

THE ROLE OF GERMANY IN THE WORLD

Marceli Kosman, *Republic of National and Ethnic Minorities. From the Piasts to the 20th Century*

The Polish state within the span of over a thousand years of history changed its borders several times, although it is conventionally accepted that its ethnic territory stretches from the river Odra in the west to the Bug in the east, and from the Baltic Sea in the north to the mountain ranges in the south. The article deals with the subject of the shaping of national identity of the knighthood in the Middle Ages and then its subsequent transformations during Poland's partition, the emergence of ethnic minorities (especially Germans and Jews) and the attitude of the local population to them in the pre-partition period. The discussed phenomena include xenophobia and xenophilia, the Polonization of foreigners and their impact on Polish culture during the partition of Poland. In the interwar period a new concept of minorities was created with regard to Ukrainians, Belorussians and Lithuanians inhabiting their ethnic territories which had been incorporated into the Polish state. Politics determined new borders after the end of World War II, which resulted in yet another “migration of peoples” this time from the east to the west and the ensuing assimilation processes.

Julita Makaro, *National Minority as a Political and Sociological Category*

The article aims to draw attention to the political character of the category of national minorities and the consequences this has for sociological reflection. The political character of the national minority category consists, among others, in the method of officially distinguishing them, their institutionalization and legitimization. Sociologists dealing with ethnic issues to a greater or lesser degree, more or less consciously – in the process of creating theory and empirical practice – succumb to categories developed in the sphere of politics. The examples of a thus problematized relation discussed in the article pertain on the one hand to the sociological distinguishing of the category of minorities, while on the other hand, concern the usage of data gathered in the National Census with his all political implications.

Grażyna Baranowska, Legal Regulations on National and Ethnic Minorities in Contemporary Poland

In Poland national and ethnic minorities are protected by law and enjoy numerous rights especially in the sphere of language, education and culture. The basic document that regulates the status of minorities and grants them their respective rights is the Act of 6 January 2005 on National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Language, which endorses the constitutional principle of nondiscrimination on grounds of belonging to a national or ethnic minority and grants the minorities rights connected with education, culture and the use of language. The object of the article is to present the legal regulations pertaining to the protection of national and ethnic minorities, and to highlight some problem areas. Considerations include the definition of national and ethnic minority, the principle of equality before the law, rights connected with education, culture and language as well as privileges concerning election law.

Łukasz Skoczylas, Poland's Multicultural Future vis-à-vis Criticism of the Policy of Multiculturalism

The article characterizes seven sources of the criticism of the policy of multiculturalism in the context of the recently voiced opinions of the western European political leaders. The described sources of criticism are: the financial crisis and the need to reduce the social spending, the pessimistic visions of the future of the European culture, the globalization, the increasing number of the immigrants and their descendants, understanding the multiculturalism as an unification rather than co-existence of different cultures, the decreasing impact of the historical and political events that were an inspiration to the politics of multiculturalism and finally the still high unemployment rate among the immigrants and their descendants.

Ewa Godlewska, National and Ethnic Minorities in Poland in the Opinions of the Advisory Committee of the Council of Europe

Poland now belongs to a group of countries which actively engage in the protection of national minorities. Also, it is a party to numerous international conventions including the most important one, i.e. the Framework Convention on the Protection of National Minorities. Since its ratification Poland prepared three reports – in 2002, 2007 and 2012, in accordance with the monitoring procedure. The first two reports were opinioned by the Advisory Committee. The latest report is currently being examined. On the basis of previous assessment Poland appears to be a country in which national minorities have an established position and their rights are respected in a majority of cases. A marked improvement of their legal status took place in 2005 with the coming into effect of the Act on National and Ethnic Minorities and on the Regional Language. The introduction of language rights in the use of auxiliary languages in offices and bilingual topographic signs was a positive aspect. A Joint Commission of the Government and National and Ethnic Minorities was created and several crucial projects with a view to counteract discrimination were implemented.

