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THE IDENTITY OF THE BORDERLAND
What monuments of Opole Region tell about. A report on pilot studies

The aim of the paper is to describe the methodology, range and conclusions of a pilot research project conducted in the area of Opole Province. The goal of the project was to make an analysis of monuments found in Opole Region in terms of the political functions they perform. By political functions I understand, in this context, the fact that the monuments – which are sited in the public space – are an element of a disciplining discourse (Foucault 2002), and thus one of the tools of the authority. In other words, monuments establish the traditional legitimization of the authority (Weber 1998). Controverting Juergen Habermas, one can regard erecting monuments as an attempt at legitimizing through making references to metaphysical interpretation of reality. On the other hand, some monuments which are put up in contemporary times (in the case of Poland this means the time after 1989) are an exemplification of the thesis of the process of legitimization of the authority, which is made possible in a capitalist society, through a strong civic society that itself takes part in developing its identity (Habermas 1999). In this sense, one can treat contemporary 'monument-oriented policy' as an expression of democratization of the public space. Decisions to remove, erect and retain a monument are taken in consultations with citizens and it is the latter who are now providers of initiatives aimed at commemorating an event, a personage, an institution, to a far greater extent than organs of political authority. It needs to be noted that monuments are a tool of political communication, peculiar mass media *sensu largo*, which has been direct motivation to insert this paper in the collection devoted to the media and the democratization process.

The specific character of Opole Province, and what follows from it – also its map of sites of remembrance – is the fact that it is a region in which a process of forming a cultural borderland has been going on for at least a thousand years. Frequent changes of the jurisdiction of Upper Silesia and

the Region's belonging to different states are the fundamental reason for this. Within a few hundred years, in Opole Region, there were established – sometimes several times – jurisdictions of the Polish state, of the Czech state, of Piast Duchy, of the Order of Teutonic Knights, of the Habsburgs' monarchy, of Prussia, of the Second and the Third Reich. After the Second World War, as a result of mass displacements of inhabitants, the ethnic structure of Opole Province got changed. Nowadays, the area of Opole Region is intersected by at least several distinctive lines separating areas which different cultural, national or ethnic groups used to inhabit or they still do. Opole Province, in its current shape, consists of the historical lands of Upper Silesia, Lower Silesia (the Districts of Namysłów and Brzeg) and the Land of Wieluń (Praszka, Rudniki). An element which preserves the identities that are already gone and the existing ones are, among others, sites of remembrance.

Political functions of monuments

The functions to be performed by monuments, motives behind their erecting and processes which they trigger, relatively rarely are the subject of interest to political scientists. Yet, putting up, removing and the very existence of monuments itself in the public space are important topics of political debates in Poland. As an example, one can mention the debate relating to commemoration of the tragic air-crash in Smolensk or the currently made efforts to have a monument erected in Warsaw to commemorate Cavalry Captain Witold Pilecki, a hero of the Second World War.

According to Malcolm Miles, a British sociologist, professor of Plymouth University, "Monuments are produced within a dominant framework of values, as elements in the construction of a national history, [...] they suppose at least a partial consensus of values, without which their narrative could not be recognized. [...] As a general category of cultural objects, however, monuments are familiar in the spaces of most cities, standing for a stability which conceals the internal contradictions of society and survives the day-to-day fluctuations of history, [...] the monument becoming a device of social control less brutish and costly than armed force," (Miles 1997: 36).

A monument is not only less costly and less brutal, but it influences – in a specific way – the process of establishing collective identity. It is every day that we walk past monuments, on our way to school, work, and in doing so we do not need to perform any ritual. It does not mean, however, that such a going past, is devoid of any influence on citizens' attitudes. Making reference to the category of 'banal nationalism' furnished by Michael Billig, one can say that monuments offer a good example to exemplify this notion. "In the established nations, there is a continual 'flagging', or reminding, of nationhood. [...] In so many little ways, the citizenry are daily reminded of their national place in a world of nations. However, this reminding is so familiar, so continual, that it is not consciously registered as reminding. The metonymic image of banal nationalism is not a flag which is being consciously waved with fervent passion; it is the flag hanging unnoticed on the public building," (Billig 1995: 8).

