans who fled to Pomerania in 1945 running away from the Red Army and their descendants, and people who arrived after WW2. Thus respondents in that category exhibit various national self-identifications and the degree of their socio-cultural embedding differs too.

The interviews carried have revealed that the integral type of national self-identification is the most common one among descendants of German colonists whose families have inhabited the studied area for generations. They describe themselves as "Germans, descendants of German settlers (colonists)" or "descendants of Germans from the Reich". Their frequent characteristic is cultural bivalence and high fluency in German. The majority of them have German citizenship. However, in their case, fundamental factors affecting their sense of identity are "blood ties" and long-term residency.

In contrast, Germans who arrived in Pomerania with the 1945 migration wave, and their descendants exhibit double self-identification and usually are culturally bivalent. Respondents in that group describe themselves as "a German and an East Prussian" or "a German-Ostpreuße". Characteristic features of that group include a weaker attachment to the area of residence and a weaker sense of group identity, but, at the same time, a higher fluency in German (and also Russian). Those people are usually members of the Evangelical-Augsburg Church, i.e. they are Protestants.

In contrast, most respondents who have arrived in the area in question after WW2 come from Silesia and Greater Poland (Wielkopolska). From the interviews it follows that they settled in Pomerania mainly for economic and educational reasons, i.e. they started their education or studies in the Tricity of Gdańsk-Sopot-Gdynia. Generally, their self-identification is double. Most of those people are culturally univalent, i.e. they have assimilated the Polish culture and consider it to be their own. Few of them are culturally bivalent.

The second most numerous social category of the leaders surveyed are Poles who acknowledge their German origin (mixed families) and inhabit the area which largely overlaps with the pre-WW2 Pomorskie voivodship e.g. Gdynia, Chojnice,

Toruń, Bydgoszcz, Tczew and Grudziądz. That category is also internally diversified. It includes both Poles of documented German descent and people whose descent is not documented but only alleged (e.g. entered into the 3<sup>rd</sup> of 4<sup>th</sup> group of the *DVL* during WW2 and whose ancestors fought in the German army). They may constitute about 20-30% of all respondents.

Respondents in that category feel that they “belong to the German nation” but do not have any documents to prove their German origin or the documents they have are insufficient. According to those respondents, their sense of bond with the German nation results from the fact that their fathers or grandfathers were *Wehrmacht* soldiers who, usually, got injured or killed, and derives from their German sounding names. That category of respondents has most claims addressed to institutions of the German state from which they expect “to be granted German citizenship which they rightfully should have”.

In most cases their national identity is uncertain, less frequently it is double. In terms of culture, they are bivalent or ambivalent. Frequently, they make their own national self-identification and involvement in institutionalised activities of the German minority dependent on the fulfilment of the above demand. The following comment of a respondent confirms the above.

[...] at meetings of the associations I said several times that we have been discriminated against by the German government and refused membership in the German nation [...] are we a worse category of Germans? I am asking! I have been active in the German minority here for so many years, and the government in Germany continues to ignore us. That is the reason why many members have left [...] and I am considering it too.<sup>37</sup>

Another social category which is now part of German minority institutions in Gdańsk Pomerania are Poles interested in German language and culture. Those people are usually spouses of ordinary members of German associations or more distant family members and friends, as well as enthusiasts of German culture and people “in search for own identity”. Respondents from that category describe themselves as “Poles” or Poles who “have something in common with the German nation” but that connection is unspecified, or have “a German origin after their husband or wife”. They are actively involved in institutional or cultural activities whereas the identity dimension of the minority life is of secondary importance to them. Their national identification can be considered uniform and they are culturally univalent or, more rarely, bivalent. And although it is difficult to determine the size of that group, interviews with leaders suggest that every year that category of people grows in number. What is more, increasingly often the leaders believe that the socio-demographic transformation within the minority will lead to a change in institutional activities and that change has already started, i.e. the change in the membership from

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<sup>37</sup> M. Lemańczyk, *Tożsamość narodowa pomorskich liderów mniejszości niemieckiej*, “Studia Socjologiczne. Pomorze – portret regionu” B. Synak, M. Kaczmarczyk (eds) (2010), No. 3, p. 107.

the exclusive formula to the inclusive one as members are now both people of German descent and Poles interested in German culture.

Results of the research reveal also the existence of other kinds of self-identification of symbolic or situational nature, in which the national identity component combines with belonging to an administrative territorial unit or belonging to a given region e.g. a “West Prussian”, a “Prussian”, a “*Koschneider*” [Polish “Kosznajder”], and a “Pomeranian”. The above kinds of the “symbolic universe” are a special kind of regional identity, related to clearly defined regions: the province of West Prussia, the province of Pomerania, or Gdańsk Pomerania. In addition, research results demonstrate that the above kind of the leaders’ identification is to a large extent supported by activities of *Landsmanschaft* organisations (Landsmanschaft of West Prussia, Landsmanschaft of Pomerania, and Danziger Association), *Heimatkreisvertreter* groups, and associated organisations.

To conclude, the national and ethnic identification of the leaders is a combination of an individual’s awareness and subjective experience and the official group identification and objective conditionalities. The multithreading of self-identifications results in discrepancies between expectations and objectives of associations. Ethnic distinctness is manifested not only by members and non-members of the German minority but it is also present inside the group. Due to socio-demographic processes within the German minority in northern Poland, i.e. migrations to Western Europe in the 1990s, little population growth and progressing extinction of the oldest generation, and little involvement of the middle and youngest generations, the leaders of associations are now faced with the need to develop a formula for future association activities. That issue is in fact about the degree of ethnic and socio-cultural diversity acceptable to members of the German minority in the light of the statues of their associations, ideology and ethical/moral values.

#### ABSTRACT

*The article presents an analysis of selected aspects of German minority activities, i.e. the socio-demographic structure of the German minority associations in areas of northern Poland after 1989 and national/ethnic self-identification of their leaders. So far, the situation in the German minority in Gdańsk Pomerania was mentioned in the background or supplemented analyses of associations operating in other regions of Poland. By contrast, in this article the German minority in northern Poland is the subject of the research. On the basis of results obtained in in-depth sociological research, the author describes the present situation and the functioning of the German minority in Gdańsk Pomerania. Thereby, she fills the gap in previous analyses of the place and identity of people of German descent.*



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# Stosunki gospodarcze między Polską a Niemcami 20 lat po zjednoczeniu

[Polish-German Economic Relations  
20 Years after German Reunification]

**Piotr Kalka, Editor**

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This volume of the “The Federal Republic of Germany 20 Years after Reunification. Politics – Economy – Society” series is dedicated to economic issues in an attempt at summarising Polish-German cooperation in this field in the years 1990-2010.

As Germany is Poland’s most important economic partner, there is a constant need for monitoring trends in their bilateral cooperation and assessing changes that result from both internal and external conditionalities. Authors of this publication analyse financial transfers in the balance of payments to provide deep insight into Polish-German economic relations, the progress made in selected fields of cooperation such as foreign trade, migration of labour force and relations in the border zone. The latter is particularly interesting due to the history of the Polish-German borderlands, their economic and cultural diversity, varying local awareness, and long marginalisation of the regions. These are often decisive for barriers to cross-border cooperation and specificity of cross-border relations. The authors: Iłona Romiszewska, Piotr Kalka, Tomasz Budnikowski and Zbigniew Świątkowski, analyse Polish-German economic cooperation in the light of the balance of payments, trade exchange between Poland and Germany, migration of manpower, and the Polish-German cross-border economic cooperation.