Krzysztof Tarka, Lithuanians in the Third Republic of Poland

The article presents the situation of the Lithuanian minority in the Third Republic of Poland. Lithuanians who densely inhabit a small area of north-east Suwalki region, in and around Puńsk and Sejny, form a close-knit community. This is the autochthonous, almost exclusively rural population. Lesser and dispersed groups of Lithuanians live on the entire territory of Poland. The overall number of the Lithuanian minority of Poland is approximately 7.5-8 thousand people. In the new reality after 1989 there have been changes in the organized activity of Lithuanians. The Lithuanian Social-Cultural Society which had existed for over thirty years changed its name to the Association of Lithuanians in Poland. New organizations were also founded, such as: the Lithuanian Society of St. Casimir or the Community of Lithuanians in Poland. For Lithuanian activists one of the most important issues was the cause of education in their native tongue. At the beginning of the 1990s the "Aušra" Publishing House began the printing of the first books in Lithuanian since the Second World War. The "Aušra" quarterly was transformed into a monthly and then again into a biweekly. Besides, regional stations of the public radio and television began broadcasting regular programmes in Lithuanian. Lithuanians are characterized by a high national self-awareness and the ability to organize themselves in the defense of their interests. A high degree of internal integration minimized the process of assimilation and allowed them to retain their distinctive individuality, their own language, culture and system of education. The factors that facilitate this phenomenon are: a compact population inhabiting a small area, peripheral location, isolation from the Polish society.

Piotr Luczys, Krzysztof Rataj, Karaites. The Question of Identity

The article aims to reconstruct the history of Karaites in the perspective of dualisms of identity (poligenealogies, bilingualism, etc.) among this ethnic and religious group, which according to the authors is an illustration of "postmodern identity re-transformations". Emphasizing the social and religious aspects of Karaism the authors portray "the minor minority" of the Republic of Poland as an exemplification of postmodern statements on "troubles with cultivating identity" in which the cardinal constructional rule remains "doubting" in Anthony Giddens' terms. Scrutinizing the first references and records on Karaites as well as their wandering history throughout the whole Europe up to the contemporary times, the authors propose a thesis on the immanent features of deterritorialization and identity eclecticism ascribed to Karaism from the dawn of its history. Thus the title "question about identity" of Karaites remains a dual one: directed towards the past ("who were we?" and "where do we come from?") as well as to the future ("who are we going to be?", "where are we heading?").

Anna Śliz, Marek S. Szczepański, Between Ethnicity and Nationality. A Sociological Case Study of the Group of Upper Silesians

The difficult and complicated history of Upper Silesia, especially changes in state affiliation, created in the native population the need of a stable identity that would resist political transformations. This led to the formation of the Silesian community, which the latest national census (2011) estimated at 817 thousand. The number is a substantial argument in the strife of Silesians for the recognition of their Silesian nationality, all the more so, since according to the law on national and ethnic minorities and regional language Upper Silesians are neither an ethnic nor a national minority. Hitherto endeavors to register the Silesian nationality proved unsuccessful. But Silesians persist in their efforts. They preserve their cultural system and strive for the recognition of the Silesian idiom as a regional language. Culture and language are important elements defining nationality and Upper Silesians are aware of the fact. In their activity they are supported among others by the Movement for Silesian Autonomy (Ruch Autonomii Śląska), which in its aspiration to the autonomy of Upper Silesia does not forget about the Silesian tradition and above all about the language.

Patrycja Bałdys, Silesian Revolt? Processes of Regaining Identity in Upper Silesia and the Idea of a Unitary State

The main aim of the article is to analyze the processes of creation and reconstruction of Silesian identity after 1989 and problems related to these processes arising from the unitary concept of the state effective in Poland. The author focuses on contradictions resulting from applying this concept which are manifested by controversies over Silesian nationality, the Silesian language and the autonomy of the region. Another crucial issue involves differences in the perception of history and collective memory of the Silesian people who represent the national perspective of local and regional authorities. The paper is based on an analysis of qualitative data derived from the author's own research which she has been conducting since 1997 and from secondary research.

Cezary Obracht-Prondzyński, Kashubians – A Quarter of a Century after the Big Change

The object of the article is to present changes that took effect after 1989 in Kashubia and its society in the sphere of identity, institutions, policy and adopted legal regulations. Analysis focuses on the institutional dimension (changes in the Kashubian movement, its pluralization, organizational development, access to new spheres of activity) and the identity of the group. Special attention is drawn to the deep changes introduced in education, mass media and scholarship. In the light of conducted research the Kashubian community appears to be a close-knit group, immune to assimilation processes, with a strong sense of distinction, but at the same time in its vast majority attached to the Polish national identity and with a definite self-image (the main characteristics of this autostereotype include: piety, diligence, devotion to one's land, perseverance even up to the point of obstinacy, patriotism); the group also has quite a numerous elite.

Magdalena Lemańczyk, The Leaders of the German Minority in Gdańsk Pomerania after 1989

The article presents the analysis of selected aspects of the activity of the German minority, i.e. the socio-demographic structure of the German minority associations in areas of northern Poland after 1989 and national-ethnic autoidentification of its leaders. So far, the German minority in the Gdańsk Pomerania was treated as a background or supplement of analyses concerning the 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 studies, the author describes the preset state and functioning of the German minority in the Gdańsk Pomerania. Thereby, she fills the gap in the previous analyses related to positions occupied by people of German descent.