Still, certain monuments sometimes perform functions of symbols of 'hot patriotism' (Billig 1995). Beside everyday "microscopic ways of reminding", monuments are a place of ritualization of social life. In the majority of cities, celebrations of state holidays take place next to a monument which becomes then a symbol, a metaphor, behind the reason for establishing the given ceremony: The Grave of the Unknown Soldier in Warsaw, the monument dedicated to "Fighters for the Polishness of Opole Silesia" in Opole, the Monument of Silesian Insurgents' Deed on St Anna's Hill, the Monument of Józef Piłsudski in Katowice, and many others. Spectacles organized on such occasions additionally strengthen the 'community-creating' and 'identity-forming' character of the monument.

A monument is thus a vital element of the process which can be called a process of building an imagined community. According to Benedict Anderson, an 'imagined community' consists in going beyond one's personal experience, it involves more people than an individual, who positions himself/herself as a member of the imagined community, knows or is acquainted with (Anderson 1991). Continuous 'imagining' to oneself of a community (a nation) and interpreting oneself as a member of it, is possible thanks to the constant process of creating and interpreting history and collective remembrance of the community (the nation).

Politically instrumental treatment of monuments is possible in many ways: monuments can serve both as a tool to legitimize moments that are significant to the homogeneous character of the community, ones that

form its identity, and as a tool to delegitimize events threatening the unity of the community (Kosmala 2005). Legitimization can be made through founding a monument, its celebrative unveiling, assisted by high ranking officials, church hierarchs or soldiers. Such a ritual 'birth' of a monument as a site of remembrance, beside the inscription, in which the founder realizes their political goal by means of carefully-chosen words, places it in a suitable and desired context within the political discourse. Also a tool of legitimization can be – at last – establishing a concrete monument as a site of official celebrations of official ceremonies. A monument can also be a tool of delegitimizing a certain vision of the past, which is no longer accepted by either the authority or public opinion. Then we can come to deal with a debate on removing a monument, acts of vandalism aimed at a monument, modification of a monument in order to alter its range and area of significance (e.g., in 1991, David Černý, the Czech artist, repainted pink the tank which commemorated the liberation of Prague by the Red Army; the repainted tank became a symbol of the withdrawal of the Soviet army from Czechoslovakia), or pulling down of a monument resulting from an arbitrary act or an administrative decision.

Since in this work I refer to the notion of 'politics of memory' (pol. *polityka historyczna*') and acknowledge erecting monuments to be an element of such a policy, I would like to briefly put in order the current state of the Polish publicist-scientific discourse concerning this notion and its significance. Politics of memory is a process of conscious creation of a certain vision of the past, whose aim is to strengthen traditional legitimization of a given political group through suitably positioned interpretation of history and tradition of an imagined community (a nation), and the tools: historical and civic education of children, youth and adults, public debate, ritual, edited works of popularizing type, interacting through public space (names of streets, patrons of institutions, monuments).

One can distinguish two main mutually contradicting standpoints towards the issue of how politics of memory should look like. One of them is advocated by the environment of liberals (as I will call it by convention), the other – by the environment of conservatives. Both agree as to the fact that "collective remembrance of the past is, in truth, a political problem. The state and politicians are not indifferent to what citizens remember and what is forgotten by them," (Cichocki 2004). To conservatives, on the other hand, politics of memory is a tool to create a coherent and positive nation-

al identity (Gawin 2009; Żurawski, Żurawski 2006–2007). To the environment of liberals the very label of politics of memory itself (literally in polish: 'historical policy') is an erroneous label, they postulate that this phenomenon should rather be called 'politics of remembrance' which would be a pluralistic discourse on the past, based on the paradigm of justice (Janowski 2006; Krzemiński 2008). Thus, depending on the political affiliation of the local authority, monuments founded in a given city or county can make references to different moments of collective identification. Simultaneously, in communes governed by conservative politicians the character and the content of the monuments erected there will be part of the process of fixing a banal nationalism, the decision-making process being centralized. In communes governed by liberal politicians, the character and the content of monuments will be decided on by the public opinion and they will correspond to the varied past of the given area. This dependence was not taken into account in the project due to the non-representative nature of the collected data.

The object of the studies

The object of the research project are the monuments found in the public space of Opole Province. The public space in this case is the whole public common space (roads, squares, parks, pedestrian zones), natural sites of commemoration (cemeteries) and spaces surrounding offices and other state central budget institutions, as well as churches. Monuments found inside buildings, such as churches and buildings of public institutions, were not taken into consideration.

In compliance with the goal of the studies, all architectonic forms (sculptures, commemorative plaques, installations) which commemorate non-private persons, institutions, events, objects, phenomena or processes, were qualified as monuments. Nevertheless, spatial forms, whose basic function is the esthetic one (sculptures, fountains) and the fact that their existence or creation is not connected with commemoration were excluded from the studies. So were private monuments (monuments of private persons in cemeteries, private sites of remembrance commemorating victims of road accidents) which are located in public space, as well as those making

reference to phenomena and processes bearing no relation to time (road-side crosses, religious figures).

