

**AN ELITE IN TRANSITION:
AN ANALYSIS OF THE HIGHER ADMINISTRATION
OF THE REGION OF UPPER SILESIA, POLAND
1990-1997**

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ABSTRACT

This thesis traces the administrative elite of the Upper Silesian region of Poland in the transition period of 1990-1997.

It introduces the research by analysing the historical development in the higher administration of the region, up to the legacy of failure in the socialist era, specifically its excessive centralisation and vertical fragmentation.

In 1990, despite its perceived ineffectiveness, administrative reform was introduced at the local level, while the two higher levels of district and region were left untouched, on the grounds that simultaneous reform on all three levels might destabilise the state.

The thesis examines the administrative actors of the region, their attitudes, and the shifts in their policies over time, in two types of institution, first, the reformed local government and second, the regional-level voivodship office headed by *voivode* – which remains unreformed despite the wish for reform of the *voivode* himself and other members of the regional elite.

Local-level reform established communes as elected self-governing units, bringing to an end their subordination to higher levels and leading to an increase in their administrative capacity and efficiency.

At the regional level, the thesis focuses on the impact of two *voivodes*. First, the ‘revolutionary’ Wojciech Czech who proposed radical administrative reforms and wished to renew Silesian ‘lost values’. The second is his ‘Bourbon’ successor, Ciszak, who wished to continue the socialist *status quo* in order to maintain the prominent position of the regional elite and the special status of the region built on its heavy industry.

The thesis then examines various attempts to reform regional administration, most notably the so-called ‘Regional Contract’ between Katowice and Warsaw, signed in October 1995.

The thesis concludes with a description of the changes which took place in the regional administration after the national election in 1997. This marked a watershed of the transition period, since administrative reform was thereafter conducted at both district and regional levels.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AWS	<i>Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność</i>	- Solidarity Electoral Action
KIK	<i>Klub Inteligencji Katolickiej</i>	- the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia
KPN	<i>Konfederacja Polski Niepodległej</i>	- the Confederation for Independent Poland
KPP	<i>Komunistyczna Partia Polski</i>	- the Communist Party of Poland
MAS	<i>Ruch Autonomii Śląska</i>	- the Movement for Silesian Autonomy
OKP	<i>Obywatelski Klub Parlamentarny</i>	- the Parliamentary Solidarity Club of MPs
PPR	<i>Polska Partia Robotnicza</i>	- Polish Worker's Party
PSL	<i>Polskie Stronictwo Ludowe</i>	- Polish Peasants' Party
PZPR	<i>Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza</i>	- the Polish United Worker's Party
SdRP	<i>Socjademokracja Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej</i>	- the Social Democracy of the Polish Republic
SLD	<i>Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej</i>	- Alliance of the Democratic Left
URM	Urząd Rady Ministrów	- the Prime Minister's Cabinet
USU	<i>Związek Górnośląski</i>	- the Upper Silesian Union
UW	<i>Unia Wolności</i>	- Freedom Union
ZOZ	<i>Zakład Opieki Zdrowotnej</i>	- the Health Service Office

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL INTRODUCTION

Introduction

This theoretical chapter is divided into four main parts. The first focuses on the importance of elite studies in the transition period and presents an overview of the administrative elite of Upper Silesia in the nineties. The second part, the methodological section, describes two main qualitative methods used in this research, while also considering the alternative approach and the arguments in favour of the qualitative methods chosen for this research. Moreover, it states who the interviewees are, and lists the research questions. The next section places the Polish administrative reforms, 1990-1997, in the context of European inspirations and Polish tradition. The last section presents the literature on elites in local government, with frequent influence being also made to Polish elite studies in general as they were a strong inspiration for this research.

1.1 The Aims of the thesis

The role of elites was decisive during the radical political changes that took place in Eastern Europe in 1989. In Poland, reforms fundamentally transforming the political, economic and social spheres were initiated by the Round Table negotiations (6 February 1989-5 April 1989). The Round Table Agreement within the national elite (between the communists and Solidarity opposition) determined that political and economic changes would have a peaceful character by proposing the holding of a semi-democratic parliamentary election. After that election and the sudden formation of the first non-communist government, the national elite's approval of further changes determined the speed of transition and the scale of the changes: parliamentary bills provoked an almost complete transformation of the political, economic and social spheres.

i. What was the role of the regional elite during the transition?

This thesis concentrates on the role of the regional elite during the administrative transition (1990-1997), because regional elites are every bit as important as national ones in the formation of a pluralist democracy. The investigation of elites is of special importance in post-communist countries, where elite studies as a whole were considered to be 'politically incorrect' during the socialist period.

This case study of Upper Silesia's administrative regional elite, although taking into account some distinctive features that are unique to the region, may illustrate a more general process of decentralisation. In particular it sheds light on the rise to prominence of new regional-level elites that has been taking place in Eastern Europe as a whole since 1989. In all post-communist countries, the rise of democracy has led to a more balanced power structure between the centre and the periphery (region), and regional elites have begun to gain prominence, although this process has not settled down yet. However, centralisation of power has been strongly preserved in certain areas and the national elites have often held onto their dominant role.

First, the research aims to analyse how the regional administrative elite of Upper Silesia adapted itself to the administrative transition (1990-1997). The process was to lead to the rebuilding of the whole institutional administrative structure, starting from the local level and ending at the central level. The administrative transition was a time of rapid and radical change, requiring substantial adaptation of both local government and the voivodship office. Already, the administrative reform of 1989 had fundamentally changed the functioning of the administration at the local level and indirectly influenced the performance of the whole regional administration. However, these reforms comprised only partial reform (limited to local government), and many dysfunctional features of the socialist administrative structure at other levels were preserved. Moreover, further administrative reform was delayed, despite promises that it would be introduced soon, as a result of the political instability of Solidarity governments. Similarly after 1993, despite intensive discussion on further reform and promises of its quick implementation, change was again delayed on political grounds. This also hindered the adaptation of the regional administrative elite to the existing situation, especially as it was seen as temporary. A further question concerns the relations of the regional elite with the national elite and the impact of the existing centralised

administrative structures on these relations. Finally, the regional administrative elite's relationships with regional society are investigated.

The second aim is to analyse the role of the regional elite during the economic transition. Was the national elite the only key player? Or was the regional administrative elite similarly important at the regional level to the national elite at the national level in 1989 during the *refolution*. What were the regional policies and who were the actors, especially in relation to the necessity of restructuring the region's outdated heavy industry? Were they radical reformers of the region or defenders of an ancient socialist regime? Were they revolutionaries and radicals, or *apparatchiki* and bureaucrats?

This thesis examines the regional administrative elite of the Katowice voivodship in the period of administrative transition between 1990 and 1997. The research concentrates on the performance of this elite in two types of institutions: first, the voivodship office in Katowice (the public administration unit), and second, local government at the commune level.

The time-span covered by the research was determined above all by the timing of fundamental changes in the administrative structure. These were introduced in two waves, the first in 1990, and the second since the election in autumn 1997. This completed the introduction of the new institutional arrangements necessary for the formation of a decentralised and effective administrative structure.

In 1990 fundamental changes took place in administration at the local level. In May 1990, after local elections had taken place, autonomous local government at the commune level was established, unequivocally distinguishing administrative functioning at that level from the situation prevailing during the socialist period. The transformation of administrative institutions at commune level from public administration units into local governments, meant that they were no longer subordinate to higher levels of administration. This completely transformed the administration of the communes and significantly improved their performance. These revolutionary changes in local administration were introduced by the new local post-Solidarity elites and coincided with the complete rotation of elites in the communes.

In 1997 the national elections led to the return to power of the post-Solidarity elite at the national level. This event completely changed the situation of the regional administrative elite, as the second wave of radical and extensive administrative reform was prepared. This second wave of transition in regional administration was initiated from 1 January 1999 with the establishment of elective government at district level. At the same time the 49 voivodships inherited from the socialist period were merged into 16 larger regions. Moreover, the administrative structure of the regions changed because a *voivode* (as the representative of public administration) began to be assisted by an elective regional government equipped with wide powers.

These changes, introduced after 1997, can be interpreted as the final stage in the transformation of the institutions of regional administration, finally dismantling and replacing the ineffective structures established in the socialist period. The period between 1990 and 1997 can be described as a unique time of unfinished administrative reform, as only certain administrative reforms were introduced. New structures co-existed with old ones. This partial reform of 1990, introduced only at local level, in the opinion of the regional administrative elite led to a significant improvement in the performance of the communes. At the same time, the regional administrative elite was aware of its own ineffectiveness at 'district' and regional levels – as a result of its being forced to act through ineffective institutions that were the legacy of the socialist period. The regional administrative elite therefore argued that further administrative reform at the next two levels of administration was both necessary and urgent.

The transitional period, spanning from 1990 to 1997, can be sub-divided into two phases for analysis. The first was the 'revolutionary' phase, from 1990 to 1994, and the second was the 'restoration' phase, 1994-1997. These phases differed at both national and regional levels, partly because of the personalities and policies of their leaders. These differences of leaders and policies between post-Solidarity and post-communist were most particularly a result of the different professional experience of the new elite versus the old during the socialist period. Thus, investigation of the socialist period – the formative period – is particularly useful in understanding differences between these two groups of elites.

At the beginning of the nineties, the regional elite began to raise the problem of the extensive exploitation of Upper Silesia during the socialist period. This was closely tied

to their belief that a similar policy was being continued by the central government after 1990. The ecological conditions and worsening health of the region's inhabitants, coupled with economic problems, pointed to the urgency of renovating outdated industrial equipment and restructuring the region's economy as a whole, as only limited, single-industry reforms had been introduced up to that time. At the same time, the regional administrative elite viewed the national elite as incapable of initiating any comprehensive regional reform. In response to the actions of the seemingly remote central government, the regional elite attempted to take the lead and advocated the solution of a return to autonomy.

In the second phase, the attitudes within the elite shifted to a more moderate demand for decentralisation of the administration and efforts to be made to unite the regional elite. At the same time, some members of the old *nomenklatura* returned to positions of power, among them *voivode* Ciszak, whose policy was aimed at the restoration of the old regime.

This investigation of the transitional period is prefaced with an introduction discussing the regional administrative elite in two earlier periods: the inter-war period (1922-1939) and the socialist period (1945-1989). I maintain that in each of these periods the regional administrative elite had some very distinctive features related to its composition and governing patterns, differentiating it from the two other periods, the inter-war and socialist. For example, only in the early socialist period was there an extensive promotion of manual workers into the administration. There is, nevertheless, substantial similarity and continuity throughout all three periods. Some features appear in more than one period; for example, authoritarian rule: Grażyński (1926-1939) and Grudzień (1970-1980); the re-appearance of army officers as *voivodes*: Grażyński and Zawadzki (1945-1948) and Paszkowski (1981-1985). Similarly, the domination of the intelligentsia among the elite appeared between 1926-1939 and 1990-1994, and probably beyond.

The regional and personnel policies in the transitional period were often either a continuation of, or a reaction against, policies of earlier periods: inter-war or socialist. Thus, a comprehensive understanding of developments during the transitional period requires investigation of these two earlier periods. For example, in the 1990-1994 phase, emotional references to the inter-war period and its prosperity were at the heart

of the regional administrative elite's regional policy. The revolutionary character of the changes encouraged the regional elite to seek inspiration from a past 'golden age' in its search for models of efficient administrative structures. This tendency was enhanced by the specificity of the administrative solutions – regional autonomy – adopted in the inter-war period in Upper Silesia.

Similarly, in the 'restoration phase', some members of the post-communist regional elite looked to the socialist period for inspiration. Moreover, in this period, revolutionary calls for autonomy were replaced by more moderate demands for stronger decentralisation. The period of the 'restoration' was no longer, in the opinion of local government, a time of radical measures, but rather a time of survival until the second stage of administrative reform. In the meantime moderate attempts at reform were made, the most prominent of which was the Regional Contract.

The investigation of the regional administrative elite takes into account changes in the importance of regional institutions during these three periods (ie, voivodship office, local government and voivodship committee during the socialist period). For example, in the socialist period the locus of decision-making shifted from the regional administrative institutions into the corresponding political structures (at local, district and regional levels).

In inter-war Poland, regional administration revolved around a *voivode* holding a wide range of responsibilities. In the case of Silesia, the power of the *voivode* was strengthened by regulations guaranteeing the region's political autonomy. For example, the *voivode* obtained powers over educational policy and financial matters. On the other hand, the *voivode*'s powers were limited by the regional assembly called the Silesian Diet. This institution was unique to Silesia as a result of its autonomy, and can be considered as an institution of self-government at the voivodship level. The Silesian Diet introduced some supervision of the *voivode*'s rule, most notably by approving the voivodship budget. This balance of power was especially important as the *voivode*'s position was quite strong because of the autonomy of the voivodship. The existence of the Diet led to a more balanced structure of administrative power at a time when the other local government institutions – communes and districts – were strongly subordinate to the *voivode*. The second administrative institution of the inter-war period in the Silesian voivodship, investigated in this thesis, is local government. The role of

the local government elite was limited by the strong power of the *voivode* and by the small size of the majority of towns. In the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship there were only two big towns, Katowice and Chorzów, and only these two towns received the status of town-districts.¹ The investigation of the inter-war period concentrates on the *voivodes* and their deputies, and at the level of the local government authorities, on the mayors of the voivodship capital, Katowice.

In the second socialist period, the thesis concentrates simultaneously on the administrative and the political elite of the region. The total subordination of local government to higher levels of state administration and political institutions, combined with the difficulty of obtaining comprehensive data, substantially limits the description of local government. The investigation of the regional elite is therefore concentrated mostly on the *voivodes* and on the first secretaries of the voivodship committee in Katowice. The territorial reform of 1975 is a crucial factor as it fragmented Polish territory and simultaneously strengthened the control of central government. In the case of the Katowice voivodship this meant a substantial reduction of its territory, and a weakening of the political and administrative position of the region through the creation of competing voivodship centres in the neighbourhood.

The third period – of the unfinished administrative reform (between 1990 and 1997) – began with significant changes in the role of the administration in the aftermath of local government reform. In the Katowice voivodship, the position of local government has also been strengthened, first by the fact that in this small territory there are now no fewer than 14 big towns with populations of around 100,000. The rise in number of these towns to 14 was the result of population growth and the post-war changes in voivodship borders. The rise of big towns in the Katowice voivodship led to a situation in which strong local governments began to challenge the previously centralised power of the *voivodes* (or the first secretaries of the voivodship committee in the socialist period). As a result, in the transitional period the regional division of power was more balanced compared to the two earlier periods.

The second explanation for the strengthened position of towns in the voivodship is the fact that, between 1990 and 1997, the voivodship office itself was completely

¹The second part of the Silesian voivodship was Cieszyn Silesia.

subordinate to central government. Thus, the voivodship office had limited opportunity to represent regional interests. For example, it depended heavily on the central budget despite the strong efforts to initiate an independent regional policy by *voivode* Czech (1990-1994). It is also important to note that the regional power structure of the Katowice voivodship is untypical of other Polish territories, which are less densely populated and where voivodship capitals are the only big towns. Typically, the administrative institutions – the local government and the voivodship office located in the voivodship capital – are the main administrative institutions in the whole voivodship. The capitals are usually surrounded by small towns and villages where the local government administration, due to limited financial resources and the scarcity of qualified members of staff, plays only a rudimentary role. As a result, the local governments of these small towns and villages have been unable to counterbalance the power of the administrative institutions located in their voivodship capitals.

To sum up, changes in the structure of the regional administrative elite do not allow direct comparisons between the periods to be made. However, taking into account these limitations, one can still observe dominant trends in the composition and style of governance. Such comparison shows the re-appearance of certain phenomena – for example, participation in certain historic events was an important pre-condition for selection to the regional administrative elite. During the inter-war period, participation in the Third Silesian Rising was a major criterion in the selection of senior administrative personnel, while participation in the Soviet-dominated communist movement was crucial to elite membership during the take-over period of 1945-1948. Similarly, in the revolutionary period (1990-1994) participation in the Solidarity opposition performed a similar role.

1.2 Methodology

This research is based predominantly on various qualitative methods. It starts in chapter two with a historical narrative describing the early history of the region; it then focuses on the inter-war period and the regional administrative elite at that time, while the last part of this chapter concentrates on the regional administrative elite in the socialist period. This historical narrative is founded on an analysis of rare memoirs and press interviews with former members of the regional administrative elite and other secondary

sources. This is supplemented by a presentation of biographical and career data for the members of the regional administrative elite in the inter-war and socialist periods (and also in the transitional period) compiled from diverse secondary sources specifically for this investigation.

The study of the contemporary elite is based mainly on two qualitative sources of data: first, unstructured interviews with members of the elite conducted between 1995 and 1997, and second, an analysis of local and national press-interviews with members of the administrative regional elite over the entire transitional period of 1990-1997. Recognition as a member of the regional administrative elite was based on a positional criterion, meaning that being in a certain administrative position was crucial to inclusion in the sample. In the case of the voivodship office elite, the research group consisted of the *voivodes*, their deputies and director generals, and the directors of the departments of Agriculture, Architecture, Civic, Culture, Disaster and Security Protection, Ecology, Finances, Geological, Economy, Foreign Co-operation, Organisational, Legal, Passport, Public services, and Re-privatisation. Among the members of the Voivodship Office interviewed were: Kurzok Jan, Konopka Zygmunt, Kubik Włodzimierz, Ginko Łucja, Beblo Wojciech, Lebicka Czesława, Matuszek Franciszek, Czarnik Andrzej Kiecka-Niechanowicz Tadeusz, Madej Andrzej, Łobzowska Bożena, Bilke Elżbieta, Wiltos Janusz², Erlich Grzegorz, Stumpf Jacek and Niewiara Piotr.

The second group consisted of the mayors of the 14 'Big Towns' of the Katowice voivodship, which, due to their size, participated in the Pilot Programme in 1994. These mayors were: Korpak Józef and his successor Kińczyk Marek from Bytom, Kopel Marek from Chorzów, Zaguła Henryk from Dąbrowa Górnicza, Frankiewicz Zygmunt from Gliwice, Dziewior Henryk from Katowice, Ogieńko Janusz from Jastrzębie, Lasek Leon, Mysłowice, Sroka Edmund from Ruda Śląska, Makosz Józef from Rybnik, Kulisz Włodzimierz from Siemianowice, Czarski Michał from Sosnowiec, Gutowski Roman from Świętochłowice, Gądek Aleksander from Tychy and Mirosław Sekuła from Zabrze.³ These towns had the potential to perform as town-districts and thus received

² In a few cases, my interviewees changed their positions, for example, Wiltos who had been director of the Legal Department was promoted to the position of Director General. Similarly, Kiecka-Niechajowicz, who was first deputy director of the Economy Department, then became director in proxy after that the deputy responsible for the Regional Contract. Similar changes of position applied to a few other directors.

³ My research also incorporated two 'Big Towns'; Chorzów and Sosnowiec, which withdrew from the project at its initial stage.

additional tasks from the central government, substantially increasing their own powers and autonomy. The limited scale of this research, and the relative political weakness of small communes compared to the Big Towns, meant that only the latter were included in this research.

The elite interviews were usually an hour long, but in some cases varied from half an hour to around two hours. Most of the interviews were tape recorded, as the majority of those interviewed agreed to this. Very occasionally, interviewees asked for the tape recorder to be switched off for a while. The interviews with the regional administrative elite were carried out on the understanding that their anonymity, would be preserved by removing details that would enable their identification, or introducing slight modifications to hinder identification.

In view of the exploratory nature of this research and the non-representative character of the sample, the interviews were non-structured and it was not possible to ask them all identical questions, in exactly the same sequence. As I wished to have spontaneous free-ranging answers, this meant that the questions often varied according to the issues raised by the interviewees themselves and that were important in their minds, but were not related to the points under analysis. For that reason, questions and answers are not reproduced verbatim, but selectively. However, certain topics were raised in every case. They are:

1. Motivation to start work in administration

How did you start to work in the voivodship office/local government? (additional questions: When? Why? Who convinced you to make this decision?)

2. Evaluation of the work in administration

What do you think about work in administration? (In your opinion, is there any difference between the functioning of administration in local government and the voivodship office?)

3.a. Developments in the Voivodship Office since 1989 – (a question for the elite of the voivodship office)

How did the voivodship office function during (i) *voivode* Czech's rule, (ii) the 'interregnum', (iii) *voivode* Ciszak 's rule? (mergers of departments or the formation of

new departments, personnel policy, the relation between the *voivode* and his deputy) Were there any differences in the functioning of the voivodship office during the rules of *voivodes* Czech and Ciszak?

3.b Developments in Local government since 1989 - (a question for town mayors)

How has local government performed since 1989? - what were the main changes? How did they affected the functioning of your town? (the Pilot Programme, the Big Towns reform) Was there any difference in the functioning of local government during their first and second term?

4. The Upper Silesia restructuring and the role of regional authorities

Are there any particular problems of regional restructuring? (especially compared to other parts of Poland). What is the role of the regional elite in preparing regional restructuring? What is their relationship with national authorities?

5. The Regional Contract

What do you think about the Regional Contract? (its signing and functioning, its main advantages and problems). Have you been participating in its programme? (Why? To what extent?)