Patryk Pawełczak, National and Ethnic Minorities in the Greater Poland Voivodship

The paper describes the situation of national and ethnic minorities in the Greater Poland voivodship. A part of the research refers to the results of a field study done by the author in the years 2011-2013. On the basis of the numeric size, territorial location, internal organization and activity of NGOs the minorities studied were classified into three groups. The following minorities are described: Russian, Belorussian, Lemko, Lithuanian, Armenian, Tartar, Czech, Greek, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, Jewish, German and Rom.

The minorities in Greater Poland are rather small in number and territorially dispersed. They do not form any compact local communities in any region of the voivodship. Particular national and ethnic minorities differ in the scale of internal organization. As these minorities live in deep diaspora they do not form any noteworthy NGOs that would in a significant way influence the political, social or cultural life of the region.

Ewa Nowicka, The Young Generation of Vietnamese in Poland. Under the Psychological Pressure of Both Cultures

The article shows the specific identity situation and acculturation processes pertaining to the young generation of Vietnamese living in Poland since childhood. On the one hand they spent the period of socialization in Poland, went to Polish schools and their most frequent daily contacts were with their Polish peers, while on the other hand they remained in the circle of their Vietnamese families so the milieu of Vietnamese friends and acquaintances and especially of their parents puts them under the psychological pressure of both cultures. They cannot completely ignore the demands of their families to which they feel attached but often they value more highly the Polish cultural models which appeal to them, particularly to young women, more than the Vietnamese ones. Young Vietnamese women find Polish culture attractive as it raises the woman's position, shortens the distance between her traditional social roles and the male roles. Vietnamese men and women differ significantly in their reactions to contact with Polish culture although in both sexes there are noticeable stable elements of the Vietnamese tradition: strong ties with the family, the desire to have children as the greatest value but attributing greater value to the birth of a boy than the birth of a girl.

Beata Lakeberg, A German, a Pole of German Descent or a Foreign German? The Problem of Identity of the German Population in the Second Republic of Poland

Literature on the German minority in the Second Republic of Poland shows this community to be diverse in terms of social status as well as economic and cultural position, and as a result with a different attitude to the newly nascent Polish state. The article deals with the issue of the identity of the German population in Poland by scrutinizing ways of defining one's own group and the group of others in the press coverage of the German minority in Poland with special emphasis on the role of stereotypes in the process of group creation and consolidation. An analysis of the press content in terms of presented criteria for defining one's own group and modes of perceiving the Polish and Jewish population allows to draw conclusions pertaining not only to the identity of the German population but also its internal dynamism. It is noticeable that although at the beginning differences between regions (caused by the period of Poland's partition) were the main influence on the way one's own identity and role in the new state were defined, later on differences originating in political views gained prominence. The reasons of this change include intensified contacts within the German population as well as the policy of the German and Polish states towards it.

Witold Nowak, The Problems of the Social Identity of Poles Living in Germany

The aim of this paper is to present the results of research on social identity of Poles and Polish speaking persons staying in Germany, particularly in its ethnic dimension. The research method applied to attain this purpose is content analysis of data gathered during individual in-depth interviews conducted in 2012 with Polish migrants living in Germany. Firstly, the methodological assumptions of the reported research project are presented. Secondly, chosen aspects of theoretical discourse on the category of (social) identity are introduced. Finally, the opinions of interviewed Poles and Polish speakers living in Germany on key issues related to ethnic aspects of their social identity are being analysed. The results of fieldwork are examined in relation to chosen previous similar research projects findings.

Marek Krutak, Poles in Zaolzie

Poles have lived in Zaolzie for centuries but since 1921 they have been a minority in this region. From then onwards they have taken measures to maintain their traditional national heritage. Even though during the communist period the Communist Party discredited their development they still managed to maintain their national identity. In 1989, they seized the opportunity to rebuild their social foundations. The Polish Congress coordinated the grounding of numerous social organizations, which were prohibited during communism. The Polish educational system underwent positive changes since new organizations were actively supporting Polish educational institutions. Improved contacts with Poland positively influenced the functions of the local Polish minority.

The most crucial problem of Poles in Zaolzie is population loss. That trend has become evident since the inter-war period when Polish people had become a minority. The decreasing number of the Polish minority is noticeable above all in schools, leading to a decreasing number of students and schools with Polish language education.