Due to the pilot character of the studies, the examination covered only a part of the monuments found in the area of the Province. The project was implemented within the framework of the subject called 'Historical Policy' realized at the Institute of Political Science of Opole University in 2012. There were 13 students of this major engaged in the realization of it.[1] The examined area covers 3.8% of the territory of the Province and is inhabited by 21.3% of the total number of its population. The selection of the sample was based on the assumption that it is areas of high density which are the most natural places to erect monuments – monuments are set up with the aim to commemorate somebody or something, therefore they fulfill their functions solely in relations with citizens. Thus, monuments are most often erected in city centres and at the main communication routes. In the examined area, the existence of 71 monuments was documented. Upon the initial analysis there were 9 monuments excluded from the research since they did not fulfill the requirements of the definition which was accepted in the theoretical assumptions of the project. Consequently, verification of the accepted hypotheses included 62 monuments.

Table 1. List of communes and cities covered by the pilot research project

Name of commune/city	Area (km²)	Number of inhabitants (thousand)	Number of monuments
Bierawa	119.2	8	6
Byczyna	5.8	3.7	2
Kędzierzyn-Koźle	123.4	61.6	7
Kietrz	18.7	6.3	3
Kluczbork	12.4	25	9
Lewin Brzeski	10.4	5.9	3

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[1] In alphabetic order: Tomasz Bartoszewski, Damian Duczmalewski, Katarzyna Duda, Piotr Franiczek, Katarzyna Jankowska, Anna Jarocińska, Bartosz Karski, Sylwester Polus, Natalia Pudełko, Sławomir Sawkiewicz, Dominika Szewczuk, Patrycja Szymańska, Paulina Trzeciak. The project is being continued and it is possible to get acquainted with the current state of the work on: www.pomnikiopolskie.wordpress.com.

Name of commune/city	Area (km²)	Number of inhabitants (thousand)	Number of monuments
Nysa	27.5	45.3	20
Opole (city centre)	9.3	40	9
Strzelce Opolskie	30.1	19.7	3
Total	356.8	215.5	62
As percent of the area /population of the Province	3.8	21.3	–

The documentation concerning the monuments consisted in filling in a specification card and taking a photograph of each object. In this way standardized information was gathered with reference to the site, the date of founding of the monument, as well as the event/s it commemorates, the character of the monument (sacral, related to martyrdom, war, local issues), the founder (a private person, an institution, a representative of the local or church authorities), the inscription (the full content and information about the message rendered in a foreign language), the condition which the monument is in. Part of the materials was digitalized and inserted on the website of the project.

Hypotheses

The research problem which was to be solved by the project was legitimization of the political belonging of the given territory through building and interpreting social frameworks of memory by means of monuments. On the basis of the problem defined in this way and relevant theoretical considerations there were the following five detailed research hypothesis proposed:

1. Did, and if so, in what way, the postwar authorities of Poland endeavor to legitimize, by means of monument-related policy in Opole Region, the justification of incorporating this territory into Poland? The hypothesis assumed that in the years of consolidation of the people's rule (1945–1970) many monuments were founded, which were based on traditional forms of legitimization of the authority: reference to

the native Polish character of Opole Province and the focus on the period of the rule of the Piasts' Dynasty (the existence of the strong Piast Duchy, e.g., in the times of Jan II Dobry [John II the Good]) were meant to provide a firm argument to speak for the Polish character of Opole Region.

2. Do the monuments reflect the cultural differentiation which has existed in Opole Region for a millennium? As a hypothesis, it was accepted that the majority of preserved monuments come from the period of the past hundred years. It was also assumed that the events commemorated by the monuments testify to the differing identity of the former and present inhabitants of Opole. This will be evident in references made to the memory of the First World War or the 19th-century history of Opole Regency, apart from monuments commemorating the Plebiscite and Silesian Uprisings, the Second World War, the period of Polish People's Republic and events of the recent 23 years.

3. Is the percentage of the monuments in the Province, which bear inscriptions rendered in the German language, high? As a hypothesis, it was accepted that in the area of the Province there have been preserved a large number of such monuments, however, they are not located in the main cities of the Region, but rather in smaller places outside urban centres. It was assumed that the monuments founded in the years 1945–2008 do not bear inscriptions in the German language.[2] It was also assumed that in the area of Opole Province there are no monuments bearing inscriptions in the Czech language or ones rendered in the Silesian dialect.