6. Administrative reforms

How do you evaluate the opportunity of efficient administrative functioning of the voivodship office/ local government? What further reforms are needed? (territorial reform: regional and district level, the proposals of the Katowice Agglomeration Association, question of regional autonomy).

In general, the respondents were open and tried to answer the questions asked of them as best as they could. The majority of them believed that, after socialism, the administration had to change and became more transparent and 'closer to citizens'. In very rare cases, when they saw a question as rather difficult, they would answer it briefly and not expand on it. Nevertheless, they did not avoid it completely. On the whole, they took the opportunity which these interviews presented to make me know the conditions under which they worked, their main achievements, challenges, and problems. If there was any problem it was my limited knowledge of the regional administration, especially during the initial interviews. As the interviews progressed this

problem was gradually overcome. This was especially, seen in relation to point 6, that is Administrative reforms, which was only added after the first few interviews.

The second source of data – press interviews with the members of the regional administrative elite – were attractive as they enabled the reconstruction of earlier events, and enriched the project by allowing the inclusion of the opinions of people who, at the time of this research, were no longer in office. For example, *voivode* Czech's regional policy is reconstructed by analysing eight of his interviews. The attractiveness of press interviews also stems from the opportunity to identify members of the regional elite. This was especially the case when their opinions were radical or controversial and included open criticism of central government. In cases when similar opinions were presented during my interviews and in the press interviews, it was decided to quote the press interviews so that those respondents could be identified. There were a few situations when the press interviews and the interviews conducted by me presented different opinions by the same people. This occurred in the case of the Regional Contract, which was generally seen as a highly imperfect, partial and temporary solution to the problems of centralisation of power and a necessary precondition for regional restructuring. In the course of my confidential interviews, the Regional Contract was strongly criticised by many of the respondents. However, in public, the Regional Contract was seen by the regional administrative elite as an improvement on the existing situation, and they publicly advocated it, hoping that an agreement with central government would improve their situation, at least partially.

In all, I made use of 11 national newspapers and 25 local publications of all kinds. As analysis of the press was such an important source of data, it is necessary to consider how these newspapers were selected and whether an unintended bias may have entered this research. First, no newspaper was eliminated from inclusion in the research or reference to it if it contained relevant information: that is, the opinions of, and interviews with the members of the regional elite, or if it presented an event that was crucial in the description of the regional administration in the period 1990-1997. In the case of certain criticism of opinions presented in the press, although they are quoted they were preceded by my commentary, indicating the controversial or highly political opinion presented by interviewees. This was, for example, the case with the opinions of both Katowice *voivodes* supplemented by the commentary or declarations in the

documents of the Upper Silesian Union (and also my respondents' opinions) on regional autonomy.

In the second case, there has never been any serious doubt about the reliability of descriptions of certain regional events during the period of investigation. For example, the actions of regional MPs in the period of the dismissal of *voivode* Czech, or the appointment of *voivode* Ciszak, or the Regional Contract negotiations. If there were any differences between newspapers, it was at the level of criticism by certain newspapers of some of the regional leaders, especially if they were seen as representing different political opinion to the newspapers. Thus, for example, *Gazeta w Katowicach* was critical of post-communist *voivode* Ciszak and presented a lot of interesting details, for example, on the functioning of the Social Council of the Economy. Newspapers more sympathetic towards him avoided descriptions of these unpopular events. Nevertheless, sometimes the most invaluable information was gathered not from the newspapers critical of respondents but, on the contrary those sympathetic to them. It is likely that members of the regional elite were more easily persuaded to give interviews to journalists from the newspapers which they saw as sharing their political, social or religious beliefs. And it is likely that they were more open in presenting their opinions in these interviews. For example, the first interview by *voivode* Czech, on the day of his appointment was in the Catholic weekly: *Gość Niedzielny*. Similarly, primary sources of data were: the monthly *Nasza Gazeta*, and *Goniec Górnos Śląski*, sympathising with the Upper Silesian Union. As a result, some of the members of the elite, who were much more restrained in giving interviews elsewhere, were interviewed by these papers. The last newspaper of this type is *Trybuna Górnicza – The Coal-miners Tribune*, where former coal-miner, *voivode* Ciszak, gave a particularly interesting interview.

As the research concentrated on regional issues, it was natural that the local and regional press were quoted more often than the national one. Particular effort was made for the widest representation of the regional press. Four main regional newspapers were especially important and were quite often referred to: *Dziennik Zachodni* and its supplement *Dziennik Śląski*; *Gazeta w Katowicach*, the regional supplement of the national *Gazeta Wyborcza*; *Trybuna Śląska* and *Wieczór*. Of these four newspapers, the two most useful to the research to me were: *Dziennik Zachodni* as it had some very good journalists writing on current regional issues, namely Grossner, Karawat, Pustłka and Smolorz. As a result, it is this newspaper that presented the most comprehensive

coverage of regional events, enriched by informed editorials. This, to some extent, is due to the fact that some of these journalists started to work under socialism and thus, they saw current events in the longer-term regional development perspective. The other two *Gazeta w Katowicach* and *Trybuna Śląska* were seen as quite politically defined: the first being post-Solidarity and the second post-communist. Despite their political character, my sympathy towards *Gazeta w Katowicach* and the national *Gazeta Wyborcza* was related to my respect for the editor-in-chief, Adam Michnik, who guarantees that the newspapers are impartial as the criticism presented is also directed at the political stance of the newspaper itself. To make the selection of regional press even more representative an effort was made to include local town newspapers, for example, *Echo* from Tychy, *Nowiny* from Rybnik and *Nowiny Gliwickie* from Gliwice.

Another valuable source of data was local government publications. Some of the local governments edited their own town monthlies, for example, *Wspólny Chorzów*, where Chorzów authorities wished to inform town inhabitants of their actions, and the problems and achievements of the town. Similarly, *Sejmik Samorządowy*, published by the local governments of the region provided information about plans and the co-operation of local authorities on the scale of the whole voivodship. Finally, *Wspólnota* was the national weekly representing the 'local government option' as often seen in its opposition to central government. The last source of data of this type was the academic monthly journal, *Samorząd terytorialny – Local government*.

Among the national press, the most common source of data was two highly respected weeklies: *Wprost* and *Polityka*, especially the latter's journalist, Dziadul, who specialises in Upper Silesia. (The first journal has post-Solidarity origins and the second post-communist origins). They may be regarded as Polish-versions of *Newsweek* or *Time*. Among the national press the renowned daily *Rzeczpospolita (The Times)*, was a very reliable source of data as this newspaper was established with the idea of separating it from any particular political party. Moreover, editorials by Cieszewska were an especially reliable source of data and provided comprehensive analysis of regional events.

These methods of investigation of the transitional period were additionally supplemented with documentary analysis. For example, in chapter six, which investigates the development of regional policy and the signing of the Regional

Contract, the official voivodship office documents were especially valuable. Overall, therefore, in this research the qualitative approach was the predominant method of analysis as it seemed to better answer the aim of this thesis which was to discover: not only who the members of the regional elite were, but also their opinions and motivations. In recent case studies of local elites in Poland, qualitative methods have played a marginal role because and a quantitative approach has predominated. In the present instance, the qualitative approach seemed preferable; first, because I wished to supplement and balance these quantitative researches and second, I wished to understand a period of radical change, such as during the transition, and to recognise not only that the new elite had arrived but also their motives in deciding to work in administration.

This is not because of any principal objection to these methods. Indeed, the biographical analysis of the inter-war and socialist periods' *voivodes* and first secretaries used standard prosopographical methods. But, it would have been difficult to get a very large sample of new elite which would allowed quantitative analysis. In these circumstances, it seemed unwise to initiate and invest time in quantitative methods, and better instead to exploring the issues using an qualitative approach

1.3 Administrative reforms 1990-1997 in the context of European inspirations and Polish tradition

In the Polish literature analysis of administrative reforms after 1989; including local government, regional administration and systemic reform of administration as a whole, references to Western European tradition are frequent. Polish administrative reforms after the period of socialism and the imposition of the Soviet model administration are presented as a return to its natural Western European sphere in which the Polish model is traditionally situated.⁴ However, the administrative reforms after 1989 are presented as a modification of foreign proposals placed in the context of Polish tradition, especially in the inter-war period. Nevertheless, these inspirations are mentioned more in the context of wider Western European tradition than in relation to recent administrative reforms of any particular Western European country, as a direct

⁴ Izdebski, and Kulesza, 1999.

inspiration for a particular reform. This has been, for example, the case with the Big Town reform of 1995-1996.⁵ Such an approach can be found in the book: *Administracja państwowa – Public administration*⁶ written by Kulesza⁷ and Izdebski⁸. Similar are presented by Izdebski in his *Historia administracji – History of administration* (1996), Regulski, and Kocan (1994), and in more recent publications are made more often to European integration by Regulski,⁹ and Gilowska, Ploskonka, Prutis, Stec and Wysocka (1999).

The old historic inspirations of the former partitioning powers, through their influence on the administration of the Second Polish Republic in the inter-war period and the Napoleonic-French influence are still seen as fundamental. According to Izdebski and Kulesza (1999) German (and Austrian) administrative tradition had the greatest influence on the countries of Central and Eastern Europe as a whole. In the case of Poland, this can be found in administrative solutions adopted by local government reform in 1990 and further administrative reforms - both district and regional- of 1998.¹⁰ The influence of the German (and Austrian) model on Polish administration can be especially seen in the local government structure. The German model based on the theoretical work of German reformer, Rudolf Gneist, was inspired by the functioning of English local government. The modified Gneist model was widely accepted in continental Europe.¹¹ In fact, the Austrian model adopted later was very similar to it. This German model was modified in at least two important elements compared to its British predecessor: first, the adaptation of the dual structure of local government as an elective body was assisted by representatives of central government, and the second difference was that continental local government has its own tasks defined (in contrast to the British enumeration of tasks by parliament).¹²

⁵ In his analysis of '*Local government in post Socialist cities*' Bennett suggests that development of cities in Poland was typical of that of other Eastern European cities as the delays in the district and regional level reforms made cities key actors in service delivery, not only for their inhabitants but also for smaller communes surrounding them. Nonetheless, he makes no direct reference to the 'Big Towns', arguing that the reforms of upper tiers are influential in enhancing cities' capacity to perform their services. Among the Western European reforms, he mentions regional reforms in Italy and Spain, and in central government administrative regions in Portugal and Greece. Finally he describes the 1982 French regional reform as the most crucial experiences to guide reformers of Eastern European cities.

⁶ Izdebski, and Kulesza, 1999.

⁷ The chairman of local government reform proposals prepared for Suchocka's government and Buzek's 1998 district and regional reform.

⁸ Expert in central government reform in the period 1991-1993 and 1995-1996.

⁹ For example; Regulski, 1999: 9.

¹⁰ Izdebski and Kulesza 1999: 44.

¹¹ Izdebski 1996: 144.

¹² Izdebski and Kulesza 1999: 44.

Nevertheless, according to Bennett (1993) 'despite this diversity, and despite the separate recent tradition either side of the former 'iron curtain', the local government systems across Europe have a common inheritance.'¹³ Among them, the most significant are:

1. Constitutionalism - the division of powers and formal electoral representation across all levels of local government
2. The fundamental building bloc of the commune as the basic unit
3. The professionalisation of administration of local government.¹⁴

Thus, when Izdebski and Kulesza talk, about the principle of subsidiarity, they refer first to the fact that it was incorporated in the Maastricht Treaty, and then mention that it was also written in the German constitution. Similarly, one can find the principle of subsidiarity in the Polish constitution of 1997 and the 1998 administrative reform also enabled incorporation of this principle into the Polish administrative system.¹⁵

An important source of inspiration was co-operation within international organisations, especially the OECD, of which Poland has been a member since 1996.¹⁶ For example, Izdebski and Kulesza, when talking about the inspiration of Polish administrative reforms, quote the OECD's opinion on the importance of efficient bureaucracy, the functionality of administrative institutions, on the development of democracy and market economy in the post communist countries.¹⁷

Moreover, the influence of common European values and standards can also be seen in different versions of the national constitutions, (in the 'Small Constitution' of 1992 and the Constitutions of 1997.¹⁸ The Charter of Local Self-government adopted by the Council of Europe in 1985 and signed by Poland in April 1993.¹⁹

One individual, but particularly revered source of inspiration has been Alexis Tocqueville's works. For example, Kulesza and Izdebski mention his opinion on the importance of local government and democracy as a defence against centralism or the

¹³ Bennett, 1993: 1.

¹⁴ Bennett, 1993: 3.

¹⁵ Izdebski and Kulesza 1999: 20.

¹⁶ The Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development.

¹⁷ Izdebski and Kulesza, 1999: 69.

¹⁸ Izdebski and Kulesza, 1999: 73

¹⁹ Izdebski and Kulesza 1999: 155, Verebelayi, 1993: 14, Zaucha 1999: 54.

loss of national independence (especially attractive in the context of the still not long-past Soviet domination).²⁰ It is worth remembering that even during the socialist period Poland was not completely separated from some general European trends that time, for example, the amalgamation of communes.²¹

Thus, Polish administrative reforms were inspired by the result of inspiration regarding certain Western European values and norms but its final shape was an original, mosaic-type, piecemeal adaptation to the Polish situation. In this mosaic-type of reform, inspiration was derived from various national models to adapt as well as possible to Polish conditions. In fact, the inspiration came more from the continental European models, more than the British model. For example:

- the local government model in which representation of the elected council is assisted by a central government representative²²
- the 'general competence' of local government (in contrast to particular enumeration of duties in Britain)²³
- the size of local government units – the contemporary British model of big basic units is driven by efficiency in contrast to the continental European model of much smaller units that are better adapted to political representation of local societies²⁴

Nevertheless, there are also a few interesting inspirations from British local government. Despite that distinctiveness, or maybe because of it the inspirations taken from British local government are easier to distinguish. For example, the Polish term, *samorząd* – is the translation of the English term, local government.²⁵ Moreover, Polish reformers often refer to the concepts of civil service, and also the organisation of government and central administration as attractive proposals for the newly reformed administration system.²⁶

²⁰ Izdebski and Kulesza 1999: 155.

²¹ Marcou and Verebelyi 1993: 35-50.

²² In Poland, as a result of the 1998 regional level reform the regional government has to co-operate with the *voivode*, the representative of central government. There used to be a similar dual administrative structure at the district level in the inter-war period).

²³ Specific institutional arrangements due to supremacy of British parliament over other institutions, Izdebski and Kulesza 1999: 32 and Verebelyi 1993: 23.

²⁴ Norton : 1995: 270-71.

²⁵ Izdebski 1996: 139.

²⁶ Izdebski and Kulesza 1999: 31

This piecemeal, mosaic-approach to administrative reform also suggests comparisons with post-socialist countries such as the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia. All these countries (and within Poland, Galicia) were, at a certain time of their history, part of the Austrian empire, and thus there are certain similarities in their administrative reform due to this common experience.²⁷ Moreover, these countries all face the similar difficulties and challenges of post-socialism, for example, the vertical fragmentation, the over-centralisation, the subordination of local government to a higher level of administration, and the lack of autonomy of local administration, should also strengthen the similarities between the administrative solutions adopted. Nevertheless, the differences dominate, and are stronger than the similarities.²⁸

Finally, in my opinion, analysing the administrative reforms since 1989, two phases can be distinguished. In the first stage, there was a common Western European democratic inspiration and certain current Western European wider current trends were influential. For example, the recent rise to prominence of the regional level of administration was reflected in the 1998 reform at district and regional level.²⁹ However, after the 1998 reform, after the second stage of administrative reforms, the emphasis was increasingly on harmonisation with the objective of entering the EU. At this stage, the role of the domestic factor were secondary. Thus, for example, immediately after the 1998 regional reform, the work on the regional policy bill started to enable the preparation by its own authorities of a regional policy for every region. The Department of Regional Development was also formed within the Ministry Economy to co-ordinate regional policy planing at the national level. In general, to harmonise regional policies in Poland to EU standards, there are two main demands; first adaptation of the Polish law and, second, institutional changes at both central and regional level for preparation and co-ordination of regional policies. In addition, standardisation of the new administrative structure to conform to NUTS units adopted by the EU is one of the primary issues.

²⁷ Illner, 1998: 14.

²⁸ For example: Coulson (ed.) 1995, Gibson and Hanson (ed) c1996, Kirchner (ed) 1999, Horvath (ed.) 2000.

²⁹ However, this reform was inspired by equally important domestic rationale, liquidation of irrational territorial organisation of state introduced by Gierek.

1.4 Elites in the local government

i. The elites in local government in the context of elite studies in Poland

Elite studies in Poland have had a relatively short tradition. The concept of the elite in Polish sociology was first presented by Znamierowski in 1928.³⁰ According to him, the elite is 'the collection of people which are chosen from the larger group', and in his view the 'limited contact' which is present in all social life makes the existence of an elite necessary. Statements about the necessity of the existence of the elite were accompanied by his belief in its parasitic character. Znamierowski's negative evaluation of the current elite led him to ask what conditions are necessary to preserve democracy, and what functions should the elite perform in the future?

ii. Elite studies during the socialist era

After the end of the Second World War and the establishment of socialism, conditions for the development of elite studies were unfavourable. Research on social structure was mostly limited to a description of class divisions. Marxist academics, for example, Wesołowski³¹ tried to limit the elite concepts (traditionally equipped with negative values) to capitalist societies.

Occasionally, elite theories were applied to the description of Polish society although they were presented within a Marxist class-theory framework to purify them from 'bad ideological connotations'. This approach can be seen, for example, in Bauman's definition of the elite as the social group that holds the power.³² Thus, according to him, this concept could also be used to describe socialist societies. Moreover, the particular achievement of Bauman is his research on the (local) elite in the early sixties. His research is exceptional, as the comparable research was not conducted until the eighties.

He showed, above all, the gradual replacement of the predominantly ideological communist elite which came just after the war with the new mainly technical elite.

³⁰ Znamierowski, 1991.

³¹ Wesołowski 1979.

³² Bauman, 1963.

'Political merits and ideological virtues are no longer a sufficient qualification for performance of the party functions: one must possess vocational education and professional skills to deal with technical problems at a table with specialists of the highest rank'.³³

Bauman's research showing the succession of the elite over time; from ideologists to technocrats is also interesting and relevant to the research on the regional elite in Upper Silesia presented in this thesis. Bauman suggested that these two types of local elites were made up by two different types of personalities, as a result of adaptation to the different economic situation. According to him, the arrival of this latter elite was the result of industrialisation. In contrast, the first group started their careers as skilled propagandists and persons of high ideological virtues. They were already members of the Communist party in pre-war Poland and soldiers during the war, and after the war they introduced economic reconstruction. The majority did not attend secondary school, nor did they have managerial qualifications. Wielding managerial power, they were influenced by ideological values in their decision making. Gradually, they were replaced by a better-educated elite for whom ideology was much less important.

Referring to studies of the Polish elite during socialism, the division is to be drawn between two groups; first, the academics working and conducting research in Poland and second, the émigré Polish academics. In the first group, two authors, Wasilewski and Frieske, are particularly worth mentioning. The value of Wasilewski's research was the extensive time span of his series of central elite researches initiated in 1972³⁴ and then continued in 1986³⁵, which enabled a description of the elite over time. Moreover, between 1983 and 1984, he also conducted the regional elite study.³⁶

Wasilewski's research focused on the career development of the elite. One of the main issues of his investigation was the role of the social origins of the elite in the recruitment process. Comparing the data on the social position of the fathers of the elite members, he indicated that the elite was formed by people coming from all social classes. However, comparison of data on elite origins from 1972 and 1986 indicated a growing

³³ Bauman 1967: 539

³⁴ Wasilewski, 1981.

³⁵ Wasilewski, *Soviet Studies*, 1990 vol 42.

³⁶ (Wasilewski, *Soviet Studies*, 1990 vol 42). The results of this research are quite similar to the main trends indicated by studies of the central elite and due to the limitation of this literature review, they will not be presented individually.

over-representation of men coming from white-collar families. This is particularly interesting, for despite official declarations in socialist countries to the contrary, inequality of chances appears to exist from birth in them as much as in capitalist countries. Wasilewski's research suggests that a rigidity of social structure was growing over time. Moreover, a phenomenon that was not observed in the first research but was noticeable in 1986 was the modest tendency to inherit managerial posts. In 1986, 14 per cent of interviewees' fathers were managers in the middle and higher echelons.

Two other issues defining career development, in addition to social origins of the elite, were educational qualifications and membership of the communist party. The research suggested that development of directors' careers depended on completion of higher education and, at the same time political membership. At the time of their promotion nearly every director had a master's degree and belonged to the communist party.

Moreover, Wasilewski's research is especially revealing as it shows earlier historical shifts of the elite or their absence over time. This is particularly relevant in the context of this regional elite study in Upper Silesia, and the focus on similar mechanisms of the changes of the elite: the complete shift of the elite at the beginning of the nineties and the second later change of the elite from the post-Solidarity elite to the post-communist one. According to Wasilewski's comparison of the central elite of the seventies with that of the eighties, they did not change, as similar promotion mechanisms led to choices of similar personal types. According to Wasilewski, this brought about a situation in which the elite was made up of identical personality types, despite different political and economic conditions. For, example, 1974 was the peak year of Gierek's rule. The economy was prosperous and the government felt a high level of social acceptance and stability. Strong development perspectives were perceived by society and the level of optimism was high. By contrast, 1986 was a time of permanent economic crises without symptoms of recovery, strong political cleavage, social resistance to government actions, and a prevailing pessimism. This contradicted Wasilewski's quite strong expectations that different types of elite would be formed in adaptation to different conditions. Finally, his research indicated the growing rigidity of social structure under socialism since the seventies, in contrast to Bauman's earlier observations of the change of the communist elite at the beginning of the sixties.