4. Are the monuments founded (and removed) in the time of the Third Republic of Poland an expression of the 'monument-based' policy similar to that applied earlier, i.e., in the time of the Polish People's Republic? Being directed, all the time, by the chief thesis of the project assuming that the basic political function of monuments is that of legitimization, a hypothesis was accepted about a substantial par-

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[2] The year 2006 was accepted on the conventional basis here. It is in this year whan on the power of the new act on national and ethnic minorities and the regional language (the Act of 6 January 2005), in the Commune of Radłów (Radlau), there were introduced (for the first time in Poland and in Opole Region) place names rendered in two languages (Polish and German).

ticipation of the civic society in Opole Region in deciding about the character of the 'monument-based policy' in the Province. Assuming that the Third Republic is a democratic capitalist state, for the validation to be effective (i.e., so that it should not lead to a crisis in communication between institutions and the public opinion), this ought to be a process in which civic society is engaged (Habermas 1999). "The ability of civic society to invest state's activity with content in the public sphere – understood as 'a network to communicate content and standpoints' [Habermas 2005: 380 – quoted by M. Castells] – is what consolidates democracy and eventually creates conditions for legal wielding of power: the authority that is a representation of values and interests expressed by citizens in the debate running in the public sphere," (Castells 2013: 25).

5. What is the level of sacralization and commemoration of religious phenomena? A hypothesis was accepted that the percentage of the sacral monuments (yet satisfying the assumed definition of a monument at the same time) should be low, oscillating in the region of 10–15% of the total number of the monuments. This hypothesis was rejected upon the initial analysis of the monuments, as one that was impossible to prove either right or wrong. The accepted definition of a monument imposed very serious limitations as regards objects to be commemorated on the sacral basis and excluded the majority of spatial forms of the sacral character.

'Opole Silesia forever Polish'

The pretext to carry out the research project was the intention to check to what extent and in what way the 'map of monuments of Opole Region' reflects the political desire to justify the change of the borders of Poland after the Second World War and the incorporation of Opole Region into Poland. In the administrative sense, since 1945 this region has been a part of Poland, still in the sense of forming a common national identity and including the Regained Lands in the imagined national community, the process of legitimization has still been going on. Parallel to this, there are going on processes of fragmentary delegitimization undertaken by environments which perceive Opole Region as the area belonging to another imagined

national community. The above-mentioned problem was included in the framework of the first detailed hypothesis.

An analysis of the research material allows confirming the thesis about running an intentional and planned monument-based policy in the period of 1945–1989, whose aim was to validate the Polish character of Opole Region. The form, the content and character of thirteen monuments in the research sample (21%) are ones that make references to the historical Polishness of the land of Opole Province. Eight of them were set up in the years 1945–1989 (12.9% of the total). Out of the other five, two were erected after 1989, the dates of founding another two were not possible to establish, and one was built in 1929. In the case of the last one – the monument of a hunter, situated in Strzelce Opolskie – the existing sculpture, most probably commemorating a prince's rifleman (from which the city derives its name) – a practical interpretation was invented, viz. "the monument makes associations with the Piast origins of the city", (Kozołup 2006). Thirteen monuments which were classified into this category are not the only ones that make references to the Polish nation in an affirmative manner. Indirectly, this thesis is confirmed by another sixteen monuments which – as regards the contents of the inscriptions they bear or their figurative symbolism – make reference to such notions as 'Poland', 'a Pole', 'a patriot', 'mother country', or to the elementary contemporary identity-related foundations of Poles as a historical nation (the Home Army, returned exiles from Siberia, Katyń).

Proving the Polish character of Opole Region by means of monuments was carried out in four ways: through commemorating Silesian Uprisings, by commemorating the era of the Piasts (and the alleged interpretation of the Piast-based history of Silesia as part of Poland's history), through commemorating local personage of authority and emphasizing their ties with Poland, via commemorating the very abstract idea of 'Polishness of Opole Silesia' itself and the inseparable fighting for it.

The dominant tool is popularization of the remembrance of Silesian Uprisings. As the website of the Year of Remembrance of Silesian Uprisings in Opole Province, which is run by the Marshall's Office of Opole Province, says, there are 61 mass and individual graves of Silesian insurgents located in the area of the Province, 31 commemorative plaques, 22 monuments and two other sites of remembrance (www.powstania.opolskie.pl). The study included four of the objects qualified by the Marshall's Office,

all of which commemorate Polish insurgents. Participants of Silesian Uprisings are referred to by them as "fighters", "insurgents", and their deeds were a fight "for Upper Silesia to be returned to her Mother Country (the sentence from the slab commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Third Silesian Uprising, found in Paderewski Square in Nysa,). None of the monuments bears a sentence rendered in the German language, or makes any references to Silesia's unique and different ethnical or administrative character. Two of the monuments serve also as sites of ceremonial celebrations of state holidays.

Along with the end of the Second World War, the authorities of the People's Republic launched the process of popularizing the history of the Regained Lands, which would justify the incorporation of the new territory into Poland. One of the mechanisms of the socialist history-related propaganda was concentrating the efforts of scholars and historians on the Piasts' times. The battle of Cedynia, which had been poorly known about until then, became a symbol of the first victorious encounter with the western neighbour, and the Dynasty of the Piasts – one of the Polish character of the state. Since Silesia (partially) had found itself under the rule of that dynasty until the 17th century, the 'Piast ideology' offered a convenient tool of building a traditional identity.

Such a thesis only partially finds its proof in the collected research material. Two of the monuments included in the study, commemorate the Silesian Piasts: one of them is the monument of Opole Prince John the Good, situated in front of Opole University, which, however, bears only a laconic inscription "Prince of Opole John the Good 1460–1532". It was founded in the year 2000 by a local entrepreneur and social activist, Norbert Kwaśniak. The requirements included in the hypothesis are therefore met only by one of the analyzed monuments: the commemorative plaque dedicated to the tragic death of Prince Mikołaj II [Nicholas II], unveiled in 1966 in Nysa, on the building which currently houses the Municipal Library. The inscription on the plaque precisely corresponds to the above-described mechanism of ideologization of the Piasts: "On the memorable occasion of the 1000th anniversary of the Polish State to the Piast of Opole, Mikołaj II, a defender of Polishness of Silesia, who sacrificed his life in fighting with the German invasion, decapitated in the market square of Nysa on 27 June 1497, the inhabitants of the Land of Nysa dedicate this plaque." This single example is

not representative of the research sample in the quantitative sense; nevertheless, it does confirm the political function assumed in the project.

The third way of proving the symbolic connection between Opole Region and Poland is commemorating people of authority who are respected on the local or nationwide level. Thus, streets of cities, towns and villages of the Region provide space for monuments and commemorative plaques dedicated to Józef Lompa (Opole, Osmańczyk Street), Adam Gdacjusz (Kluczbork, the area of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland), Franciszek Myśliwiec (Łosiów), Adam Mickiewicz (Opole, Katowicka Street). N.B. Adam Mickiewicz is another example, following the Piasts, of making use of a historical person's authority as a political tool that is necessary to create a ritual or a legend.[3] Similarly, as in the case of the Piasts, it is not the very "tradition itself which was false here, but the intention behind using it," (Kłosowska 1996: 45). The sentence inscribed on the monument dedicated to Adam Mickiewicz reads as follows: "To the bard of the Nation / on the XXXth anniversary of liberating Opole Region / The Union of Polish Teachers." The inscription confirms the mechanism accepted in the hypothesis, of manipulating the historical tradition: in 1965, teachers of Opole dedicate liberation of Opole Region to Adam Mickiewicz!

In the case of monuments dedicated to local people of authority in the times of the People's Republic, one can easily notice the trend towards underlining their connections with cultivating the Polish character of Opole Region. Thus, Adam Gdacjusz is "a Protestant denominational writer who wrote in the Polish language, a prose writer, developing Polish tradition of writing in Silesia in the 17th century," (which is true, although the inscription does not mention that he was responsible for introducing the Silesian dialect into literature). None of the inscriptions found on the monuments erected in those times mentions, in the slightest way, the German past of the territory or the different and distinctive nature of Upper Silesian culture.

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[3] Using the same principle, beside Adam Mickiewicz, in the communist Pantheon of new heroes the following figures were included: Stefan Czarniecki, Kostka Napierski, Tadeusz Kościuszko, Jan Kiliński (heroes of peasants' and bourgeois' movements), Stanisław Staszic, Hugo Kołłątaj, Maria Curie-Skłodowska, Juliusz Słowacki (outstanding intellectuals), Józef Bem, Jarosław Dąbrowski, Feliks Dzierżyński, Kazimierz Pułaski (international revolutionists). On the other hand, the then national tradition excluded, among others, Józef Piłsudski, Roman Dmowski, Władysław Sikorski and Władysław Anders.