Frieske's research, conducted in autumn 1987, is particularly relevant as it focused on the administrative elite - the central administrative elite in the period directly preceding the political transition. It may be interesting to see if there is a continuity of administrative elite in the pre-transition and transition period on which the Upper Silesian elite case study concentrates. Frieske's research tried to answer a question about who the central administrative elite in 1987 was.³⁷ This question was seen by Frieske as urgent in the period when the wide-spread signs of severe political and economic crises were evident and the expectations of the elite intensified. To answer this question, Frieske tried to distinguish typical characteristics of the central elite. As a result, a few subgroups of the elite with certain characteristics were distinguished.

His data suggested that egalitarian policy was to some extent, limited by the hereditary recruitment of various elites as the large number of directors' families were able to preserve their privileged social position. For example, more than half of the directors came from unprivileged families (rural or small town upbringing, working class or peasant origin of fathers). However, in contrast, one quarter of the directors came from families where elements of privileged social position occurred. In summing up, nearly all directors of departments in 1987 had at least one element of the characteristics of privileged social position presented above, but very often, they had several.

Moreover, Frieske's research confirmed the exchange of personnel at the top ministerial positions at the end of the eighties. Analysis of personal bibliographies enables us to discover two periods of elite modification in the eighties. Three-quarters of departmental directors at the end of 1987 were new people in those positions for the first time. Half of them entered the bureaucratic elite in the eighties and one third took their first directorship post in the seventies. Although they were new members of the elite, they were, nevertheless, according to Frieske, experienced administration officers. Half of them waited for their first directorship post for 10 or more years and almost one third of them for between 16 and 20 years. However, despite the fact that the exchange of personnel took place as mentioned, three-quarters of the elite took directorial positions. However, the long apprenticeship they spent in administration meant that it was not really a new elite. Thus, despite the urgent demand for radical reformers, the

³⁷ Frieske 1994.

communist authorities employed the same type of people, with only minor corrections, as Frieske's research shows.

The biographical data of the elite in Frieske's opinion shows that party membership was a necessary condition for further promotion. Professional paid work for the communist party for at least some time was characteristic for one quarter of directors. This proportion was, according to Frieske, surprisingly low, and did not confirm the common opinion on the *apparatchiki* career paths of the elite. Nevertheless, the elite he investigated was the *nomenklatura*-type elite in the wide-meaning of this word.

The second type of research on the national elite during the socialist period comprised studies of Polish *émigrés*, Bieleśiak³⁸ and Misztals,³⁹ and western scholars such as the English academic, Lewis⁴⁰. In the situation of political censorship in Poland, the role of these researches was particularly significant. The earlier mentioned researches conducted in Poland, despite academics' ambitions, were relatively rare and the opportunity to generalise to the whole elite and to express openly it at that time, was difficult. However, they made unquestionable efforts trying to present their interpretation indirectly in the subtext. Nevertheless, the main achievement of the 'exile' literature was the deep and thorough investigation of the elite over time. For example, Misztals' investigation analysed the national elite from the Second World War until 1984. The advantages of these exile studies was that the changes of the elite and their policies could be freely investigated in the context of political and economic conditions. Moreover, they could analyse certain sensitive issues, which were essential for the description of the elite at that time. For example, Misztals showed the growing isolation of the communist elite from society and described the development of the illegal Solidarity elite.

The second study, by Bieleśiak, examines the recruitment policy of the central elite over a 20-year period from 1954-1974 and its influence on integration and political stability. His study shows the main difficulty of obtaining of data in *émigré* researches, and as a result, this and all other *émigré* researches were based on relatively limited official communist data - mostly statistics. A particularly valuable source of data was the

³⁸ Bieleśiak, 1983.

³⁹ Misztals, 1984.

⁴⁰ Lewis 1989.

changes in Central Committee membership, as Bielasik's and Misztals' researches indicate (similarly to Western researches in other socialist countries).

However, Bielasik research, like other elite studies of Poland in the eighties, is inspired by the growing symptoms of the economic and political crises, that intensified the question of the elite's competence. In this case, Bielasik is especially interested in the openness of elite recruitment and its importance for wider social access to policy making, (as he seems to believe in the reforming of the system).

The third study, by Lewis, is especially relevant in the context of this thesis on the regional elite, as it is concentrated on voivodship secretaries of the communist party. The analysis covers the extensive period from the establishment of socialism until the introduction of martial law. One source of information, like the earlier two researches was the analysis of available statistical data: such as their dates of birth, dates of joining of the party, first party appointment, and so on. However, this statistical analysis is interlinked with historical narrative presenting the influence of national politics on the compositions and actions of the regional secretaries. In particular, attention is drawn to policies of the most powerful of influential voivodship secretaries, as in the case of the Silesian voivodship: Gierek, Grudzień or Żabiński were often mentioned.

To sum up, despite the rather limited number of researches on the elite during the socialist era, the portrait of the national elite seems to be relatively sophisticated, reflecting the changes in its composition and policies over time and in general indicating the rising rigidity of social structure and the growing inter-generation reproduction of the elite.⁴¹ However, the main limitation of these researches is concentration on one type of the elite - the overwhelmingly powerful national elite and especially its political branch. Regional elite studies exist, although they are rather rare. In drawing the portrait of the elite the researchers paid particular attention to the available statistical data, for example, on the composition of the members of the Central committee or Voivodship Secretaries. Similarly, in the case of the research conducted in Poland, their investigation concentrated on data gathered from questionnaires; the elite

⁴¹ This can be especially appreciated when compared with other post-socialist countries. For example, Best (1997: 8) writing on elite studies in Eastern Europe argues that Poland and Hungary have a considerable pre-1989 tradition of independent social science, which could be re-integrated into the mainstream of international science. This is, in contrast, for example, to the Ukraine and Bulgaria which had to start from scratch.

origins, education achieved and communist party membership. The opportunity to widen the scope of research to include, for example, interviewees investigating elite attitudes, was limited due to political censorship, only in the research in the eighties did some liberalisation appear.⁴² Wasilewski (1990) in his study on the regional elite and Frieske (1994) had the opportunity to add a few open questions.

iii. The transitional elite - research on post-communist elite in Poland

In the investigation of literature similar to the research of the regional elite of Upper Silesia, a lot of inspiration were derived from and most attention was given to, the studies of 'the transitional elite', despite it being mainly concentrated on the national elite. The local government elite studies, in most cases concentrating on the so-called stable periods, were seen as less important.

Elite research intensified somewhat during the eighties, and the experience of this enabled academics to closely follow radical changes at the top since the fall of communism. For example, since 1989 Wasilewski and Wesłowski, have been conducting a series of extensive and systematic researches of the parliamentary elite. They have been able to closely follow often frequent political changes; the first short tenure of the contract diet 1989-1991,⁴³ the second tenure 1991-1993,⁴⁴ and continued research of the current parliament. In Wasilewski's⁴⁵ opinion, research in this area was especially attractive as it was the basic area of new elites' formation.

The novelty of this series of research was that in addition to statistical analysis, for example, data on the MPs' origins, their political membership, or their earlier work, was enriched by qualitative analysis. In time of such radical changes as the 1989 parliamentary election, when the Solidarity opposition for the first time entered parliament, it seems especially relevant not to limit research to statistical data on the new elite, but to ask open questions such as: Why do they decide to stand in elections? What they do think about their work in parliament? It seems that relying only on

⁴² The elite opinions sometimes indicated a sense of professional frustration, which was linked directly to the growing feeling of complete inefficiency and ungovernability under the socialist system (Wasilewski 1990: 184)

⁴³ Wasilewski and Wesłowski (ed.) 1992.

⁴⁴ Wasilewski (ed.) 1994.

⁴⁵ Wasilewski 1997: 18

prosopographical analysis to comprehensively reflect these changes is not possible, as quantitative methods are not able for example, to answer the question of why only certain members of the former opposition decided to become politicians. Thus, this series of research using qualitative methods to analyse the revolutionary type of changes and its elite, has been one of the most direct and strongest inspirations for the methodological approach used in this research of the regional administrative elite.

One can even talk about the blossoming of the elite studies at the beginning of the nineties, especially on the national political elite.⁴⁶ According to Wasilewski⁴⁷, such emphasis on the political elite during transition was related to its central role and the politicisation of the whole elite. Only in the latter phase of transition - the consolidation of the new system (around the parliamentary election of the autumn 1991), can one talk about the gradual de-politicisation of the new elites and the members of these elites gradually returning to their primary roles. This development is evident in dynamics and the number of elite studies, for example, Grabowska,⁴⁸ Grabowska and Szawiel, Gorat and Marcinak,⁴⁹ on the political parties' elite⁵⁰, or more general research on the changes of the Polish elite over time by Sztumski⁵¹ or Wnuk-Lipiński,⁵² or interesting editions of post-conference papers such as: *'The elite in Poland'* edited by Pałeczki (1992). The two studies by Sztumski and Wnuk-Lipiński were preceded by a description of the socialist period elite which they saw as requiring some attention, that they believed it had not had been given in the past. At the same time, they were also convinced that the description of the transitional-revolutionary elite demanded the description of socialism, as this elite still preserved many features of the past. Their assumption is similar to that accepted in this thesis, where analysis of the transitional elite includes frequent references to the socialist period.

Wasilewski⁵³ also suggested that this transitional (revolutionary) nature of the elite is reflected in the issues on which scholars' investigation concentrated, such as; who are the new elites? and what happened to the old elite after the collapse of communism?

⁴⁶ In 1990, the department of elite studies chaired by Wasilewski was established in the Institute of Political Studies in Warsaw.

⁴⁷ Wasilewski 1997: 16

⁴⁸ Grabowska, *Sisyphus. Social Studies*, vol 9, No. 1, 1993

⁴⁹ Gorat, Marcinak, 1995.

⁵⁰ Grabowska, Szawiel, 1993.

⁵¹ Sztumski J., 1997.

⁵² Wnuk-Lipiński Edmund, 1996.

⁵³ Wasilewski 1997: 19.

Some research has tried to investigate more general trends of post-communist elites. For example, Wnuk-Lipiński participated in the project on the comparison of the post-socialist elite in Poland, Hungary and Russia, trying to answer to what extent we can talk about similarities between the elite changes in these countries during the transition period.⁵⁴ They especially concentrated on the question of whether we can talk about its reproduction or, rather, its circulation. The first assumption of the reproduction of the elite was that the collapse of communism did not affect the composition of the elite, or, circulation of the elites, meaning that the revolution led to recruitment of the new elite. The research suggested that in relation to the political elite in all these three countries one can talk about circulation of the elite. However, in the economic sphere, the research concluded its reproduction. The surprising finding was the high level of *nomenklatura* education - 90 per cent held a Master's Degree. Thus, the hypothesis of 'negative type of selection', which assumed that the role of political loyalty was the main criterion of selection and led to promotion of people with low level of education was rejected.

iv. Local and regional elite studies in Upper Silesia

In Upper Silesia, since 1989 one can talk about intensification of regional studies (or rather local studies), and two main centres can be distinguished, the Government Department and the Sociology Department⁵⁵ of University of Silesia. This strong tradition of regional studies in Upper Silesia, which after 1989 encompassed in the centre of its interest the investigation of local elites is rather exceptional compared with other Polish universities and is probably, above all, due to the historical tradition of this region. As a result, the Silesia University was front-runner of elite studies and thus, the whole presentation of the local elite literature review, apart from one study will concentrate on researches conducted there.

Both departments were interested in the radical change brought about by the formation of new institutions of the voivodship – local government. A few research projects were

⁵⁴ Szelenyi, Treiman, and Wnuk-Lipiński (ed.), 1995.

⁵⁵ During socialism this department had a strongly developed centre of the Sociology of Town.

conducted: in the Government Department by Sztumski and Dobrowolski⁵⁶, and in the Sociology Department by Szczepański. Most of these researches can be located in one theoretical and one methodological approach.

The most popular method of investigation was a survey among the representatives of local government, sometimes supplemented by opinion polls among inhabitants of that local government. As a result, opinions of the elite and the inhabitants were compared, for example, who really has the power in your town? Or what are the main challenges facing further development of the town? Moreover, the research also focused on the prosopographical analysis of the composition of the elite; according to their gender, age, education, political affiliation, and so on, sometimes these reflected the changes of the elite composition over time.

The particular achievement of these elite studies was the fact that there was such a strong tradition of local elite studies already under socialism and the first research was already conducted in 1986 and the second in 1992. Thus, it was possible to draw a longitudinal picture of the local pre-transition and early transition period elite that is quite unique. To this category can also be included the comparative research on the Cracowian, Katowice and Tarnów elite conducted by Drąg and Indraszkiewicz, (1994) from the Cracow School of Economics. This research, despite certain criticisms of the quantitative approach adopted, is especially worth mentioning as it covers a relatively large group of more than 1000 people coming from three different regions and thus enables one to see the Upper Silesian elite against the background of the other regional elites. Moreover, this elite study investigated the elite of three main groups; the state administration, local government and business. What is probably surprising, is that this study shows the differentiation of the elite between these three main professional groups which they come from rather than the regions. This is somewhat contradictory when compared with the results of this Upper Silesian study, which suggests the strong uniqueness of this elite. This, one could argue, can be explained by the different criteria of analysis. For example, the Voivodship Office elite at the beginning of the nineties shared with the elite in other voivodships similar post-Solidarity origins but what really seems to have distinguished it was its values and motivation, as will be suggested by the evidence in chapters 3-7. To sum up, the main advantage of this prosopographical

⁵⁶ The results of these research were published in a series of books: (1.) Dobrowolski (ed.) 1994, Dobrowolski and Frackiewicz (ed.) 1994, Dobrowolski, and Wróbel, (ed) 1995.

method was that it facilitated the drawing up of a comprehensive and general picture of the elite as a group, but at the same time it took them out of the wider social and historical context and did not reflect their fundamental values. Thus, when I decided on the proposals for my research project, I wished to add to the already existing picture by concentrating on the elite's values and motivation.

A particularly inspiring piece of work was Szczepański's and Nawrocki's research in Tychy.⁵⁷ This project, using mostly the qualitative approach, tries to answer rarely asked questions in relation to the formation of local government elite such as; What were the changes in the local political scene? What was the bargaining about? Why were certain groups able to preserve power? What were their assets, what political coalitions did they form?

In this context, this Upper Silesian case study, focuses on local government but, in addition to most of the research on the voivodship office elite is a valuable alternative approach, as by investigating both these elites, which are closely inter-linked, the wider-regional perspective is drawn. It seems that despite the fact that the voivodship office in the period under investigation was left unreformed, the investigation of its functioning, answering the question: what are the actions of the individual *voivodes*? is the main challenge to regional studies.

Despite, the fact that it was natural under the authoritarian regime during socialism that most of the studies concentrated on the central elite, it seems that sometimes social science was left a bit behind the political changes and, for example, still concentrates overwhelmingly on the national elite and its 'actors'.⁵⁸ At the same time, prosopographical research on the local elite defines it as a broad-positional (homogeneous) group. For example, all councillors were included, despite certain individuals - the main 'actors' being more powerful. Mayors or *voivodes* should be distinguished more vividly from the whole group⁵⁹ and investigated to the extent that national leaders were under scrutiny. It seems that the regional reform of 1998 and the strengthening of regional administration helped to solve to this problem, for example,

⁵⁷ Szczepański, and Nawrocki, 1995.

⁵⁸ Thus, criticism of the 'kremlogist' approach, to some extent could be made both of Eastern and Western scholars.

⁵⁹ Szczepański and Nawrocki in their investigation of Tychy often make reference to Goffman. It seems that this approach is also attractive in the investigation of the regional elite.

the extensive research project by Halamska on the local elite in Poland, in the term 1998-2002.⁶⁰ Finally, the enlargement of the EU also increased interest in the regional elites.⁶¹

v. An overview of administrative and local government elite theory and research

In this section of the literature review, the research on local elite studies in other post-socialist countries will be investigated first, while studies of administrative and local elites in Europe and elsewhere will be presented in the second part.

The post-socialist transitional elite is seen as more relevant to the Upper Silesia case study, and investigated more comprehensively.⁶² One particularly interesting study dealing with a topic very relevant to this thesis is in a book entitled: '*Local Democracy and the Process of Transformation in East-Central Europe*', as it is a significant contribution to the study of local elites in post-socialist societies.⁶³ The research was conducted in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in the period 1991/1992. The authors' interest in the study of local government elites arises: first, from their conviction of the importance of local government in the post-communist countries due to its role in the development of democracy, as it is much closer to the citizens than national government, and second, its opportunity to stimulate efficiency of public administration. The particular conditions of local government after communism, and the fact that both the elite and administrative institutions at the time were in the process of formation, were reflected in the nature of the research aims. The study is a successful integration of the theoretical tradition of local government studies in Western Europe and America to particular problems of 'the transitional elite', and the specific post-communist environment. The four research aims were distinguished as:

⁶⁰ More information can be found at: <http://www.euroreg.uw.edu.pl>

⁶¹ Elites and Institutions in Regional and Local Governance in Eastern Europe 'One Europe or Several?' ESRC Programme conducted by the Government Department at the London School of Economics and Political Science (more information can be found at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/Depts/Government/elites.htm>).

⁶² Higley and Pakulski (2000) argue that three main events in the last two decades lead to re-consideration of elite theory. First, the role of elites in fostering economic development in the 'Asian Tiger' countries in contradiction to concepts of dependency; second, interest in the role of elites in socialist and post-socialist Eastern Europe; and thirdly, the elite-driven demise of the Soviet Union and post-socialist Russia and the CIS.

⁶³ Baldersheim (ed.) 1996.

1. Citizens' involvement – what is the role of the new institutions and their elites? Do they make a difference after the period of forced social passivity? The research shows that despite relatively low trust in local government, a fairly large proportion of citizens in all these countries believed that the local administration improved its performance noticeably (according to data gathered from surveys among citizens, councillors, mayors and chief administrative officers).
2. Elite formation - to what extent were the old elites replaced by the new one? The research found that the new leaders at the beginning of the nineties were more of an elite than those before 1989, as there were more white collar workers and they were also better educated (a university degree) than before 1989. Finally, there was also a generation change promoting younger men as well as more restricted social recruitment.
3. Policy choices – will political orientation and ideologies matter in policy choice? They found that there were differences between, on the one hand, Slovakia and Hungary, where the mayors were directly elected by citizens and personal characteristics were more important than party membership, and on the other hand, the Czech Republic and Poland, where mayors were not directly elected and where mayors' individuality was seen as secondary.
4. Executive performance – How can representation and efficient execution be balanced and integrated? This issue was a serious dilemma at both national and local levels after the long period of authoritarian rule. The fact that in Hungary and Slovakia mayors were elected directly meant that in those countries their leadership was more visible in contrast to the other two countries where the importance shifted towards the local council – the representative body.

Finally, the attractiveness of this book also arise from the fact that the results of the research were supplemented by a comprehensive description of the environment in which the elites were formed, with especially detailed information on the development of local government. The book ends on optimistic note as the research suggests that local government in east-central Europe demonstrated *virtuous circles* as 'good morals was the quality most universally appreciated in local councillors'.⁶⁴ The *virtuous circle* can be sketched as: autonomy - democracy - efficiency.

⁶⁴ (Baldersheim 1996: 236).

However, after this initial enthusiasm about local government performance, the further administrative reforms of the regional levels were halted in Eastern Europe as a whole and this was also mirrored in social-science research, as since then there has been no other similarly ambitious cross-regional comparative project. Nevertheless, three are Russian studies of local and regional transitional elites, which are especially interesting as they indicate both similarities and striking differences. For example, examined the first study simultaneous institutional and elite changes; the second the importance of the regional or, as Matsuzato argues, sub-regional elites; and the third, by Hughes, the regional elite.

Duka studied the institutionalisation of the local power elite in St Petersburg.⁶⁵ His research bears a strong resemblance to the formation of the local and regional elite in Upper Silesia. In both cases, the formation of the local elite was preceded by the change of the national elite. This was followed by free local elections. The local elections in Poland in 1989, and St Petersburg in Russia in 1990 bear striking similarities. There was a radical polarisation of political forces in Poland which meant: Solidarity versus *nomenklatura* and a certain number of independents, and in the case of St Petersburg: a wide bloc of democratic forces versus *nomenklatura*, and a third bloc of conservative communists. Furthermore, in both cases; the unity of Solidarity, or the 'Democratic Election-90', did not last long after electoral victory. Finally, then was a less striking similarity between both studies in the presentation of the elite formation in the context of the institutional flux - the simultaneous reform of administrative structure. In the case of Upper Silesia, the accent was on the establishment of a new and powerful regional layer of public administration. While in St Petersburg after the transfer of power from the central level in the second study, the question was division of power between them inside the city council and the council and the city administration (which led to dissolution of the council in 1993).

The second Russian study is a cross-regional comparison; '*Local elites under transition: country and city politics in Russia 1985-1996*'.⁶⁶ The main argument of this article is that to understand the transition of Russia, one should not only look at the central elites, or regional elites but look even deeper inside, at the subregional level, at the composition of elites and their politics, as these according to Matsuzato, were the

⁶⁵ Duka A. *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*, September 1997, vol. 21,

⁶⁶ Matsuzato, *Europe-Asia Studies*, Volume 51, December 1999

driving force for transition. One of the main issues of his analysis of democratisation of Russia is that of replacing the former *nomenklatura* with younger leaders. Comparison among the cross-regional and sub-regional elite is in favour of those where the replacement took place. However, the author argues that young people are more induced to go into business, than to work for public institutions (meaning both state administration and local government). This, compared with the results of Drag's and Indraszkiewicz's study, shows that local government elites in Poland differ from Russian ones, as in the first case the institutional reform of local government led to the arrival of the new post-opposition elite. This difference of local government elite composition in Poland and Russia seems to be due to the more radical reform of local government in Poland, which completely broke down with the socialist legacy of local government subordination to regional administration and enabled a 'clean-start'. In the third study on sub-national elite and transition in Russia, Hughes⁶⁷ argues that despite formal democratisation of regional legislative bodies, two interlocking elites political-administrative and economic, continued to colonise these bodies. In other words, the regional elite showed a strong adaptation mechanism and the regional elite continued to be a closed elite. Similarly to Matzsuzato, Hughes identifies the privatised business sector despite small representation (- one quarter of deputies) as the main rejuvenating and reformist force.

In this literature attempts were made to identify some common trends among the post-communist elite. For example, Beyme⁶⁸ compared the Eastern European elites with Southern Europe in the seventies, and Higley, Pakulski and Wesółowki tried to compare changes in Eastern Europe in 1989 with earlier revolutions⁶⁹ and locate Eastern European elites in a model of elite configuration on the transition to democracy.⁷⁰

To sum up, in this section, the prominent part was allocated to the study of the post-socialist, transitional elite. Although, the author is against drawing permanent impenetrable lines between East and West European elite studies, the particular features of the transitional elite in the nineties, that is the change of the elite, inter-linked with the simultaneous institutional transition, or, for example, the role of post-communists, resulted in the main emphasis being placed on East European studies. Nevertheless, at

⁶⁷ Hughes, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol 49, no. 6, 1997

⁶⁸ Beyme, *Governance*, 1993.

⁶⁹ Higley, Pakulski *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, 1994

⁷⁰ Higley, Pakulski and Wesłowski 1998.

the time of writing this thesis, one can talk of early stabilisation of both the elite and administrative institutions, and here some brief reference is made to other European studies.

Among Western European studies of the local elite in the 'more stable periods' (in contrast to the transitional period) the recent British research on local leadership by Leach and Wilson (2000) is interesting as the analysis of case studies of local leaders shows similarities to Eastern Europe where the personality of reformers matters a great deal. In Britain, individuality of leaders also matters, despite the fact that they act in a more stable institutional administrative structure. However, their 'case studies of leadership in action' show that in Britain the change of party ruling the local councils, although much less radical than political changes in Poland in 1989, nevertheless also led to substantial changes in leadership policies. The much-debated issue of directly elected mayors indicates that in Britain (and Western Europe) institutional stability is not absolute but relative, and administrative reforms, although introduced in an evolutionary manner, can have a profound effect on the performance of local elites.

Among local elite studies it is also worth mentioning comparative studies such as, for example, *'Local elites in Western democracies: a comparative analysis of urban political leaders in the U.S., Sweden, and the Netherlands'*⁷¹, which concentrated on the background of the elite, their perception of their local politics and their policies. Although it was hoped that wider generalisation to local elites would be made, the results of the study are less than promising due to the difficulty of comparing cross-national data, as questions (not formulated in the same way) have various meanings depending on the country in question. Nonetheless, this study can be seen as an early attempt at cross-country comparisons while wider-generalisation would demand further research.

In the literature on elites there is also another substantial branch of research: case studies of national administrative elites: for example, Japan⁷², Malay⁷³, Indian⁷⁴ and among the Europeans; France⁷⁵ and of more particularly relevance to this thesis, as to it

⁷¹ Eldersveld, Strömberg, and Derksen (ed.) 1995

⁷² Koh, 1989.

⁷³ Johan, 1984.

⁷⁴ Thakur, 1981.

⁷⁵ Suleiman, 1974

deals a large extent with the socialist legacy, is the research on the Soviet administrative elite.⁷⁶ Farmer's study is also interesting as it applies a 'revolutionary' approach comparing the shift of the elite during Gorbachev's transformation to the French revolution by drawing similarities between the Party *nomenklatura* and Tocqueville's aristocracy, and between non-Party intelligentsia and the bourgeoisie. Despite suspected differences between these particular countries, all these national administrative elite studies bear a strong resemblance to one another, as they focus around a few central topics such as: its recruitment and promotion, education, socialisation and modes of interaction, elite-society relations, sometimes values and beliefs, and accordingly, among them is job satisfaction.

These researches are a valuable source of information drawing the comprehensive portrait of the elite as a group and changes of the elite over the long-term, often inter-linked with certain political changes of leadership. Nevertheless, in these descriptions, the focus is on the elite as a social group and the presentation of their background and careers, whereas their policies and values are of secondary importance. Thus, main leaders are not distinguished from the portrait for the whole research group and policies and values are absent, or diluted in policies of the whole group. This is despite the fact that among the elite itself not everybody has the same influence and power. All this once more stresses the attractiveness of Dahl's study of New Haven, where in his elite study, an understanding of social background, careers, policies and beliefs complemented one another.

Finally, the classical studies of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*⁷⁷ and Dahl's book *Who governs?*⁷⁸ have left a lasting legacy. Tocqueville did not study local elites though he was emphatic in his understanding, that local democracy was key to national democracy. Dahl's portrait of local power structures in New Haven based on a set of lengthy interviews (but also supplemented by statistical data) not only enables the elite to be shown as a group, but also named and portrayed its main local leaders.

⁷⁶ Farmer, 1992.

⁷⁷ Tocqueville, 1994.

⁷⁸ Dahl, 1961.

Conclusion

This theoretical chapter aimed to provide an overview of the aims and method of the research project. Thus, it starts with arguments about the interest and importance of the study of regional elites in post-socialist countries. It then presents reasons to explain which methods are used and why. The next section of this chapter describes Polish reforms in the context of wider European administrative trends. Finally, the Upper Silesia case study is placed against a background of similar research, indicating the certain uniqueness of this elite but at the same time its similarity to other 'transitional' elites, thus making a preliminary contribution to elite studies more generally.

* * *

The structure of the thesis:

As mentioned earlier, the assumption that the composition of the regional elite and its regional policies were shaped by historical experience is reflected in the structure of this thesis. Chapter two concentrates on the territorial definition of Upper Silesia; it also gives an overview of early historical developments. This investigation is followed by an analysis of the inter-war period, and in the last section of this chapter, the socialist period. In chapter three, analysis of the transitional period starts with an investigation of *voivode* Czech's policies during the 'revolutionary' phase of the transitional period. The policies of his successor, *voivode* Ciszak, are examined in chapter four. Chapter five focuses on local political and administrative developments in local government in the period 1990-1997. Chapter six examines the Regional Contract signed in October 1995. Lastly, chapter seven presents the regional administrative elite's proposals for further administrative reform.

CHAPTER 2

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

This historical chapter is divided into three main sections: first, the early history of Silesia; second, the inter-war period; and third, the socialist period. Each of these three main sections starts with a short introduction and ends with a conclusion indicating the particular importance of this time to the transitional period. The importance of this historical introduction arise from frequent references to earlier historical events made by the members of the regional elite, even ones that which one could suspect are not relevant anymore.

2.1 Defining Upper Silesia

i. Early history of Silesia – Polish Silesia in the Middle Ages

In this first subsection the historical evolution of the concept of Silesia and later Upper Silesia is presented. This is followed by an investigation of Upper Silesia's historical ties with Poland, from its separation in the Middle Ages to its re-incorporation in 1922. Reference to Upper Silesian ties with Poland has been made in the debate on the regional and national identification of Silesians, which reappeared in the inter-war and socialist periods (and also in the transitional period, which is central to this investigation.)

In 1922 part of Upper Silesia was reincorporated into the Polish state after several centuries of separation. With regards to regional politics, the extremely strong role of regional identification is a distinctive characteristic of the region due to its early separation from the Polish state. In those parts of Poland that remained under Polish

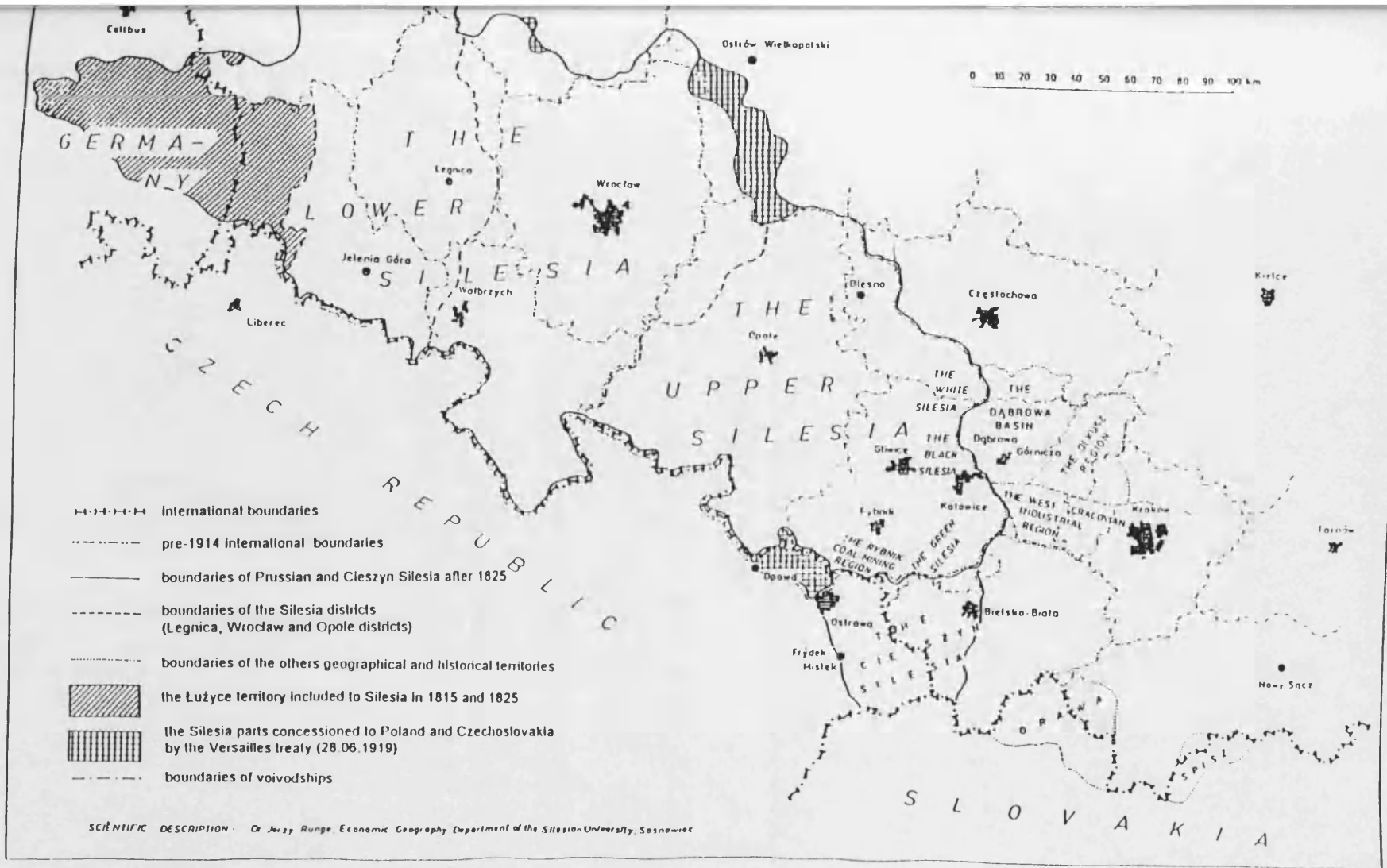
sovereignty for a few centuries before the partitions, the experience of national integration weakened regional identifications. This fact alone indicates the necessity for investigating the national identification of the inhabitants and their opinion on the incorporation of Upper Silesia into Poland. The national and regional (self-) identification of the native population, especially during *voivode* Czech's tenure (1990-1994) is therefore one of the central recurring points of reference in this research. The regional policy of *voivode* Czech was shaped primarily by his Silesian origins. It was marked by strong religious accents and sometimes by the primacy of regional values over national ones.

Silesia is the geographical region that 'lay on both sides of the river Odra, and stretched from near the source of the river north-westward for nearly 250 miles to the borders of Brandenburg.'⁷⁹

The region's ties to Poland date back to the seventh century A.D. At the time, the region was already inhabited by Polish tribes. In around the year 990, Silesia became part of the newly-formed Polish state. However, already in the Middle Ages, during the ninth and tenth centuries, Silesia, on the Polish border with the Czech and German states, was often invaded by them. At the beginning of the twelfth century, the Polish kingdom was substantially weakened by fragmentation into small duchies. The same happened in Silesia, and this drew the attention of its neighbours. In 1348 the Polish king Casimir the Great formally signed over Poland's right to Silesia to the Czech king, John Luxembourg. Despite this, Silesian ties with Poland were preserved by the maintenance of rule in the provinces by dukes originating from the Polish House of Piast. Almost two centuries later, in 1526, the province of Silesia, with other Czech territories, passed to the Habsburgs. The Silesian branch of the house of Piast continued to rule until 1675, when it was extinguished with the death of the Duke of Brzesko-Legnica. This date can be seen as marking the extinction of the Polish ruling class in Silesia, although the Polish language and Polish traditions were preserved in succeeding centuries among peasants and industrial workers.

⁷⁹ Pond, 1958: 1.

Map 1: The boundaries of Silesia (source: Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański, 1994 Appendix)



ii. *The Polish administrative tradition during the Partitions, 1795-1918*

At the end of the eighteenth century, the old Polish republic, unable to create a strong central power and with backward administrative institutions (both central and territorial), was divided⁷⁹ among its neighbouring states: the kingdom of Prussia, and the Russian and Austrian empires. The long period of the partition led to the formation of different administrative and legal cultures in the three territories of the partition.

It could be argued that such a remote historical division is irrelevant to politics in the late twentieth century. However, the systemic transition was a time of national and regional redefinition, and the role of past events, even remote ones, was crucial. For example, in the Katowice voivodship, *voivode* Czech, referring to this period, emphasised the cultural distinctiveness of Upper Silesia and Prussian Poland from the neighbouring Dąbrowa region, which used to form part of Russian Poland.

All three partition powers left their mark in the shape of different attitudes towards administration, the state, law, and the degree of preservation of national awareness. The three administrations differed both in their attitudes to Polish culture and national identity, and in their administrative efficiency. In the Prussian and Russian sections, a policy of denationalisation was enforced, and Poles were excluded from the administration as a result. However, Prussia had a long, relatively democratic (by comparison with Austria and Russia) tradition due to the early formation of elective institutions, as illustrated by the early introduction of constitutional monarchy. Moreover, in Prussia the strong and efficient state (which eliminated illiteracy and provided workers' insurance) led to strong respect for the state and its institutions, with the rule of law being deeply rooted.

In contrast, the legacy of the Russian State was an absence of legal order. Russian officials exercised control from distant central institutions. This, in turn, led to extreme bureaucratic wilfulness within the decision-making process, which oscillated between corruption and cruelty. Poles living in Russia saw the Russian state and its administration as alien.

⁷⁹ Three Partitions of 1772, 1793 and 1795.

The third partitional territory, Galicia, enjoyed autonomy. Poles were employed at all levels of administration, some even as Prime Ministers. However, the Austrian state was excessively bureaucratic and characterised by complicated and time-consuming procedures.⁸⁰

iii. Upper Silesia under Prussian rule, 1740-1922

The region of Silesia is divided into two main parts, Lower and Upper Silesia.⁸¹ During the sixteenth century, the term 'Upper Silesia' began to be used to describe the geographical region around the sources of the river Odra (*Oder*). After the Austro-Prussian wars of 1740-1763, the term 'Upper Silesia' began to be used to cover only Prussian Upper Silesia. In this thesis the term 'Upper Silesia' will be used according to this definition. The tiny piece of Upper Silesia left in Austria began to be called Cieszyn Silesia.

After incorporation in 1763 the Prussian administration encouraged the industrial development of the region, and industrialisation played a primary role in the development of Upper Silesia in the period after the Austro-Prussian wars.

iv. Regional and national identification in Upper Silesia

After the annexation of Upper Silesia in 1763, Prussia introduced a policy of germanisation, which became more intensive in the period of the *Kulturkampf* (1872-1886). Statistical data show that the percentage of the Polish-speaking population in Upper Silesia began to decrease in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, but Polish-speakers still made up the majority of its population. Indeed, at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries one could observe the emergence of national identification among the majority of Polish-speaking Silesians. The first Polish candidates to the Prussian *Reichstag* were elected only in 1903.

The Polish-speaking population of Upper Silesia was set apart from the German newcomers, not just by their language but also by their religion (Catholic Poles as

⁸⁰ Hamilton and Roszkowski, 1991.

⁸¹ See map 1, page 40.

opposed to Protestant Germans) and their lower social position (Polish-speakers were predominantly blue-collar workers). The still-existing Polish-Silesian prejudice against upward mobility is rooted in this period. As a result native Silesians are still underrepresented among regional upper classes in proportion to Polish newcomers.⁸² At that time avoiding upward promotion was a way for Polish-speaking Silesians to preserve ties to their own cultural group. The policy of the Prussian state allowed promotion only for people willing to adopt the German language and complete separation from the group that they came from. For Silesians this meant alienation from their own (ethnic) group. Thus, they avoided upward mobility.⁸³ Despite these distinctive cultural, religious and, finally, linguistic differences between German newcomers and Polish-speaking natives, the main historical division for the native population was the religious one. Despite efforts by the native population to preserve their own group identity, which without doubt went along ethnic lines, the native population did not see themselves as distinct from newcomers in national terms.

This rise of national awareness, which became marked at the turn of the century, did not end until the conclusion of the inter-war period, and some would suggest that it is not finished even now. Chlebowczyk (1980) applies to Upper Silesia the concept of borderland awareness, in which national identification is not bifurcated but rather may be placed along a continuum of identities. According to Chlebowczyk the continuum starts with ultra-nationalism at both extremes of the scale (the German and the Polish) and moves towards national indifference in its centre. In the case of Upper Silesia, German and Polish influences overlapped, and Upper Silesians were exposed to both of these influences. However, in certain periods, the more attractive state (economically/culturally) attracted the 'borderland' society and inclined Upper Silesians to shift their identification towards it. This process can, for example, be illustrated by the mass emigration of the native population to Germany in the late seventies, as a result of discriminatory policies toward the Silesian population by the communist regional authorities. On the other hand, Szramek,⁸⁴ one of the most prominent Silesian authors, compared a Silesian to a pear-tree that bears fruit on both sides of the frontier. For an Upper Silesian, the adoption of the Polish or German national option imply respectively

⁸² This was despite the fact that they were predominant among the regional administrative elite in the nineties. However, this reflects their stronger engagement in the public life of the region rather than their number per se.

⁸³ Błaszczak-Waławik, 1990.

⁸⁴ Szramek, *Śląsk*, no.1, 1995.

cultural homelessness (or alienation); being a Silesian meant the integration of both influences.

2.2 The tradition of administrative autonomy in Upper Silesia in the inter-war period, 1922-1939

The aim of this section is to describe the taking over of a part of Upper Silesia by Poland and its social and administrative integration into the state in the inter-war period. First, the national situation will be presented; the rebirth of the Polish state and the inter-war administrative tradition of 1918-1939. The analysis starts by highlighting the importance of the inter-war experience as a source of inspiration to reformers in the nineties, at both the regional and national levels. This description of administration in Poland as a whole will lead to the presentation of the particular situation in Upper Silesia and its administration. Special attention is paid to rights and privileges in the form of regional autonomy for Upper Silesia, with significant powers remaining with the regional authorities. This subsection also investigates the composition and performance of the inter-war regional administration, with special attention being paid to the main regional leaders, the *voivodes*, and their local government counterparts (the discussion focuses on the mayors of Katowice).

i. The rebirth of the Polish state and the inter-war administrative tradition

After the fall of communism, members of the Solidarity opposition turned to the inter-war period for inspiration in their efforts to reform what they considered to be the completely distorted political and economic institutional systems inherited from the communist period. The influence of the inter-war model is also very evident in relation to the subject under investigation; the systemic reform of public administration. Proposals for reform were based on a return to the former three-tier administrative structure and territorial division of the country. The influence of the inter-war period may also be discerned in the reform of local government, which was the first step in the systemic reform of administration. The institutions of local government were given

autonomy from central government, a move that was inspired by the perceived effectiveness of this institutional arrangement during the inter-war period.