In the case of monuments dedicated to local authorities, the change in the way of their commemorating after 1989 is evidently characteristic. The observed tendency confirms the fourth hypothesis about the growing importance of civic society in creating their own identity in the conditions of capitalist democracy. This is also a period in which the largest number of monuments of this type were founded. Their content and character reflect the pluralistic nature of Opole Province. Among those commemorated ones in the past twenty-three years, there are the following: Silesians (Karol Musioł), famous German scientists born or living in Opole Region (the zoologist – Prof. Bernhard Grzimek, the poet – Joseph von Eichendorff, the biochemist and Noble award winner – Konrad Emil Bloch), outstanding figures who stayed in Opole Region on a temporary basis (General Charles de Gaulle, Marquis Marie Josephe de La Fayette), outstanding Poles (John Paul II). In the case of German scientists, however, the inscriptions are not free from manipulations, consisting, for instance, in avoidance of writing about the German background of the commemorated figures. Eichendorff is thus a "romantic poet", Bernhard Grzimek a "man of Nysa", and Konrad Emil Bloch an "American biochemist".

It turned out that an element of the monument-based policy in Opole Region, which was not assumed in the hypotheses, yet proved to be a very significant one, was the phenomenon of migration of remembrance. The transfer of the population in Opole Province (and that in the whole of Silesia) after the Second World War consisted in an enforced displacement of the German population and settling down of the Polish who came from the territories which – on the power of the decisions taken during the Potsdam Conference – were incorporated into the Soviet Union, and also from other poorer and overcrowded areas of Poland (the lands of Rzeszów Region and Podlachia). Together with the transfer of the population there occurred a migration of remembrance, which consisted in an alien tradition becoming fixed in Opole Region, in the spatial understanding of the phenomenon. The immigrant population, throughout the whole period of the People's Republic, cherished the remembrance of the Home Army, Katyń crime, the exiles returned from Siberia, the 1943 Volhynia massacre. After 1989, the memory of those tragic events found its expression in the processes of remembrance, among others, through acts of founding monuments. Twelve objects (19.4% of the whole examined sample) make references to four of the above-mentioned historical events. The majority of them were erected

thanks to endeavours on the part of local communities, combatants' unions or other civic organizations.

Multicultural remembrance

The second hypothesis which was accepted in the project, concerned the multicultural tradition of the Region. It was assumed that the existing monuments, will after all (despite ideologizing traditions in the period of the People's Republic, despite strong anti-German tendencies in the Third Republic of Poland) reflect the multiculturalism of Silesia. This thesis proved right: part of the components of multiculturalism were described while discussing the results of the first hypothesis. It is worth adding that beside the described components of the monument-based remembrance, there exist also a relatively large number of sites of remembrance dedicated to victims and heroes of the First and the Second World Wars. Among them there are monuments and plaques commemorating Polish, Soviet and German soldiers killed in the wars. Five of the examined ones commemorate those who died in the First World War. They are located in the County of Bierawa and in Nysa. More of them (12) commemorate victims of the Second World War, including soldiers, murdered prisoners-of-war, prisoners of concentration camps and camps of forced labour.

Inscriptions in the German language and other languages (Hypothesis 3) are found on sixteen monuments (25.8% of the examined sample). Among them there are eleven inscriptions in German, three in Russian, two in English, and one in Danish and Hebrew each. The thesis assuming a relatively large number of monuments bearing inscriptions in German proved true. At the same time the thesis about not placing inscriptions in this language on monuments dating from 1945–2006 was undermined as four German inscriptions appeared between 1990 and 2004. No inscription in German, however, was found on monuments founded in the years 1945–1989.

The hypothesis assuming that German inscriptions, if they are featured on monuments, are found in provincial places was partially confirmed. In fact, six monuments (among them three bearing inscriptions exclusively in German) are located in the area of the County of Bierawa, the district itself – according to the national census of 2002 – being inhabited by over 20% of

inhabitants who declare to be German and where the German language has acquired the status of an auxiliary language. Three of the above-mentioned monuments date from the time before the Second World War. It can be supposed that the communist authorities, by removing the German-related remembrance from the topography of the Province, concentrated mainly on urban centres. It is possible, too, that the political neutrality of the inscriptions (the monuments are dedicated to victims of the First World War) protected them from being removed. However, inscriptions in German are also found on monuments in Nysa, which is the third city of Opole Region as regards the number of inhabitants. In the case of Nysa, though, the initiators of the monuments bearing German inscriptions (three monuments) were the local Polish authorities and they are monuments bearing inscriptions in two languages. Two of them date from before the Second World War.