The importance of the inter-war experience as a model for political, economic and administrative institutional reforms at the beginning of the nineties is rooted in the nation's history. It was in the period immediately following the First World War that the Polish state – the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939) – reappeared after the prolonged period of the partitions. It was then that the modern state and its administrative institutions were formed, that the territory of Poland began to be re-unified under its own laws and legal system, and that the training of native Polish civil servants began.

Table 1. Summary of main characteristics of local government and regional administration systems in Poland 1918-1997

DURATION OF THE PERIODS	TYPES OF STRUCTURE	NUMBER OF UNITS
<p>THE SECOND REPUBLIC (1918-1939)</p> <p>1. IN GENERAL</p>	<p>New and original administrative system, inspired mainly by the former partitioning powers¹ The preservation of certain distinctiveness of territorial administration among former partitions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • THE FORMER AUSTRIAN PARTITION local government at local and district level (weak and undemocratic at district level) • THE FORMER PRUSSIAN PARTITION local government at local and district level and elective regional government at voivodship level • THE FORMER RUSSIAN PARTITION local government at local and district level 	<p>17 voivodships</p>
<p>2. IN AUTONOMOUS SILESIA VOIVODSHIP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ VOIVODSHIP LEVEL – The Silesian Diet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the right to administrative and tax bills - the executive body - Voivodship Council chaired by voivode <p>Also, in Silesia voivodship, the distinctiveness between former Prussian and Austrian partition was preserved (Upper Silesia and Cieszyn Silesia)²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ THE DISTRICT LEVEL quite similar ▪ THE LOCAL LEVEL the existence of additional local government units at the level of boroughs (<i>Amtsbezirke</i>) in Upper Silesia but not in Cieszyn Silesia³ 	<p>7 districts in Upper Silesia part</p> <p>2 districts in Cieszyn Silesia part</p>

¹ Izdebski, Kulesza, 1999: 59

² For example, election laws distinguished these two parts of Silesia throughout the whole pre-war period

³ Sieradzka 1992

DURATION OF THE PERIODS	TYPES OF STRUCTURE	NUMBER OF UNITS
<u>THE POLISH PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC</u> (1945-1989)		
1. 1945-50;	<p>THE 'POLISH' STAGE,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - continuation of the institutional and structural patterns of the pre-war period - territorial organisation resembled Polish (and Western European tradition) 	In 1950 - 17 voivodships, 314 districts 4315 communes
2. 1950 -75;	<p>THE 'POLISH -SOVIET' STAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soviet type of territorial organisation of the state was imposed – territorial division of country was preserved but filled with Soviet-type institutions 	
3. 1975-89. ⁴	<p>THE 'POLISH -SOVIET-FRENCH' STAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - territorial division of state 	1972 - reduction in the number of communes from 4315 to 1354 1975 - abolition of districts, replacement of 17 with 49 voivodships ⁵
<u>THE THIRD REPUBLIC</u> (1989 – 1997)⁶ - the period under investigation		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1990 reformed local government at commune level and unreformed district and regional level - 1994 Pilot Programme Towns and 1996-1997 Big Towns – 'town-districts' 	

⁴ In this diagram, the division used by Kukliński and Swianiewicz in their analysis of Polish meso – voivodship administration was adopted but modified.

⁵ Wollman *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 1997.

⁶ The analysis in the period of the still current Third Republic was limited in this diagram to the changes during the period of my research.

The administrative difficulties that characterised the inter-war period, and which were rooted in the period of the partitions, were only partially overcome at the time. Throughout the whole inter-war period, the administration of the newly formed state faced two main problems. The first was how to unite territories divided by three different administrative traditions and, at the same time, create an independent state administration that would enjoy wide social support. Partitioning and foreign occupation had led to strong distrust of state institutions among the Poles, with the exception of those living in the Prussian partition (where, as we have seen, attempts at germanisation were accompanied by efficient administration and the rule of law). As a result, even when the independent state was formed, administration in general still enjoyed a low social status.⁹¹ These social attitudes distinguished Poland from other Eastern European countries.⁹²

The second main difficulty was the lack of civil servants. This too was a result of partitioning. In both Prussian and Russian Poland, Poles had, in general, been excluded from the administration. In the Austrian section, the policy had been more relaxed and Poles had occupied a wide range of administrative positions. As a result, the Polish state administration after the First World War was dominated by poorly-educated civil servants from Galicia.⁹³ This is illustrated by the experience of the Silesian voivodship, where four out of the five *voivodes* who held power during the inter-war period were from Galicia.

During the twenty-one years of the inter-war period (1918-1939) the two main problems facing the newly-established state (concerning the territorial unification of the state and the formation of highly-trained administrative personnel) only began to be overcome. Their influence is felt to this very day. At present, some of the territorial divisions dating back to the period of the partitions are still influential. My research on the period from 1990-1997 indicates, for example, that in the Katowice voivodship, the cultural, economic and political divisions between Upper Silesia and the Dąbrowa basin have been preserved (Upper Silesia used to form part of the Prussian and Dąbrowa of the

⁹¹ Piekalewicz, 1975: 8.

⁹² Schöpflin, 1993: 14-15.

⁹³ Hamilton and Roszkowski, 1991.

Russian partition).⁹⁴ Similarly, the second of the inter-war difficulties, low social prestige, still causes serious hardship for the current regional administrative elite.⁹⁵

ii. The administrative structure in the inter-war period

The inter-war Polish state was fashioned after the model of the Third French Republic. The administration was divided into three tiers: voivodships, districts, and communes. Extended administrative powers were given to the administration of the 16 voivodships.⁹⁶ The power of *voivodes* (in striking contrast to the socialist and post-socialist situation) extended to all administrative issues, with the exceptions only of the military, tax collection, and educational issues.⁹⁷ This was expected to balance the power of the central government in Warsaw and to preserve the stability of the administration even if the central cabinets were unstable.

The Silesian voivodship was divided into districts and communes in accordance with the three-tier model described above and applied to the whole Polish state. Its special status as an autonomous voivodship modified its structure mainly by the creation of an additional institution, the Silesian Diet. The diet was a directly elected regional parliament, equipped with wide political powers.

Variations in the three-tier structure reflected the pre-independence situation and distinguished between the former Galicia, and Prussian and Russian Poland. For example, elective regional government existed only in the former Prussian partition.⁹⁸ Thus, in this thesis, the administrative structure will be presented using the model of the Upper Silesian part of the Silesia voivodship. The other part of the voivodship, Cieszyn Silesia, formerly part of Galicia, had a slightly different administrative structure. In

⁹⁴ The question of whether these two areas should stay in the same voivodship was an important issue on the agenda of the regional elite. This conflict between Upper Silesia and the Dąbrowa basin started in the socialist period, when they were united in one voivodship, although there were also tensions during the war. In 1990, the Upper Silesian Union blamed the region's degradation during the socialist period on the fact that it was dominated by the elites from Dąbrowa. The question of whether these two parts should stay together was also raised by *voivode* Czech (see chapter three).

⁹⁵ The low social prestige of civil servants and negative attitudes towards administration were indicated during interviews with the voivodship office elite (see chapter three) and local government elite (see chapter five).

⁹⁶ Map 2, page 51.

⁹⁷ In Silesia voivodship, however, tax collection and education were also under *voivode* supervision.

⁹⁸ Izdebski, 1996: 147.

other words, different parts of the Silesia Voivodship had slightly different administrative arrangements, depending on the power that had occupied them during the 'partitions'.



Map 4: The administrative division of inter-war Poland (source: Davies, 1981 volume 2 p. 403)

iii. Inter-war regional autonomy of Upper Silesia and historical and administrative continuity

At the beginning of the nineties, just like the national elite, the regional administrative elite of Upper Silesia looked to the inter-war period in drawing up their proposals for administrative reform. However, their conclusions were coloured by the specific characteristics of Upper Silesian administration in the inter-war years, particularly the experience of regional autonomy which had been unique in Poland. This strengthened their belief that the decentralisation of power was an urgent necessity, as was further administrative reform. Therefore, their demands were more radical than the proposals put forward by the central elite or by regional elites in other parts of the country.

The inter-war period was perceived by the regional Solidarity elite, mostly in the period 1990-1994, as the 'golden age' of Upper Silesia. Regional policies were therefore directed to obtaining powers similar to those held by the inter-war regional authorities. Thus, the concept of 'the golden age' will be investigated in relation to the performance of the administration during that period, and in assessing the social and economic conditions of regional society. The events that led to the granting of regional autonomy in the inter-war period will be reconstructed in order to explain why the region was the only one to receive such political and economic rights. Historical developments in the inter-war Silesia voivodship and its administration will be investigated thoroughly as it is assumed that strong historical continuity is present. Thus, the belief that the region deserved special treatment because of its economic contribution to the nation, which was widely held in Silesia during the inter-war period, is still present and influential.

Due to this historical continuity, attitudes to regional policy in the transitional period can be completely understood only within the context of the region's history. This seems to be particularly important in relation to such issues as:

- The national and regional identification of the native Silesian population. The manner of Upper Silesia's incorporation into the Polish state by means of a plebiscite sometimes raised doubts among sectors of the native population as to whether they had made the right decision. The results of the plebiscite and the subsequent doubts among the native population had a very strong impact on the policies of the national and regional authorities towards the native population. For

example, restrictions were first introduced in relation to their employment in administration in the inter-war years, and these reappeared in the socialist period.

- The issue of class structure; that is, the consequence of the absence of a native Silesian upper class such that only scattered individuals were members of a regional elite.
- The ways in which regional and national identification, as well as social structure, interacted and influenced the relationship between the native population and newcomers, leading to the reappearance of conflicts.

Therefore, in the following sections the inter-war *voivodes*, local government leaders and their regional policies will be presented in detail as their influence reaches far beyond the inter-war period, and substantial similarities and continuity have been preserved in regional administration.

iv. Formation of the Silesian voivodship

The Silesia voivodship was formed out of two areas: Cieszyn Silesia, incorporated in 1920, and Upper Silesia, added in 1922. This thesis will, in general, concentrate on the Upper Silesian part of the Silesia voivodship, as Cieszyn Silesia, for the whole inter-war period, preserved its national, social, and administrative distinctiveness.

The economic importance of Upper Silesia led to a four-year-long period of bargaining between Germany and Poland over the region. As a result, the voivodship of Silesia was the last territory to be united with Poland. In the spring of 1919, during the Peace Conference in Paris, it was suggested by the Alliance that Upper Silesia would be assigned to Poland. The Polish delegation, headed by Dmowski, had claimed the region for Poland on the grounds that the proportion of Poles in the region exceeded 90 per cent. Rymer, who was later to become the first *voivode* of Silesia, was present as an adviser to the Polish delegation concerning Silesia.

Kaeckenbeeck, the president of the Arbitral Tribunal of Upper Silesia,⁹⁹ recollected in his memoirs strong German protests. Their arguments suggested a lack of economic and cultural ties with the Polish state. He noted:

No point of the first draft of the Peace Treaty brought a more emphatic protest from Germany than the cession of Upper Silesia to Poland. In the remarks of the German delegation it constituted an absolutely unjustified inroad into the geographical and economic structure of the German Reich. Since 1163 Upper Silesia had had no political connexion whatever with Poland. There were no Polish national traditions in Upper Silesia, no memory of Polish history; nor had Upper Silesia participated in the liberation struggle. Germany further denied that Upper Silesia was inhabited by a clearly Polish population.¹⁰⁰

In June 1919, the final version of proposals handed to the German delegation concluded that the fate of Silesia was to be decided in a plebiscite. While this was in preparation, Polish Risings broke out twice, once in 1919 and once in 1920.¹⁰¹ In the run up to the plebiscite each side tried to increase its support among the population. In October 1919 the Prussian parliament introduced a bill proposing to give autonomy to Upper Silesia. In July 1920, the Polish parliament, trying to compete with the German offer, proposed autonomy to whatever part of the Upper Silesian territory was granted to Poland.

According to Ciągwa (1997), autonomy was mainly proposed to strengthen the attractiveness of the Polish State and to incline the Silesians to vote for Poland during the plebiscite in March 1921. During the plebiscite agitation, the Polish authorities, aware that the new state was weak and vulnerable, wished to make the Polish offer more attractive by promising substantial financial and economic privileges in addition to wider political rights. The region was to have its own treasury with extensive financial discretion, and was to be equipped with its own regional diet. In the financial sphere regional autonomy enabled the formation of the Silesian Treasury, the institution which was to guarantee maintenance of the existing living conditions and the further industrial development of the region. In other words, the incorporation of Upper Silesia was to be achieved by promising to preserve the economic and living conditions that the region enjoyed as part of Germany. For example, wages in the region were by far the highest

⁹⁹ The international court formed by the Alliance to supervise the realisation of the acts of the Geneva Convention.

¹⁰⁰ Kaeckenbeeck, 1942: 4.

¹⁰¹ The Third Silesian Rising according to Davies (1981 volume 2 pp. 499-500) was a protest against the definition of plebiscite territory in the Treaty. The Second Rising started on 19 August and lasted five days. It was triggered by premature German celebrations of the capture of Warsaw by the Russian army.

compared to other parts of Poland.¹⁰²

In addition, Polish propaganda during the plebiscite campaign tried to show that incorporation into Poland would improve the Silesians' social position as they would gain opportunities for better education and professional careers. One such attempt to reassure Silesians concerning their position in Poland was the employment policy concerning civil servants in Silesia voivodship, promulgated by the Polish parliament in May 1921. Article 3 of 'the regional constitution' (*Status Organiczny*)¹⁰³ gave Silesian civil servants precedence over Poles from other regions.

Polish efforts to strengthen the Polish position during the plebiscite brought only limited success, and the results of the plebiscite in March 1921 were in favour of Germany. 993,826 Silesians participated in the plebiscite, comprising 95.5 per cent of those eligible. Among the 190,000 émigrés¹⁰⁴ who returned for the vote, 182,288 were German emigrants and 10,120 Poles. Only 40.4 per cent voted for union with Poland.¹⁰⁵

As a result of the plebiscite (and of the Third Silesian Rising which followed), Germany received 61 per cent of the 11,000 km² area, but Poland received the richest part of the region: Polish Upper Silesia accounted for 74.3 per cent of coal extracted in the region and for 58 per cent of pig iron production.¹⁰⁶ However, in the first years, Germans were able to preserve ownership of 75 per cent of heavy industry and about 87 per cent of the land in Polish Upper Silesia.¹⁰⁷ Thus, regional policies that aimed at the integration of Upper Silesia with Poland by trying to increase Polish ownership in Upper Silesia were of particular importance, especially for *voivode* Grażyński (1926-1939).

The results of the plebiscite should not be taken as definite and unambiguous indicators of the 'national' identification of the Silesians: economic and social considerations also influenced their decisions. Some Polish Silesians were fearful of incorporation into the newly-formed Poland: many of them considered union with Poland was a leap into the

¹⁰² Rose, 1935.

¹⁰³ Quoted by Ciągwa, 1985: 141.

¹⁰⁴ People born in the region but living abroad who returned for the plebiscite.

¹⁰⁵ Polish propaganda after the plebiscite tried to sweeten the results by arguing that 47.3 per cent of those voters actually living in Silesia voted for union with Poland.

¹⁰⁶ Rechowicz, 1988: 15.

¹⁰⁷ Błaszczak-Waławik, 1990: 22.

unknown, and its effects on their economic and social positions could not be predicted with any certainty. Many were doubtful of the new Poland's economic and political strength. Moreover, the strong regional ties worked against the exclusion of Upper Silesia from Germany. The results also showed that the social structure in the region was significant to the final outcome, with pro-German votes dominant among the middle and upper classes as a whole.¹⁰⁸

For the Polish authorities, the results raised the fundamental question of the national and regional identification of the Silesian population. The issue was to have a significant impact on regional policies towards the native population. Doubts over the identification of Silesians with Poland, and therefore over their loyalty to the state, would resurface at all critical moments of regional history; for example, in 1945 and in 1990.

The results of the plebiscite also led to the third and the largest of the Silesian Risings,¹⁰⁹ with the participation of about 60,000 Polish Silesians. This started as a refusal to accept the March 1921 plebiscite result and lasted for two months (3 May-5 July 1921). The Rising convinced the Allied powers to divide the territory in a way that was more favourable to Poland. More importantly, these Risings, especially the Third, also had a major impact on the inter-war period (and to some extent on the socialist period) for three main reasons.

The first reason was that they projected the development of Silesian awareness from the regional to the national sphere. The second was that they were crucial in the formation of the regional political and administrative elite, especially during the *Sanacja* regime of 1926-1939.¹¹⁰ The third was that the Silesian Risings, as well as the plebiscite, strongly

¹⁰⁸ Wanatowicz, 1982: 31.

¹⁰⁹ First 16-24 August 1919, Second 19-25 August 1920.

¹¹⁰ The Silesian insurrectionaries joined the administration in three waves. The first wave was immediately after 1922 but they were gradually replaced by newcomers. The second wave of employment of Insurrectionaries was during the *Sanacja* period, and the third was after the Second World War until about 1950. Several insurrectionaries rose to prominence in the inter-war period and even later, for example, Józef Rymer (*voivode* from June 1922 to December 1922) and Michał Grażyński (*voivode* from 1926-1939), Jerzy Ziętek, who was deputy *voivode* and *voivode* in the period 1945-1975 and Arka Bożek, (deputy *voivode* from 1945 to 1950).

Wojciech Korfanty (1873-1939), another prominent insurrectionary, played a crucial role through the whole inter-war period. His exceptional position was due to his role in the emergence of Polish national identification among the native population of Upper Silesia; he was also a charismatic leader of the Silesian Risings. In 1918 he was the only politician in the region who was able to unify the Polish

influenced the Silesians' view of what type of ties they wanted to have with the rest of Poland. Three different currents of opinion were discernible. First, there were those who doubted whether the region should be incorporated into Poland at all, preferring to remain part of Germany. Others argued that the region should be incorporated into Poland with a privileged status as an autonomous region. The last group suggested that the region should be incorporated into Poland without receiving autonomy or any other privileges that would differentiate it from any other region.

Most Silesians saw union with Poland as the result of a free choice made during the plebiscite, rather than the efforts of the newly-born Polish state. For example, military support for the Silesian Risings had been limited as the Polish army was engaged on the eastern front at the time. Silesians also felt alienated from other parts of Poland due to the fact that Poles from other regions had a limited awareness of the preservation of Polish dialect and tradition in Upper Silesia.

The Silesians' views on Upper Silesia's ties with Poland can be contrasted with attitudes in Cieszyn Silesia.¹¹¹ In Cieszyn Silesia, there was no plebiscite and it was thought natural that the area should be incorporated into Poland. By contrast, among Upper Silesians the plebiscite raised doubts as to whether they wanted to belong to Poland at all. Since then, this fundamental question – whether to stay within the Polish state or at least to have regional autonomy – has been raised by representatives of the native population at all critical points in regional history.

The economic importance of Upper Silesia, German irredentism and fear of possible dissatisfaction among the native population with belonging to the Polish state, led to the adoption of protective and privileged policies throughout the inter-war period. This was also strengthened by the Silesians' belief that their region was the most developed in inter-war Poland. One of the most striking examples of these protective actions was the employment policy that existed only in this voivodship and controlled the inflow of workers from neighbouring regions.

political parties of the region. Later, during the inter-war period, Upper Silesia lacked a leader who had such prestige. Korfanty did not work in regional administration as he had ambitions to become the national leader, trying to challenge Piłsudski's position. In addition, he was the leader of the Christian Democracy, the most influential regional party.

¹¹¹ Kopeć, 1986.

v. *Administration in the Silesian voivodship*

The incorporation of Upper Silesia in 1922 was a challenging task for the newly-established Polish state. The difficulties associated with its incorporation were similar to those in other parts of the new state, but the early separation of Silesia from Poland made them even more severe. For example, demand for civil servants, as well as engineers, lawyers and teachers, was much greater in Silesia than in any other part of the new state. Although Silesians were guaranteed precedence over Poles from other parts of the country, in practice there were not enough of them with the qualifications required to fill the available posts. This was further aggravated by the lack of a tradition of higher education in Upper Silesia. In 1929/1930, a total of just 350 Silesians were enrolled in any type of Bachelor's and Master's degree courses, which meant one student per 2,600-2,650 people. This was in contrast to one student per 700 persons in other parts of Poland.¹¹² As a result, during the whole inter-war period, nearly all senior positions in the regional administration and in industry were taken by newcomers – Poles who came from other parts of the country.¹¹³ Moreover, in Upper Silesia, a Polish upper class did not exist at all in sharp contrast to other parts of Poland, even those that had been under Prussian rule, like Posnania. This was a consequence of the long separation from the Polish state (from 1348 until about 1918).

Administration in the voivodship of Silesia (Polish Upper Silesia) was modified by two distinctive features: first, by the above-mentioned regional autonomy, and second, by the Geneva Convention, which established limited international supervision over the region for a period of fifteen years. The Geneva Convention was signed in May 1922 by the governments of Germany and Poland, just before taking over their parts of Upper Silesia in June 1922. The Convention aimed to ease the difficulties caused by artificially cutting through the middle of an economic unit, and to preserve minority rights. The Convention had a significant impact on the economic development of Polish Upper Silesia as it preserved the privileged economic position of the German owners and limited some reforms. For example, the Polish authorities were unable to carry out agricultural reforms that involved re-distributing the land (mostly German-owned) among the native population.