As far as the examined sample is concerned, there were found no monuments bearing inscriptions in the Silesian dialect or in the Czech language.

Summing up, the map of monuments in Opole Region actually reflects the multicultural character of the area, still the reflection is not one of the existing social relations and culture of the Region. It is also in this case that the truth of the political function of monuments becomes confirmed – they do consolidate and strengthen desired identities. The decisive majority of monuments which refer to non-national components of local culture commemorate persons, universal events that are not assigned to remembrance of another concrete nation or another imagined community (victims of the First and the Second World Wars, world-famous personages). Among the 62 examined monuments there are 22 which – in no way – make references to the Polish culture.

Out of the citizens' initiative

The last of the analyzed hypotheses was the conviction concerning the common participation of local communities in taking decisions about the functioning of monuments in the years 1989–2012. As regards this period of time it was accepted by convention that there functioned the system of capitalist democracy in Opole Province, whose identity – according to the theory of communication activity by Habermas – is created and interpret-

ed at the active participation of public opinion. Confirmation of this hypothesis can be looked for directly in the analysis of people and institutions that are listed in the inscriptions as founders of monuments, and indirectly – in the character and the contents of the erected monuments.

Twenty-eight of the monuments being examined were founded between 1989 and 2012 (in the case of a few of the monuments it was impossible to establish exact dates of their foundation). The founders or persons (institutions) who initiated the efforts to erect the monument were established in the case of 19 monuments. In ten cases they were local units other than organs of the local authority (private founders, schools, associations). In nine cases the initiator or the founder were councils of towns or communes, or presidents (mayors of towns or villages). The above quantitative analysis confirms the thesis about democratization of the monument-related policy in the conditions of capitalist society.

This thesis gets strengthened by the analysis of the content and the character of the monuments founded in the time of the Third Republic. Four monuments commemorate the Home Army, another four – the exiles returned from Siberia. On the map of monuments of Opole Region, commemoration of those events (including Katyń, the Volhynia Massacre, 'Storm' Action) was a new phenomenon which resulted from local citizens' initiatives. The founders or initiators of these eight monuments were the following: the exiles from Siberia and the community of Nysa Region, exiles from Siberia of Kluczbork Region, Scouting Association of the Republic (*Związek Harcerstwa Rzeczpospolitej*), Committee for Protection of Remembrance of Fight and Martyrdom (*Komitet Ochrony Pamięci Walk i Męczeństwa*), World Union of Soldiers of the Home Army (*Światowy Związek Żołnierzy Armii Krajowej*), the City Council of Nysa.

The remaining twenty monuments can hardly yield to categorizing, since each relates to a different – most frequently local – element of identity. Three of them refer to the newest history (the monument dedicated to John Paul II in Kluczbork, the monument "Let's Defend Our Opole Region" ["Brońmy Swego Opolskiego"] in Opole, the monument dedicated to the inhabitants of Kędzierzyn-Koźle fighting against the flood in 1997).

Conclusions

The project was of the pilot character, its biggest value lying in confirmation of the usefulness of the accepted research method to analyze sites of remembrance and their political functions. The effectiveness rises even higher as the fundamental difficulty in realization of the project were just methodological problems. The research material was subject to a quantitative analysis despite the fact that it was not homogeneous. The only element connecting each of the monuments was the fact that they commemorate something or somebody. At the stage of formulating the research hypotheses and assumptions it was not taken into account that each monument functions within the framework of and creates a public discourse. One should then find out about the exact context of founding each of the monuments, together with an analysis of press accounts concerning acceptance by the public opinion of the idea of erecting it, registration of incidents connected with each of the monuments (devastation, celebrations, shifts in their significance). Each of the monuments is – at last – an original form of artistic expression; it is not only the name and the content of the inscription on the monument, but also its form that carries a certain message. A good illustration of the above is the monument "To Polish Patriots" found in Nysa. It is formed by two massive granite wings that resemble, in their shape, Poland's national emblem. The wings are connected with a block of glass, in which there are immersed a few objects – symbols of the national martyrdom: an urn with ashes from under the execution wall in Oświęcim (Auschwitz), earth from the graves in Katyń, Charkov, Mednoje, Lychakiv Cemetery and the Cemetery on Rossa, a stone from Monte Cassino, an Uhlan's sabre and a birch cross entwined with barbed wire.