¹¹² Błaszczak-Waławik, 1990.

¹¹³ Rose 1935, Wanatowicz 1982.

More importantly, regional autonomy modified the administrative structure of the Silesia voivodship by establishing the Silesian Diet (legislature). The Diet aimed to cover social, economic, and educational issues, but its powers were limited in the financial and social areas. Its members were directly elected in regional elections. In the inter-war period, the Silesian Diet was crucial in preserving the democratic culture of the region. The Silesian Diet was abolished in 1945, together with the autonomy of the Silesian voivodship. The second institution of regional autonomy was the Silesian Treasury, which guaranteed that only about seven per cent of *tangenta* – regional revenues – went to the central budget.

a. The public administration elite

In the inter-war period in Silesia voivodship two main phases can be distinguished: first, ‘gradual polonisation’, from 1922 until 1926; and second, radical polonisation between 1926 and 1939. This periodisation is based on the regional policies introduced by the various *voivodes*, especially as regards the composition of the regional administrative elite. Presentation of the regional policies is preceded by a sociological characterisation of their main agents, the *voivodes*: their regional origins, education, administrative qualifications, and their weak or strong position in the region.¹¹⁴

During the first period – that of gradual polonisation – the *voivodes* changed frequently. Regional policy was, therefore, inconsistent and the *voivode*’s power was relatively weak. This weakness was especially marked in regional industry, where German owners preserved their domination. These *voivodes* also had only limited ‘success’ in decreasing the proportion of pupils attending German minority schools (the number of pupils in these minority schools was significantly higher proportionally than the number of Germans in the voivodship). However, the distinguishing feature of the first period was the gradual influx of newcomers into administration.

The period of gradual polonisation can itself be divided into two phases. The first phase is connected with the rule of *voivode* Rymer. During that time one observes the relative domination of Silesians, but the process of importing civil servants from other parts of

¹¹⁴ See table 2, page 61.

Poland had already started. However, some protective policies were introduced by the *voivode* to limit the radical fall in the employment of Silesian civil servants, among them former insurrectionaries. In the second phase, power was transferred from the native Silesian *voivode* to three successive newcomers who were in office for a relatively short period of time, about a year each, except for Bilski, who lasted a little longer. Their rule was characterised by the rising domination of newcomers, as stricter qualifications criteria were introduced in the recruitment of the administration.

Silesian politics in the inter-war period tended to shadow those at the centre. Thus, some changes in the Silesian voivodship in the first period were similar to those in the centre – for example, frequent changes of central government. After Piłsudski's coup of 1926, in the voivodship of Silesia, as in central government, authoritarian power was exercised by former army officers. The *Sanacja* regime led to the stabilisation of political power in the voivodship: there was only one *voivode* after 1926 (Grażyński). He used this long tenure to introduce his vision of regional policy, directed towards the radical polonisation of industry and education. His authoritarian rule shared the main features of the various central governments at that time, notably the restriction of opposition activists. This culminated in the use of physical force against them and imprisonment. Moreover, the Silesian Diet, like the *Sejm* in Warsaw, was twice dissolved during Grażyński's tenure.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁵ An important event that shaped the development of the inter-war administration at both national and regional level was the Piłsudski *coup d'état* in 1926, which established the *Sanacja* regime. In the aftermath of the coup, authoritarian governments dominated by military officers were established. The *Sanacja* regime made substantial efforts to unify the administrative structure and the electoral laws of the formerly separate Polish territories. However, the take-over of power by the Piłsudski regime also had negative effects on administration; in particular, extreme politicisation of the administration occurred (Ajnenkiel, 1977).

Table 2: The main administrative periods of the inter-war Silesia voivodship, 1922- 1939, and the *voivodes*.

THE MAIN ADMINISTRATIVE PERIODS OF THE INTER-WAR SILESIA VOIVODSHIP (1922-1939) (according to regional policies introduced by <i>voivodes</i> and the composition of the regional administrative elite)		NAMES OF VOIVODES	PERIOD IN OFFICE	REGIONAL ORIGINS (FROM UPPER SILESIA, OR OTHER PARTS OF POLAND)	CONTACTS WITH UPPER SILESIA BEFORE PROMOTION	ACHIEVED EDUCATION	PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF ADMINISTRATION
FIRST PERIOD : GRADUAL POLONISATION (1922-1926)	First phase: relative domination of Silesians in administration (1922-1922)	JÓZEF RYMER (1882-1922)	(June 1922-Dec. 1922)	Silesian	The chief position during the Silesian Risings	'self-taught'	(1921-1922) Chairman of the Principal People's Council in Upper Silesia
		ANTONI SCHULTIS (1869-1939)	(Feb. 1923-Oct. 1923)	Newcomer (Galicia)	During the plebiscite, in the Legal Department of the commissariat	LLM University of Lwow (Galicia)	(1890-1918) Work in Galician administration (1918-1921) Ministry of Internal Affairs (1921-1923) Director of department in voivodship office in Lwow
	Second phase: domination of Newcomers in administration (1923-1926)	TADEUSZ KONCKI (1878-1924)	(Oct. 1923-May 1924)	Newcomer (Galicia)	No earlier contacts with Upper Silesia	LLM, LLD Jagellonian University Cracow (Galicia)	(1907-1918) Work in Galician administration (1919-1923) Managerial position in Ministry of Internal Affairs
		MIECZYSLAW BILSKI (1875 - after 1938)	(May 1924-Sept. 1926)	Newcomer (Galicia)	No earlier contacts with Upper Silesia	LLM University of Lwow	(1902-1914) Work in Galician administration (1918-1919) Ministry of Internal Affairs (1919-1923) Deputy <i>voivode</i> of Warsaw (1923-1924) <i>Voivode</i> of Kielce voivodship
SECOND PERIOD: RADICAL POLONIZATION (1926-1939)		MICHAŁ GRAŻYŃSKI (1890-1965)	(Sept. 1926-Sept. 1939)	Newcomer (Galicia)	The chief position during the third Silesian Rising	MA History LLD Jagellonian University Cracow	(1921-1923) Lecturer at Jagellonian University (1924-1925) Director of department in Ministry of Agricultural Reform

Table 3: The characteristics of the deputy *voivodes* in the inter-war Silesia voivodship, 1922-1939

NAMES OF DEPUTY VOIVODES		PERIOD IN OFFICE	REGIONAL ORIGINS	EARLIER CONTACTS WITH UPPER SILESIA BEFORE PROMOTION	ACHIEVED EDUCATION	PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE OF ADMINISTRATION
FIRST DEPUTY VOIVODE	ZYGMUNT ŻURAWSKI (1878-1962)	(June 1922–June 1931)	Cieszyn Silesian (formerly part of Galicia)	(1918) Participant in Cieszyn Silesia's fight for incorporation into Polish state (1920) Commissar of Polish Government for the Duchy of Cieszyn Silesia	LLM Univ. of Lwow	(1895-1918) Work in Galician administration
	TADEUSZ SALONI (1890-?)	(June 1931–Sept. 1939)	Newcomer Galicia	No earlier contacts with Upper Silesia	LLD Jagellonian Univ. Cracow	Work in Cracow district administration (Since 1921) Legal adviser in Ministry of Interior (Since 1926) work in the voivodship office in Katowice (1927-1931) Director of Presidium Department in the voivodship office in Katowice
SECOND DEPUTY VOIVODE SINCE 1935	LEON MALHOLME (1888- c. 1940)	(May 1935–Sept. 1939)	Newcomer Russia (but of Polish nationality)	(1929-1933) Polish consul in: Bytom and Opole in (German Upper Silesia) (1934-1935) Polish consul in: Ostrawa Morawska (Czech Cieszyn Silesia)	LLM Univ. of Petersburg Univ. of Dorpat	(Since 1918) Ministry of Foreign Affairs (1934) Legal adviser in Polish Embassy in Paris

- The Voivodes

An analysis of regional policy demands presentation of the main actors; the *voivodes*. The first *voivode* after the incorporation of Upper Silesia into Poland, Rymer, and his deputy, Żurawski, were both Silesians and independence fighters.¹¹⁶ Their nominations seem to have been related to their origins: Rymer, who was a representative of Upper Silesia, the major part of the new voivodship, became *voivode*; Żurawski, who was a representative of Cieszyn Silesia, became deputy *voivode*. Rymer represented the 'combatant' type of administrative career. It was based on his achievements during the struggle for Upper Silesia's incorporation into Poland. In 1921, he became the chairman of the Principal People's Council, whose aim it was to prepare Polish civil servants for the new voivodship. This experience was the dominating factor in his promotion and compensated for his lack of education and administrative qualifications. The pure 'combatant' type of career is fairly rare in the inter-war period and can be mainly observed in 1922, also among his Silesian colleagues employed in administration.

Rymer's administrative career is quite similar to that of some regional leaders of the socialist period, such as Zawadzki, Nowak, Gierek and Grudzień. Like them, Rymer, as a boy, emigrated to Germany to work as a coalminer (Gierek and Grudzień worked in France). Moreover, as with these post-war regional leaders, poverty prevented him from finishing secondary school, and he furthered his education by studying independently. The same features which bring Rymer near the socialist regional leaders also distance him from the majority of the representatives of the inter-war regional administrative elite. Thus, Rymer's promotion was a rare exception as educational criteria excluded blue-collar workers from senior positions in administration. This lack of academic qualifications also distinguished him from Żurawski, who worked as the deputy *voivode* between 1922 and 1931. Żurawski's career had some features of the 'combatant' type: in the period between 1918 and 1920 he was the Commissar of the Polish government for the Duchy of Cieszyn Silesia during the negotiations between the Polish and Czech governments. However, he also shared with newcomer *voivodes* from Galicia the main features of the 'bureaucratic career', as he had a law degree and extensive experience as a senior civil servant.

¹¹⁶ See table 2, page 62.

During Rymer's tenure, the shortage of Polish personnel in administration, and also particularly in industry, forced the voivodship authorities to employ German civil servants who declared loyalty to the Polish state,¹¹⁷ even though the 'national' issue was one of the most sensitive. However, the second and equally important reason for employing German Silesians was the strong regional ties.

The next three *voivodes*, Schultis, Koncki and Bilski, represented the second phase of the policy of gradual polonisation. Their tenure coincided with a further influx of newcomers into the administration. The similarity of the regional policies of these three *voivodes* is probably, at least to some extent, explained by their similar origins, administrative qualifications (the requisite law degrees: LLM or even LLD) and work experience. First, they all were newcomers from Galicia. Second, they also had similar professional 'bureaucratic careers': all three *voivodes* had worked in managerial positions in central administration. Finally, Koncki and Bilski had no contacts with the region before their promotions, while Schultis had only short contacts during the plebiscite.

These three *voivodes* followed similar personnel policies in the voivodship administration. During their time in office there was a further influx of newcomers, much stronger than during Rymer's tenure. As a result, newcomers began to dominate. For example, in 1925, Rostek was the only Silesian among twelve directors of departments in the voivodship office, though Silesians occupied a higher proportion of positions at the middle level.¹¹⁸ These *voivodes* tried to gain social support in the region by trying to protect the employment of Silesians in administration. For example, Koncki, after three months in office, explained to the Silesian Diet that he had not signed any promotion for a newcomer who had not finished secondary or higher education. Thus, the arrival of newcomers during his tenure was justified only by the necessity of employing in some positions people with high qualifications, which only newcomers had.

¹¹⁷ Wanatowicz, 1986: 33.

¹¹⁸ Wanatowicz, 1982: 42.

- The regional conflict

It was at this time that the conflict between natives and newcomers and their different cultures started to become evident. Since then it has had a tendency to re-appear during the regional crises of both the inter-war and the post-war periods. Moreover, this conflict between natives and newcomers has had a strong impact on the regional policies conducted since then.¹¹⁹

Silesians were also a strongly exclusive social group, in contrast to the newcomers, who were much more open towards other groups. For native Silesians, regional ties were of primary importance over national ones, while national identification was secondary or did not exist at all.¹²⁰ Kossak-Szczucka wrote that the Poles from other regions were alien to them:

We were aliens for them [Silesians], such aliens. It is understandable that they hold their Polishness dearer than their own lives, their own Polish soul, their Polish language, but never did they have any sentiment toward the Poles, whom they did not know, who were not interested in them. History's mistakes must be paid for.¹²¹

Attitudes towards the German population living in the region significantly distinguished natives from newcomers. Thus, strong regional ties and solidarity led Polish Silesians like Korfanty and the Christian Democratic party to defend the rights of German Silesians. For example, they protested against the 'nationally' motivated policy of limiting the employment and promotion of German Silesians in the voivodship administration (and also in industry), and of replacing them with newcomers. Thus, the death of Rymer, a native Silesian, was crucial for the development of employment policies. Despite the fact that Rymer started the quite strong influx of qualified civil servants from other Polish regions, the shift of power to successive newcomer *voivodes* intensified this process.

Silesians also considered themselves to be economically and culturally superior to Poles from Galicia and Russian Poland. Silesians enjoyed much higher living standards,¹²² and statistical data of the inter-war period confirmed a higher level of participation in

¹¹⁹ Compare, for example, opinions of the Upper Silesian Union in 1989, chapter three.

¹²⁰ Wanatowicz, 1994: 96.

¹²¹ Kossak-Szczucka in Błaszczak-Waławik, 1990: 23.

¹²² Wanatowicz, 1994: 42 and Serafin, 1996.

elections. At the same time, a lower crime-rate reflected the long tradition of legal order and democratic institutions in the Prussian State in comparison to former Russian Poland and Galicia. Moreover, Silesians were very religious, much more religious in fact than Poles from other regions, hence the strength of Christian Democracy¹²³ and their relative immunity to communist ideology, which was traditionally strong in neighbouring Dąbrowa.¹²⁴

In contrast, newcomers, who, in the thirties, made up only about four or five per cent of regional society,¹²⁵ displayed the culture typical of the majority of Polish territories, which was centred on their noble and rural origins. They greatly respected education and white-collar jobs. The different class origins of Silesians and newcomers (a high proportion of whom occupied senior positions in the administration and in industry) were expressed in the egalitarian culture of the Silesians and the elitist values of the newcomers. The elitist character of the newcomers influenced their feeling of cultural superiority and their strong sense of a mission to modernise the region. The different cultural traditions of the Silesians and the newcomers, which led to the creation of this regional conflict, were further reinforced by the formation of the new social and economic factors. The social structure, formed after 1922, excluded Silesians from the regional upper classes, but most of all the conflict was intensified by the radical worsening of the economic conditions of the native Silesians due to widespread unemployment.

The departure of Germans from the Silesia voivodship after its incorporation into the Polish state seriously depleted the regional middle and upper social strata and led to a social vacuum. This was especially evident in administration and education, though the Germans preserved their ownership of industry. The formation of the new regional elite, despite the earlier declarations given during the plebiscite, was mostly based on newcomers. Furthermore, the extensive demand for qualified personnel in administration led to employment of incompetent newcomers; 'incompetent and unsuitable candidates were accepted for many important posts with regrettable results'.¹²⁶

¹²³ Davies, 1981, volume 2, 221.

¹²⁴ Schöpflin, 1993: 34.

¹²⁵ Serafin, 1996: 20.

¹²⁶ Rose, 1935: 278.

The regional conflict between the Silesians and the newcomers was also made worse by the Silesian expectations of preserving an egalitarian, classless social structure. The native Silesians were surprised by the formation of a Polish upper class, especially as they were almost completely excluded from this group. Arka Bożek, the spokesman for the Polish minority in German Upper Silesia and the post-war deputy *voivode* (1945-1950), put it like this:

We dreamt of an ideal Poland, of a righteous Poland, a Poland without lords or farm-hands. It was to be the motherland of people who were really free and equal.¹²⁷

The Silesians' disenchantment with belonging to the Polish state and their sense of social injustice caused by the influx of leaders from other regions, were also strengthened by the feeling that their efforts during the Silesian Rising were left unrecognised. The same author, Bożek, added:

The Silesian people were severely mistaken. Here in their mother[land] they found themselves in misery and unemployed and they had to work as farm-hands.... Only the lords changed. The Berlin lords left, and the Warsaw-Cracow lords arrived. I would like to be objective but it is difficult to say which lords were worse. Everything suggests that it was our relatives [Poles from other regions]. There hangs over Silesia a doom, a curse which has made her a servant of one or the other side.¹²⁸

This double sense of injustice due to the formation of the newcomer upper class and lack of recognition of their sacrifice during the Silesian Rising led the Silesians to further strengthen their regional ties. Sometimes, it even led to an 'escape into regionalism', which was expressed in their isolation from the newcomers. At the same time, the contrast between the Polish and German Silesians was decreasing. Silesians saw themselves primarily as one regional group, despite being of different nationalities or speaking different languages. Similar attitudes traced back to the inter-war period can be found in the period under investigation; for example, in the Upper Silesia Union declarations in 1989 and the opinions of *voivode* Czech.¹²⁹

According to Błaszczak-Waławik (1990) strong regional identification and the absence or decline of national identification in the form of an 'escape into regionalism' caused about 15 per cent of the inter-war population of the Silesia voivodship declared only

¹²⁷ Kopec, 1986:29 quoting Bożek.

¹²⁸ Wanatowicz, 1982: 283 quoting Bożek.

¹²⁹ See chapter three.

regional identity.¹³⁰ This retreat from national identity was intensified by the worsening economic conditions in the region, especially the high level of unemployment, with one quarter of the families in Upper Silesia suffering from unemployment in 1932.¹³¹ The social structure of Upper Silesia, with natives remaining in their low social class position, also strengthened their 'escape into regionalism'. Sometimes, there were even hints of separatist ideas, as in the case of the Union for the Protection of Silesians. However, Kopec (1986) suggested that this group of natives without national identification arose as a result of voivodship and central administration policies.

- *Voivode Grażyński*

Grażyński was appointed immediately after the military takeover in 1926. His long rule led to stability and continuity of his regional policy. He came to power with strong backing from the *Sanacja* regime, although at the beginning his position in the region was weak since for the majority of Silesians he was an unknown official sent from Warsaw. However, within a short time, his policy of state intervention led to economic progress, and electoral results showed a significant rise in support for him. This could be measured by the decline of German votes, which is an indication of satisfaction with belonging to the Polish state rather than of national identification. In 1928, 42 per cent of the voivodship population voted in favour of German minority parties.¹³² After Grażyński had been in office for eighteen months, it was 31 per cent, and two years later it was 20 per cent.¹³³

In 1926, Grażyński was appointed *voivode* and he remained in office for thirteen years. In the light of this, his tenure should be more closely examined, using the same variables that were used to discuss his predecessors. Presentation of Grażyński's rule, as with the previous *voivodes*, will concentrate on four main points:

¹³⁰ Estimates vary significantly and political criteria seem to be the primary factors behind the figures for example, *voivode* Grażyński did not recognise this group at all, while Korfanty estimated that it applied to 30 per cent of Silesians.

¹³¹ Wanatowicz, 1994: 99.

¹³² Germans made up 15 per cent of the voivodship population (Błaszczak-Waławik, 1990: 52). Thus, the much higher support of the voivodship population for the parties of the German minority should probably be interpreted as an indication of dissatisfaction with their economic conditions rather than national identification.

¹³³ Rose, 1935.

1. his regional origins, education, qualifications, and career development;
2. his personnel employment policy in the administration, especially concerning the administrative elite;
3. his authoritarian style of governing;
4. his regional policy.

First, like his three predecessors, Schultis, Koncki and Bilski, Grażyński was of Galician origin, and he had a law degree and experience of managerial work in central administration. However, in contrast to the other three he had fought in the Third Silesian Rising. He also had extensive knowledge of national problems and a clear vision of radical polonisation when he took office.

Although the inter-war *voivodes*, apart from Rymer, were highly qualified academically, Grażyński's qualifications were particularly impressive. This may have been a factor in his early promotion – he was only 36 years old when he was appointed. In addition, like the regional elite of the socialist period, he was promoted to a central ministerial position in the last of the inter-war government, as Minister of Information. He was nominated after the outbreak of war on 5 September 1939. Grażyński resembled the regional socialist elite of the eighties, which incorporated a few scholars into the administrative and political elite of the voivodship. He also had a high position within the *Sanacja* regime. This enabled him to conduct an anti-German policy, which was in conflict with the anti-Russian and pro-German policy of Beck, the Minister of External Affairs. Grażyński's conflict with Beck was proof of his political skills: his anti-German policy was presented as the idea of regional organisations and parties, rather than his own idea, and therefore not something for which he could take responsibility or blame.

The second strand of Grażyński's policy, the employment policy of the administration, is to be investigated in the context of a new phenomenon, the formation of a regional umbrella party. From the moment of his arrival, Grażyński based his power on the former insurrectionaries, who were dispersed in the regional elite, as a sort of umbrella party uniting people of various regional parties and associations. Among these the most prominent was the Polish Insurrectionaries' Union, which aimed to unite regional society around 'common national values'. The club of the Polish Insurrectionary Union was officially open to all insurrectionaries, but the cost of enrolment and the monthly

fees preserved its elitist character.¹³⁴ This inner circle of the elite was mainly organised by his colleagues from the operational group 'East', of the Third Silesian Rising, and they took the highest positions in the voivodship administration and politics.¹³⁵

During Grażyński's rule there were two deputy *voivodes*: Saloni and, from 1935, Malholme. The appointment of Saloni, a close colleague of Grażyński, is a typical example of the appointments of the *Sanacja* era, when selection for a higher position was based on close personal ties. The appointment of the second deputy *voivode*, Malholme, Długajczyk (1983) suggested, was made by Beck to weaken Grażyński's position.