The applied procedure of methodological reduction was, in my opinion, indispensable and useful, since it permitted to draw unambiguous and reliable conclusions in order to find answers to four of the five detailed hypotheses. The attempts at a scientific description of political functions of monuments made to date have taken on rather the form of scientific essays (Miles 1997; Janicka 2011;) and are rather the area of studies for sociologists and historians (Nijakowski, Szteliga 2002) . In case the project is to be continued, from now on not as a pilot one in its character but as a regular research project, the questionnaire needs changing. The information con-

cerning the state of monument's conservation should be made more detailed and standardized – the data relating to this part, obtained from the pilot studies, were so unclear that they could not be taken into account in the analysis of the research material. Monuments should be treated also with different significance due to their location. Up to now each monument has been dealt with as a separate unit of equal importance. Certainly, however, a monument located in the main square of a city has a far greater force of influence than a commemorative plaque in the outskirts of a village. Obviously, too, one needs to take into consideration all manifestations of 'hot patriotism', connected with certain monuments – celebrations of holidays, acts of devastation and the like.

Streszczenie

Celem artykułu jest opis metodologii, zakresu i wniosków pilotażowego projektu badawczego przeprowadzonego na terenie województwa opolskiego. Projekt ten ma na celu analizę znajdujących się na Opolszczyźnie pomników pod kątem ich politycznych funkcji. Stawianie, usuwanie i istnienie pomników w przestrzeni publicznej są ważnymi tematami politycznej debaty w Polsce. Specyfiką województwa opolskiego, a co za tym idzie także jego mapy miejsc pamięci, jest to, że jest to region, na którym od co najmniej tysiąca lat trwa proces budowania społeczności pogranicza. Elementem, który zachowuje odeszłe w przeszłość i istniejące tożsamości są między innymi miejsca upamiętnień. Jednocześnie zmiana reżimu politycznego na danym terytorium (w przypadku województwa opolskiego mamy do czynienia również ze zmianą struktury społecznej), skutkuje prowadzeniem motywowanych politycznie działań, mających funkcję legitymizacyjną. Projekt ma charakter pilotażowy, w trakcie realizacji potwierdzenie znalazły zarówno hipotezy, postawione przez zespół, jak i adekwatność przyjętej metody badawczej.

Summary:

The aim of the paper is to describe the methodology, range and conclusions of a pilot research project conducted in the area of Opole Province. The goal of the project was to make an analysis of monuments found in Opole Region in terms of the political functions they perform. The research problem which was to be solved by the project was legitimization of the political belonging of the given territory through building and interpreting social frameworks of memory by means of monuments.

Due to the pilot character of the studies, the examination covered only a part of the monuments found in the area of the Province. The examined area

covers 3.8% of the territory of the Province and is inhabited by 21.3% of the total number of its population. The selection of the sample was based on the assumption that it is areas of high density which are the most natural places to erect monuments. In the examined area, the existence of 71 monuments was documented.

The project was of the pilot character, its biggest value lying in confirmation of the usefulness of the accepted research method to analyze sites of remembrance and their political functions. The effectiveness rises even higher as the fundamental difficulty in realization of the project were just methodological problems. The research material was subject to a quantitative analysis despite the fact that it was not homogeneous. The only element connecting each of the monuments was the fact that they commemorate something or somebody. At the stage of formulating the research hypotheses and assumptions it was not taken into account that each monument functions within the framework of and creates a public discourse. One should then find out about the exact context of founding each of the monuments, together with an analysis of press accounts concerning acceptance by the public opinion of the idea of erecting it, registration of incidents connected with each of the monuments (devastation, celebrations, shifts in their significance). Each of the monuments is – at last – an original form of artistic expression; it is not only the name and the content of the inscription on the monument, but also its form that carries a certain message.

The applied procedure of methodological reduction was, in my opinion, indispensable and useful, since it permitted to draw unambiguous and reliable conclusions in order to find answers to four of the five detailed hypotheses. In case the project is to be continued, from now on not as a pilot one in its character but as a regular research project, the questionnaire needs changing. Monuments should be treated also with different significance due to their location. Up to now each monument has been dealt with as a separate unit of equal importance. Obviously, too, one needs to take into consideration all manifestations of 'hot patriotism', connected with certain monuments – celebrations of holidays, acts of devastation and the like.

Keywords: Political functions of monuments, traditional legitimacy, Opole Voivodeship, cultural borderland, multicultural society

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