The regional appointment policy adopted by Grażyński was not limited to positions in public administration. It was also applied in regional industry and the officially-independent local government. The scale of this appointment system resembled the socialist *nomenklatura* system as nearly all the key positions in the region were taken by people loyal to the regime, and there was no place for those who tried to be apolitical. However, there were significant differences between these two periods as high qualifications were necessary for civil servants in the inter-war period, and political affiliation could not be the sole reason for an appointment. This was in contrast to the negative selection in the socialist period. In his appointments, Grażyński also took into account national and class origins, and 'confirmation that their children were brought up in an environment promoting the Polish language and culture'.¹³⁶

Grażyński's employment policy toward Silesians has been variously evaluated. Kopeć (1986) suggested that he deliberately tried to limit the employment of Silesians, and only employed them at lower positions, as a token questure. However, Wanatowicz (1982) believed that the low proportion of Silesians employed in administration during Grażyński's tenure was due to their poor qualifications, and that the *voivode* made efforts to promote them, making some exceptions for the promotion of Silesians without qualifications.

¹³⁴ Rechowicz, 1988:123.

¹³⁵ Przewłocki, 1985:73.

¹³⁶ Rechowicz, 1988.

Thirdly, Grażyński's authoritarian rule, in contrast to all former Silesian *voivodes*, was aimed towards the total elimination of the opposition, even of those who, like Korfanty, were members of the Silesian Diet and had official immunity. Similarly, he did not co-operate with the Silesian Diet and often left Diet sessions.¹³⁷ While inter-war regional politics cannot be reduced to clashes of personality, the role of such personal rivalries was crucial in Silesian and national politics.¹³⁸ This domination of individuals and personal coteries over political parties in regional politics may partly be explained by the relatively weak legitimacy of administrative and political institutions due to the continuing identification of institutions with the partitioning powers. In the inter-war period in Silesia voivodship, personal conflicts seemed to have had their origins in the past, mostly during the Third Silesian Rising.¹³⁹ Formed then, these personal conflicts dominated the political attitudes of the leaders and prevented political compromises even in extremely serious political situations. This inability to compromise is illustrated in the conflict between Grażyński and Korfanty. When Korfanty came back from political exile in Czechoslovakia only a few months before the expected war in April 1939 he was sent to prison on a charge of peculation, which probably hastened his death. The personal conflict between the two Silesian leaders, Korfanty and Grażyński, embodied the attitudes of the two groups inhabiting the region: natives and newcomers. It was a division in which the newcomers supported quick integration and the Silesians defended regionalism and gradual integration.

The fourth issue was Grażyński's regional policy aimed at the radical polonisation of Silesia. This had two major components. The first was the liquidation of the Silesian voivodship's political autonomy via the abolition of the Diet. Grażyński advocated the abolition of autonomy and the special rights and privileges related to it on the grounds that the region should not be different from other voivodships.¹⁴⁰ However, the huge popularity of autonomy in regional society quickly convinced him to withdraw his earlier proposals. These he later modified into a concept of changing the voivodship borders to increase the influx of Poles from other regions. The modification of

¹³⁷ Przewłocki, 1985: 75.

¹³⁸ Davies, 1984; 129-148 on the duel of Piłsudski versus Dmowski.

¹³⁹ During the Third Silesian Rising, Grażyński was the chief of staff of the Operational Group 'East', whose soldiers played a crucial role in the fighting and wanted to liberate the whole of Upper Silesia. Their attitudes were in opposition to those of Korfanty who was the Dictator of the Rising and who did not believe in military solutions, preferring instead to advance Polish territorial claims through diplomacy. He considered the Rising as dangerous, as it could have a negative influence on Polish territorial claims during the Paris Peace Conference.

¹⁴⁰ Rechowicz, 1988: 280.

voivodship borders was also aimed at integrating the heavy industry centre of Upper Silesia with the Dąbrowa basin, which was intended to strengthen the political significance of the enlarged voivodship, too.

The second component of Grażyński 's regional policy was trying to win over that part of the Silesian population that did not have a clear national identification. The problem of the nationally-indifferent population was also complicated by the presence of a substantial German minority in the voivodship (as mentioned earlier, Germans made up 15 per cent of the population of Polish Upper Silesia). This raised the possibility that the nationally-indifferent population would be attracted by German nationality. Grażyński main aim was to reduce the number of children educated in German minority schools. He also wished to Polonize industry by introducing Polish management, decreasing German ownership, and improving the conditions of blue-collar workers by means of a policy of state intervention that would increase their satisfaction with belonging to the Polish state. In both education and industry his authoritarian methods brought significant results compared to the first period.

b. The local government elite

The organisation of local government in the voivodship of Silesia was modified as a consequence of regional autonomy. Thus, the voivodship office was simultaneously representative of the central government, and the institution of local government as an expression of regional autonomy. The local government department of the voivodship office proposed both commune and district bills. The Upper Silesian part of the voivodship was divided into nine districts, including two towns with the status of district: Katowice and Chorzów.

The local government elite will be investigated using the example of the capital of Silesia voivodship, Katowice. During the inter-war period, there were two mayors, Alfons Górnik and Adam Kocur. As for the public administration elite, the description of these mayors will include investigation of their regional origins, education, professional qualifications and employment policies.¹⁴¹ The most important feature of

¹⁴¹ See table 4, page 74.

the local government elite was its heavy domination by Silesians, in contrast to the public administration elite (which was investigated above in the example of *voivodes*, deputy *voivodes* and directors of departments in the voivodship office). The fact that the local government was dominated by Silesians is worth exploring insofar as it influenced the professional careers and national identifications of elites in local administration. As in the case of the public administration elite – the *voivodes* – the employment policies of local government elite – Katowice mayors – will be investigated. The employment policies of the mayors Górnik and Kocur will be compared to the policies of the *voivodes* in public administration during the relevant periods: the first period, that of gradual polonisation (1922-1926), and the second period, radical polonisation (1926-1939).

The careers of both of Katowice's inter-war mayors, Górnik and Kocur, show a number of striking similarities even though they held office in different periods. First, both were Silesians, even coming from the same town, and they were nearly the same age. Likewise, both followed a similar educational path: LLD at the University of Breslau (*Wrocław*). Even their fate after dismissal was similar – emigration to Germany. This similarity in their careers is a good illustration of the presence of strong regional ties. It also illustrates Chlebowczyk's (1980) concept of 'borderland consciousness', characterised by the overlapping of national influences. In the case of Kocur it led to identification with Polish nationality. By contrast, Górnik, brought up in German surroundings, seemed to balance both influences and felt above all Silesian. During the Third Silesian Rising, he was a Korfanty supporter, and protected the economic and social conditions of Polish Silesians in Katowice. The national and regional identifications of Kocur and Górnik vividly illustrate the role of regional ties in the area, where society was divided according to national identification nearly by chance. In consequence, national identification was treated by many Silesians as less important than regional identification.

The policies of Górnik and Kocur (representatives of local government) had a lot in common with those of the public administration in the voivodship for the relevant periods. For example, Górnik's employment policy shared many features with that of the first phase in the public administration, when Rymer was in office. Górnik declared:

In practice I would not know Poles or Germans, but only Polish-and German-speaking inhabitants of towns.¹⁴²

Kocur, a close colleague of Grażyński, in contrast, conducted a policy of radical polonisation.

Table 3: Similarities and differences in the professional careers of the inter-war mayors of Katowice, 1922-1939

	Alfons Górnik	Adam Kocur
PLACE OF BIRTH	Upper Silesia (Kuznia Raciborska) b.1886	Upper Silesia (Kuznia Raciborska) b.1884
NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION	Silesian	Polish Silesian
EDUCATION	University of Wrocław and Berlin LLD	University of Wrocław LLD - during that period, contact with Polish culture and literature
WORK EXPERIENCE	From 1914 work in local governments of Upper Silesia	From 1926 director of Silesia Voivodship Police
ROLE DURING THE PLEBISCITE AND THE RISING	In 1921 a member of the Principal People's Council and advisor to Korfanty on Katowice	One of the leaders in the Operational Group 'East'
PERIOD IN OFFICE	(1921-1928) After the <i>Sanacja</i> take-over, political attacks on his employment policy forced him to leave Upper Silesia (and he emigrated to Germany)	(1928-1939) After the Second World War he emigrated to Germany (like a lot of the <i>Sanacja</i> politicians)
NATIONAL POLICY	Nationally impartial	Radical polonisation

In the first period, before the *Sanacja* take-over,¹⁴³ *voivodes* did not intervene in local government actions. When Grażyński became a *voivode* and initiated his policy of radical polonisation, he also tried to subordinate local governments. He often rigged election results to promote Polish town mayors or replaced the democratically-elected councils with receivership councils (*commisarial councils*) headed by his supporters.

To sum up for both the national and regional elites at the beginning of the nineties, the administrative structures of the inter-war period were a crucial point of reference in the search for models to replace the ineffective administration left by socialism. This inspiration was especially strong in the case of the Upper Silesian administrative elite. Most of all, they emphasised the widespread competencies vested in the Silesian

¹⁴² Górnik quoted in Murzyn, 1979: 133.

¹⁴³ Sieradzka, 1992: 77.

regional authorities during the inter-war period due to regional autonomy, and the resulting extreme decentralisation of power. The native Silesians also pointed to the democratic character of regional institutions: the Silesian Diet had given the regional population the sense that 'we, the people' were participating in the decision-making process. A similar desire for democratisation of regional institutions, to participate in decision-making processes, to decide for 'ourselves', was strongly felt after the fall of communism. This was strengthened by the widespread view that central governments were unable and unwilling to recognise regional interests.

The autonomous Silesia of the inter-war period was sometimes seen by the regional administrative elite as the most effectively-ruled region in the whole of Poland at that time. This strengthened the view that the period had been something of a 'golden age' in the region's history. This rather uncritical view of the period is partly to be explained by the strong emotions associated with the return of the region to Poland after centuries of separation. However, the analyses presented above – for example, of the conflict between the native Silesians and newcomers – indicate that it was also a time of serious social and economic problems. Among these problems the most severe was the exclusion of natives from the upper classes and, in consequence, from the regional elite. This was assisted by high unemployment among the native population. The seventeen-year period between the incorporation of Upper Silesia and the outbreak of the Second World War (1922-1939) resulted in the limited creation of an indigenous regional administrative elite in Upper Silesia.¹⁴⁴

The thorough understanding of attitudes and actions in the field of regional policy in the transitional period requires that they be traced back to the inter-war period in at least one more respect. Investigation of the inter-war period is crucial in relation to development of regional and national identification of the Silesian population. For example, the results of the 1922 plebiscite left a lasting impact on perceptions of the Upper Silesians' 'Polishness'. Doubts about their commitment to the Polish state had a fundamental impact on the national and regional authorities' policies towards the native population. The influence of these policies reached far beyond the inter-war period: similar policies reappeared during the socialist period, and their impact is still to be felt in the politics of the region today.

¹⁴⁴Wanatowicz, 1982: 54.

Analysis of the performance of the administration during the inter-war period seems to confirm the native regional elite's view: the extensive powers vested in the regional authorities made Silesia the most effectively-ruled region in Poland during the inter-war period. Nevertheless, there were severe regional economic and social problems (mentioned above) which the regional administration was not able to overcome. Although the opinion of the regional elite at the beginning of the nineties about the inter-war period seems to have been uncritical, nevertheless it was a valuable inspiration for decentralisation of power and systemic reform of administration.

As the inter-war period was seen as the best in regional history, and its administrative actions as extremely efficient, regional administrative elite demands were directed to obtaining political power similar to that of the inter-war regional authorities. However, proposals to return autonomy to the region presented at the beginning of the nineties were not well received outside Silesia. Rather than being seen as a positive effort to decentralise power, they raised fears about Silesian separatism. These fears were strengthened by the long-standing doubts about the national self-identification of the Silesians, doubts that were reinforced by memories of the German occupation of Silesia during the Second World War.

2.3 The national and regional administration in the socialist period, 1945-1989

The first part of this section investigates the role of administration in the socialist period in Poland as a whole, while the second part focuses exclusively on the Upper Silesian administration. The section starts with a presentation of the role of *nomenklatura*. In addition, the main administrative phases are distinguished. The next subsection focuses on the role of the heavy industry type of economic development, and its impact on administrative centralisation and vertical fragmentation among various sectors. Reference to the role of heavy-industry economic development will be also made in the second subsection of this section when the privileged position and extreme power of the Upper Silesian regional elite will be investigated. The last subsection concentrates on a presentation of the main changes in the administration during the socialist period, especially the 1975 reform. References to this reform are often made by members of the regional administrative elite in describing their existing situation, but most of all when

they demanded a return to the pre-1975 administrative situation.

In the second part of this chapter, the development of administration in the Upper Silesia region is investigated. The description of the regional elite concentrates on two groups: the administrative regional authorities themselves, and the political regional elite, the latter of which often exercised control over the former. I identify six main administrative periods. Through the whole time, the performance of the regional elite was strongly affected by the radical external political changes. Thus, for each of the administrative periods the central and particular political features are distinguished; for example, the *Volskliste* issue after the war, the Stalinist purges (1948-1956), the administrative reform of 1975 during Grudzień's tenure, and then the employment of intellectuals in the period after martial law. These events were so important that they are included despite the fact that they were characteristic of just one administrative period. At the same time, the limitation in availability of the data causes separate issues to be distinguished for each period, which are not followed in the subsequent periods. For example, the Upper Silesian employment in administration is undoubtedly the crucial variable. However, it can only be presented in relation to the period 1945-1970.

i. The legacy of the socialist administration

The socialist period left behind it an extremely centralised and ineffective administrative structure that was also highly fragmented vertically, both in terms of chains of command and territorial spread. However, from the Upper Silesian regional administrative elite's point of view, the effects of administrative reform are particularly analysed in relation to the restoration of the traditional three-tier administrative structure with 17 large regions. This reform further strengthened administrative centralisation by transferring power from regional and local authorities to numerous territorial special administration units directly subordinate to individual ministries. Thus, the two main challenges to systemic administrative reform after the fall of socialism were to overcome its extremely centralised administrative structure and its concomitant feature of vertical fragmentation.

a. The role of administration in the socialist state

- The *nomenklatura* changes and the main administrative phases of the socialist period

During the socialist period, the role of the state was all-embracing, as private ownership in the economy was marginal. In all spheres, the policies of the communist party were considered identical to the aims of the state. Other economic and political associations did not exist, or were directly subordinate to the party.

The functioning of the national and regional administrative (and political) elite during the socialist period was influenced by two main factors: first, formation of the *nomenklatura* – the socialist elite¹⁴⁵ and its cyclical changes at the top of the communist party; and second, the socialist concept of rapid industrialisation.

First, the *nomenklatura* system secured the communist political elite's monopoly over the public sphere. The authoritarian rules of the *nomenklatura* blocked channels for presenting opposition ideas and limited the opportunities for social mobility within the political elite. As a result, post-war history is marked by waves of social unrest leading to political crises (in 1956, 1970 and 1980) that were accompanied by conflicts within the ruling elite.¹⁴⁶ Changes in the party leadership occurred directly after displays of worker and student unrest culminating in political crises. These led to cyclical shifts in party leadership and affected the composition of the political and administrative elites at central and regional levels.

In examining the socialist era, six main political periods at central level (also relevant at regional level) will be distinguished.¹⁴⁷ The first two were the take-over (1945-1948) and Stalinism (1948-1956), both of which occurred during Bolesław Bierut's rule (1945-1956). Władysław Gomułka's rule (1956-1970) constitutes the third period,

¹⁴⁵ Voslensky, 1983.

¹⁴⁶ Erlich, 1991.

¹⁴⁷ See table 5, page 80.

followed by Edward Gierek's rule (1970-1980), the interregnum (1980-1981), and the last period, Wojciech Jaruzelski's rule (1981-1989). In all six periods, political power was concentrated in the hands of the first secretaries of the communist party.

Table 5: The political and administrative elite of the Katowice voivodship in the socialist period, 1945-1989, in the context of main national trends

NAME OF THE FIRST SECRETARY	BOLESŁAW BIERUT (1944 -1956)		WŁADYSŁAW GOMUŁKA (1956-1970)	EDWARD GIEREK (1970-1980)	STANISŁAW KANIA (1980-1981)	WOJCIECH JARUZELSKI (1981-1989)
<i>IDEOLOGY</i>	Take-over (1944-1948)	Stalinism (1948 - 1956)	National communism	Communist facade and promise of economic development	Uncertainty	From military coup to negotiation
<i>ORIGINS OF THE ELITE</i>	Communist exiles from the Soviet Union and the communist resistance		Gradual rise of experts	Formalised bureaucracy	Purges	Militarised
<i>ELITE RELATIONS: The Communist Party, Administration, Industry, the Military</i>	Domination of the communist party by the military, and security service both which were infiltrated by Russians		Supervision by the Polish communist party of other institutions	United under the communist party	Disunited, gradual rise of military	Displacement of political elite enabling negotiations between the army and the Solidarity opposition
<i>FIRST SECRETARY IN THE KATOWICE VOIVODSHIP</i>	MARIAN BARYŁA (Feb. 1945 - Feb. 1946) EDWARD OCHAB (Feb. 1946 - April 1948) ZENON NOWAK (May 1948 - Oct. 1948)	RYSZARD STRZELECKI (Oct. 1948 - Feb. 1950) JÓZEF OLSZEWSKI (Feb. 1950 - 1957)	EDWARD GIEREK (March 1957 - Dec. 1970)	ZDISŁAW GRUDZIEN (Dec. 1970 - Sept. 1980)	ANDRZEJ ŻABIŃSKI (Sept. 1980 - Jan. 1982)	ZBIGNIEW MESSNER (Jan. 1982 - Dec. 1982) BOGUMIŁ FERENZTAJN (Dec. 1983 - Nov. 1987) MANFRED GORYWODA (Dec. 1987 - Nov. 1989)
<i>VOIVODES OF THE KATOWICE VOIVODSHIP</i>	ALEKSANDER ZAWADZKI (March. 1945 - Oct. 1948)	BOLESŁAW JASZCZUK (Oct. 1948 - Feb. 1952) JÓZEF KOSZUTSKI (April. 1952 - Feb. 1954) JERZY ZIĘTEK in proxy (Feb. 1954 - Dec. 1954) RYSZARD NIESZPOREK (Dec. 1954 - April 1964) JERZY ZIĘTEK (April 1964- June 1975)		STANISŁAW KIERMASZEK (June 1975 - June 1978)	ZDISŁAW LEGOMOSKI (June 1978 - Dec. 1980) HENRYK LICHOŚ (Dec. 1980 - Dec. 1981)	ROMAN PASZKOWSKI (Dec. 1981 - May 1985) TADEUSZ WNUK (May 1985 - May 1990)

Between 1944 and 1956 the communist party, with Bierut as first secretary, established and maintained a monopoly over political power. On the whole, this was a strongly ideological period, with the emphasis on Poland's subordination to the Soviet Union. The Soviet authorities wanted to create the impression of an independent Polish army (security forces), politics and administration. However, Russian officers (often of Polish origin, the most striking example being Marshal Rokossowski) took crucial positions in the state.

Gomułka (1956-1970) tried to unite communist ideology with Polish national tradition. This attempt was reflected in the phrase 'the Polish road to socialism' which emphasised that each socialist country should have the power to decide its economic and political policies freely as long as the socialist framework and ideology were preserved. His rule ended in 1970 after workers' strikes which demonstrated the workers' disillusionment with socialism.

The next period, 1970-1980, with Gierek as the First Secretary, showed the strong role of the heavy-industry lobby of Katowice. This regime came to power with awareness of the high level of social dissatisfaction and lack of ideological support. As a result, Gierek's policy was essentially a contract between the communist party and the general population. Each side agreed to withdraw some claims: the communist party relaxed control over public life in general and promised to improve living standards; in return, society was expected not to challenge socialist authority. The political liberalisation of the seventies led to a crystallisation of the opposition. In the mid-seventies small unofficial groups were formed, such as a Workers' Defence Committee (KOR) and numerous Catholic Intelligentsia Clubs.

The next period, 1980-1981, began with workers' strikes in August 1980 when the Solidarity Trade Union was created. The strikes ended only after prolonged negotiations with the government authorities. These led to the signing of national agreements at Gdańsk and Szczecin, allowing the establishment of the trade union organisation, Solidarity, totally independent from the communist authorities. During the Gdańsk negotiations between the striking workers and the government, a crucial role was played by the opposition intelligentsia linked to the KOR or Christian organisations.

During the 1980 crisis, the central elite tried to avoid the use of force, instead adopting a more gradual approach in order to eradicate workers' protests. However, the scale of social support was much larger than they had expected. Overnight, Solidarity membership rose to 10 million out of a population of about 38 million people. Even more significant was that at least one third of the communist party rank-and-file members enrolled in Solidarity. This unexpected growth of social support for Solidarity, and rising radicalism on both sides, culminated in the introduction of martial law (13 December 1981) by General Jaruzelski. However, negotiation with the Solidarity opposition eventually took place in 1989 and an agreement to conduct partially free national elections was obtained. This last phase can be interpreted as an 'unorthodox' one for socialist countries as power shifted from the party elite to the military. The top military officers took positions in the ranks of the party and in the cabinet. Moreover, military officers gained power through the acquisition of positions within the voivodship and local administration, as well as in many industrial plants.¹⁴⁸

The implementation of the *nomenklatura* system made it difficult for those outside the communist party to gain a foothold in public administration or other state institutions. The role of the administration itself changed to some extent reflecting to political and reshuffles at the top. In general, the fact that the administration did not produce material goods led to the communist interpretation that the administration was subordinate to the industrial sector. The position of the administration was also weakened by its dependence on the communist party. Furthermore, supervision by security forces eroded the administration's ability to react. The main task of the public administration was therefore to implement party resolutions; its secondary function was to preserve a democratic façade. Thus, its role was reduced to the more superficial, formal functions of government.

Until the administrative reorganisation in 1975, some power was preserved at the regional level and *voivodes* had relatively strong political positions. Afterwards, the territorial administration (regional and local) in general wielded little influence over the territory nominally under its control. Instead, its power was shifted to the directors of big companies backed by voivodship secretaries.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁸ At that time General Paszkowski was the voivode in Katowice Voivodship.

¹⁴⁹ Erlich, 1991, Regulski and Kocan, 1994.

- The domination of the economy by heavy industry and its influence on the administrative structure

Of equally important influence on the functioning of the national and regional elites and in addition to the *nomenklatura* system and cyclical changes at the top, was the concept of the economic growth that underpinned the communist party's economic policies. The assumption was that rapid growth could be achieved only through extensive industrialisation. Within the industrial sector, the crucial role was played by heavy industry – 'key industry'.¹⁵⁰ The importance of this sector of industry was strengthened by the domination of coal over Polish exports.¹⁵¹ All these factors meant that after the war Upper Silesia continued to be a region of enormous economic importance. As a consequence, its regional elite had unprecedented political powers and was granted wide financial resources.

The heavy industries were administered centrally, in contrast to enterprises producing consumer goods which were administered by the regional and local administration. Decisions related to heavy industry were taken by the central elite. The majority of decisions regarding industrial investment and other planning matters were based on the individual circumstances of each case, and detailed procedures to be followed. This centralisation of the decision-making process also led to wilfulness on the part of the national elite in the preparation of plans in relation to costs, location of firms, size, and so on. However, as the example of Upper Silesia indicates, in certain regions the authorities had been able to preserve wide powers; for example, Gierek during Gomułka's tenure.

1. Vertical fragmentation

The socialist economy was divided into several sectoral lobbies of various ministries fighting with each other over limited financial subsidies and personal privileges. This led to vertical fragmentation, which meant the division of power among numerous ministries and their dependent units at the regional and local levels. These units answered directly to their ministry in Warsaw and were isolated from similar

¹⁵⁰ See for example Prud'homme, 1992 or Hamilton and Roszkowski, 1989: 148-149.

¹⁵¹ Pond, 1958: 206.

administrative units operating in the same region or locality but responsible to a different ministry. In theory, the activities of different units would be co-ordinated by means of agreement between the ministries at the centre. In practice, communication between various ministries and departments at the central and regional level was absent.¹⁵²

This vertical fragmentation is particularly interesting as it seems not to have been investigated to the degree it deserves, probably because it is a unique feature of socialist administration. Its consequences were one of the most severe hindrances to effective administrative performance in the post-socialist countries. Moreover, this vertical fragmentation had a significant impact on the functioning of the general administration authorities at regional and local levels, as the scope of their power was significantly circumscribed, in contrast to the inter-war period.

Under socialism, vertical fragmentation resulted from intense competition over the division of political power. The formation of a particular ministry reflected the political strength of a relevant sector of industry. It was believed that the formation of a separate ministry or any other administrative institution would facilitate the gaining of additional privileges and financial resources. Gradually, as a result of the political bargains among the national elite, the number of ministries was rising contrary to any economic rationale. This had serious effect on the co-ordination of national policy; increasingly, different administrative ministries conducted contradictory policies.

2. Extreme centralisation

According to Goralczyk,¹⁵³ vertical fragmentation was an inextricable feature of extreme centralisation and thus there is a reciprocal relationship between the two. This interpretation seems to be confirmed by the analyses of changes in Polish administration under socialism: periods of centralisation policies were always accompanied by a rise in the number of ministries, while the subsequent waves of decentralisation were always assisted by cuts in the number of ministries.

¹⁵² Erlich, 1991.

¹⁵³ Goralczyk quoted in Taras, 1993.

For example, the first post-war government in 1944 was divided into 13 ministries, but two years later the number had grown to 20. In 1949 the Ministry of Industry and Commerce was replaced by six new ministries. The disappearance of this particular ministry was significant as it gave rise to intense conflict among various successor ministries responsible for narrow industrial sectors. In the following years (1950-1953) eight more ministries were created. This centralisation phase culminated in social unrest in 1956. This prompted the national elite to try to introduce a more socially acceptable decentralised model of the state. Certain powers were then delegated to the local level of administration and, at the same time, ten existing ministers were replaced by five new ones. However, subsequent waves of centralisation occurred. Similarly, when Gierek came to power in 1970 and Jaruzelski in 1980, following social unrest, they also tried to decentralise administration by merging ministries and transferring some power to the intermediate level. However, the tendency to centralise reappeared in the later phases of their rule, leading to a gradual rise in the number of ministries.

In his analysis of the waves of centralisation and decentralisation after 1956, 1970 and 1980, Goralczyk suggests that the extreme concentration of power led to an increase in the number of ministries because the previous ministerial structure, with few ministries, was not able to exploit its power sufficiently. However, after a certain period of time, centralisation and the concomitant fragmentation of ministerial power led to inefficiency in the decision-making process, and thus to economic difficulties, which culminated in cyclical social unrest and subsequent decentralisation attempts.

b. The administrative structure and its reform during the socialist period

The abolition of the traditional three-tier administrative structure and the associated historic territorial organisation were quickly revealed to be fundamental obstacles to effective performance by the regional administrative elite during the period under investigation. These two issues constituted a 'bottleneck' that hindered effective transfer of power to regional authorities.

The communist state was characterised by an extremely centralised system of decision-making and implementation of economic policies. State administration formed a

pyramid organisation, with a rigid hierarchy of central, regional and local institutions.¹⁵⁴ The lower the level an administrative institution occupied the pyramid, the more limited was the level of discretion allowed it and the greater was the supervision by a higher level of authority.¹⁵⁵ The administrative centralisation of the state was introduced in two main waves, the first in 1950, and the second between 1973 and 1975. As a result of the first reform in 1950, local governments stopped being independent administrative units responsible to the local communities which elected them. This was in contrast to the inter-war period. Instead, local government began to be completely subordinate to the higher levels of administration.

In the second wave, between 1973 and 1975, Gierek's reform distorted the administration even more: centralisation became extreme. The three-tier structure which had consisted of 17 voivodships, over 3,000 districts and 4,000 communes was replaced with a radically new system based on two levels. The entire middle level of the administration was torn out as districts were abolished.¹⁵⁶ The old communes were merged to produce around 2,500 new ones, while the 17 old regions were broken up into 49 new ones. The new voivodships were very small, one-third of the size of the old regions, and only a small proportion of their historic boundaries were preserved. Thus, they were both weak and artificial, and could no longer carry out the 'ambitious' tasks that the old regions used to perform. After the reform, these tasks were taken to the centre, while the competencies of former districts were taken on by the new small regions.

Surażka (1993) suggests that although the 1975 administrative reform was the most radical, territorial merging and subdividing was a constant practice of the communist leaders as they tried to destroy ties among the local and regional elite. This opinion is shared by Gorzelak and Mularczyk (1990: 18), who believe that the 1975 reform increased the power of the central elite on a scale which had not existed before. Surażka also argues that the formation of new voivodships also led to a decrease in political

¹⁵⁴ Piekalewicz, 1975, Regulski and Kocan, 1994.

¹⁵⁵ Prud'homme, 1992, Regulski and Kocan 1994.

¹⁵⁶ This reform abolished district territories, which were historically rooted as far back as 500 years and supported local integration of rural areas with district or voivodship towns. Districts formed a level of intermediate administration between regions and communes, and were descended from historical units of local self-government administered by the landed nobility. Moreover, the geographical extent of the districts reflected the spread of local networks of communication between the district-towns and surrounding villages. These had developed through the centuries; in general, the villagers could make the return journey to their district town on the same day by horse and cart.

control over society, and illegal opposition developed. This is shown by the study of the two regions of Katowice and Bydgoszcz, where the political structures and personnel remained almost intact. As a result, in those two regions the opposition developed much more slowly than in the rest of Poland.

Moreover, the effectiveness of the territorial structure prior the 1975 reform indicates that even during the socialist period these divisions enabled the regional and district party leaders to co-ordinate numerous administrative units in their territories to conduct a coherent regional policy. However, replacement of the districts with these new regions – artificial structures – quickly led to administrative chaos. These 49 regions were so ineffective that the central communist authorities, wishing to pursue a centralised style of ruling and to have some control of regional administration, established, *ad hoc*, around 120 different territorial units directly subordinate to ministries. What is particularly interesting is that most of these special administrations, directly subordinate to ministers, had to be introduced on the basis of the 17 traditional regions and districts. As Surażka et al (1996: 443) put it: ‘The central government was swelling and fragmenting at the same time, each ministry developing its own empire’. This also meant that the opportunity for even minimal co-ordination of policy at regional and district level did not exist at all.

To sum up, this reform significantly weakened regional and local authorities. It also led to even greater fragmentation of administrative structures at all levels by enhancing the vertical fragmentation of administration. Thus, most of the proposals for administrative reform put forward by the regional administrative elite stressed the need to return to the pre-1975 situation, when the local and regional authorities had had certain powers, even under socialism.

ii. The administrative and political elite of Upper Silesia during the socialist period, 1945-1989

The experiences of the Katowice voivodship during the socialist period left a strong impact on the post-socialist administrative elite in three main areas. Firstly, the minimal participation of Silesians in the administrative and political institutions of the voivodship was mostly caused by the *Volkliste* and Grudzień’s discriminatory policy.

Secondly, the ideological orthodoxy of the regional elite delayed the formation of the regional opposition elite. Thirdly, the economic privileges of the region were in contrast to those in other parts of Poland and produced animosity in other regions. Finally, the whole socialist period indicates the unprecedented role of heavy industry and consequently, the domination of the socialist regional elite by coalminers. Even during the transitional period the coalmining lobby tried to use its exceptionally strong position to defend its sectoral interests by maintaining the heavy-industry character of the region, however obsolete.

Throughout the socialist period, there were two voivodship power centres: one 'administrative', the other 'political'. The first was the voivodship office; the second was the voivodship committee of the communist party. Thus, the description of the socialist regional elite will be focused on both the administrative and political elite although there were some shifts in the importance of these two institutions over the years. In general, the regional political elite supervised the administrative elite, leaving little discretion to the voivodship administration; it was only during Grudzień's tenure (1970-1980) that regional administration was totally subordinated to him. However, there were two exceptions to the primacy of the political regional elite: first, the period of 1945-1948, when the position of *voivode* Zawadzki was higher than that of the first secretaries of the voivodship committee; and second, after the introduction of martial law in 1981, when *voivode* General Paszkowski (1981-1985) was given a free hand in the voivodship.

Similar features of sociological description of the regional elite in the inter-war and socialist periods are considered for the purpose of comparison (regional origins, period in office, education, earlier professional experience, political affiliation and age). However, this investigation includes the specific feature of the socialist period, that is, the frequent promotion of the first secretary of the voivodship committee to the central elite. This promotion from the regional elite to the central elite was not so important in the other two periods (the inter-war and the transitional periods).

During the socialist period, six main phases were distinguished at the central and voivodship levels, as the changes in composition and policy of the national communist elite during the socialist period had an overwhelming influence on the actions of the

voivodship elite.¹⁵⁷

a. Formation of 'the Upper Silesia voivodship' – political and social consequences

'The Upper Silesia voivodship' formed after the war was different from the inter-war one in its territorial and ethnic composition. The new 'Upper Silesia voivodship' was created in January 1945 out of three main parts: firstly, the inter-war Silesia voivodship (Polish inter-war Upper Silesia); secondly, Opole Silesia (German inter-war Upper Silesia, after 1950 the separate Opole voivodship); and lastly, the significant part, the Dąbrowa basin.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁷ See table 5, page 80.

¹⁵⁸ See map 3, page 90.



Map 3: The administrative division of Poland, 1945 and 1950-1974 (source: Koter, *Współnota*, no 20, 1996, p.8)

b. The main administrative phases in the socialist period in Upper Silesia

- The communist take-over in Upper Silesia, 1945-1948

The political take-over of power by the communists was initiated by the liberation of Upper Silesia and the Dąbrowa basin at the end of January 1945 by the Red Army. They transferred power directly to the communist authorities, although the Resistance movement of Upper Silesia was made up of soldiers of various political affiliations, among them the Home Army. Moreover, the Polish communists were very few in number due to limited social support and the inter-war Stalinist purges. In consequence, they were not strong enough to take over and preserve regional power in 1945 without the Red Army and NKVD backing.

The Red Army treated Upper Silesia as a traditionally German land, especially the inter-war German part of Upper Silesia. Consequently, it was there that their hatred of the Germans was expressed and revenge for the German invasion of the Soviet Union was to be extracted.¹⁵⁹ The policy of the Soviet authorities towards Upper Silesia influenced the communist regional elite who came directly from the Soviet Union and who had also served in the Red Army. As a result, they too perceived Silesians as Germans, with the exception of Zawadzki whose attitude was more moderate.

The role of Upper Silesia in the period just after the war was crucial as Poland at that time was an agricultural country. From that region alone came 40-42 per cent of industrial production, 50 per cent of direct exports, and 75 per cent of indirect exports. According to Błasiak (1990:91), this had serious political consequences, because after the liberation of Upper Silesia, the most prominent Polish communists arrived in the region. The group arriving directly from the Soviet Union was headed by General Zawadzki, who became its *voivode* from 1945 to 1948. A month later, in February, the first secretary of the voivodship committee, Baryła, arrived. After that, the two regional power centres were established, presenting different regional policies.

Officially, Zawadzki had a high position in the communist party, as his membership of the Politburo of the communist party suggested, but above all he was a colonel of the

¹⁵⁹ Davies, 1984: 79.

NKVD.¹⁶⁰ Evaluation of *voivode* Zawadzki's role is difficult. There are extremely varied opinions concerning his actions.¹⁶¹ *Woźniczka* offers an extremely negative but popular opinion on the Dąbrowa-originating elite rule under the leadership of Zawadzki, comparing it to a sort of occupation:

The power in the voivodship was held by the people from central Poland, and mostly from Dąbrowa. In Upper Silesia people began to comment ironically that there was a sort of occupation by Dąbrowa. This led to the discrediting even of local Resistance members of the PPR. The activity of Gestapo collaborators also influenced the discrediting of local communists...¹⁶²

The more moderate opinion of Walczak (1996: 130) seems to better explain Zawadzki's actions. On the one hand, Walczak characterises Zawadzki as an orthodox Stalinist or, even more strongly, an NKVD colonel, but on the other hand, he also observes that he chosen a *Sanacja* civil servant, Ziętek, as his deputy. According to Błasiak (1990: 93), Upper Silesia was the only voivodship in the country where the *voivode* had a higher position than first secretaries of the voivodship committee. Even more significant is the fact that he conducted an unorthodox national policy as he did not wish to eradicate national and regional distinctiveness. Zawadzki position's was so strong that he was able to override the more orthodox views of the communist party at central and regional levels. This allowed Zawadzki to conduct his own non-discriminatory policy towards the regional native population. This was particularly visible in his attitude towards Silesians having German *Volksliste*, and in the employment of Silesians in the voivodship administration. Among them were several Silesian insurrectionaries holding managerial positions. At the same time, due to 'the internationalist communist doctrine', all national sentiments were recognised as dangerous. Thus, the negative attitudes towards Silesians not only arose due to the accusation regarding their possible inclination towards Germany, but the Silesian insurrectionaries were also seen as dangerous even though they were fighting for the region's incorporation into Poland . For example, in confidential documents the communist authorities attacked former insurrectionaries for their active engagement in the public life of the region.

In the first period, 1945-1948, there were three first secretaries of the voivodship committee, and each was in office for only a relatively short time. Firstly, their most

¹⁶⁰ Davies, 1984 and Torańska, 1987.

¹⁶¹ Compare *Woźniczka*, 1996 and Walczak, 1996.

¹⁶² *Woźniczka*, 1996: 22.

striking common feature, although natural after the war, was their military experience. Baryła was in the communist resistance, Ochab was in the Red Army and later a general in the Polish army in the Soviet Union, while Nowak was also a soldier in the Red Army. Similarly, in the regional administrative elite, Zawadzki and Ziętek had both been officers in the Polish Army in the Soviet Union and Zawadzki had been in the Red Army prior to that. The fact that members of the political regional elite had that 'Soviet experience' seems to have had a major impact on their vision of socialism, which was Stalinist. Their experience of the Stalinist terror during the war¹⁶³ and the complete submission to the Soviet authorities facilitated adaptation of their regional policies according to the national Stalinist model.

Secondly, all three first secretaries were members of the Central Committee, while Zawadzki had a higher political position as a member of the Politburo. Thirdly, all three secretaries were newcomers. Fourthly, they were inter-war communist elite members of the small KPP, which was nearly totally exterminated by Stalin. With the exception of Ochab, they were blue-collar workers, and Nowak, as well as Zawadzki, was a coalminer.

To sum up, the regional administrative and political elite (analysed here using the examples of Zawadzki, Baryła, Ochab and Nowak) reveals a striking uniformity in its regional origins and political careers. In addition, it should be emphasised that its members were one type of communist, the 'Soviet-bred communist', who had spent the war in the Soviet Union and served in the Red Army.

The presentation of the regional policies conducted by the voivodship office and the voivodship committee in the take-over period will concentrate on two main agendas; the *Volkliste* issue and the employment policy of the administration. The persecution of the native population as a result of the *Volkliste* was a particularly traumatic experience which had a primary influence on development of the Silesian attitudes and regional policies in the period of investigation, 1990-1997. The *Volkliste* issue was very important as it influenced the social position of Silesians in the voivodship and shaped the composition of the voivodship administration. Moreover, it had a crucial impact on the widely-held view among native Silesians who saw themselves as being ruled by an

¹⁶³Torańska, 1987.

'alien elite', and, in the most radical form, by the 'Dąbrowa Mafia'. Thus, it is not surprising that at the beginning of the nineties the new regional administrative elite was predominated by the Silesians reacting to socialist-period discrimination by suggesting a return to regional autonomy.

The persecution, as a result of the *Volkliste*, is extremely important because it applied to 95 per cent of Silesian society whom the Germans had considered to be German or potentially so. These people were accused of having betrayed Poland and of identifying with Germany.¹⁶⁴ Their Polish citizenship was suspended, which meant that they had no civil rights nor any opportunity to defend themselves. Very often, all their private property was confiscated and there was no possibility of appeal. A substantial number of Polish Silesians were also imprisoned or deported to Germany. In 1945, there was even a serious danger of the deportation of the whole Silesian population, an action limited only by Zawadzki's intervention.¹⁶⁵ The suspension of Polish citizenship had a fundamental impact on the formation of the socialist regional elite, as the Silesians were prohibited from entering politics or taking any senior administrative or managerial posts.¹⁶⁶ To sum up, the persecution as a result of the *Volkliste* was an extremely severe and traumatic experience that fundamentally influenced the relationship between Silesians and newcomers. In consequence of the *Volskliste* issue and the accusation of national betrayal, one can observe the movement of some Silesians away from Polish culture, and national identification towards the Germans. This can be illustrated in their shift towards speaking German in public in 1947.¹⁶⁷

The above-mentioned regional policy of Zawadzki, in contrast to other members of the communist elite, did not try to eliminate all form of national or regional distinctiveness. This is most clearly reflected in his cautious attitude towards the *Volskliste* issue. The positive attitude towards Silesians was, at least to some extent, due to the influence of his deputy, Ziętek. Ziętek was not only a Silesian, but had been a middle-ranking civil servant in local government in the inter-war period. His long administrative experience

¹⁶⁴ These accusations resulted from of a lack of knowledge of the specific circumstances concerning the borderland. Chlebowczyk's concept of 'borderland awareness', where national identification took the form of a continuum instead of clearly-formed, bifurcated national divisions, seems to better describe national identification in Upper Silesia. However, the communist authorities often used the German *Volkliste* categories as the sole criterion when deciding on the national identification of Silesians.

¹⁶⁵ Błasiak, 1990: 75.

¹⁶⁶ Błasiak, 1990: 72.

¹⁶⁷ Walczak, 1996: 216

(1922-1939) and his high competencies compared to other members of the socialist regional administrative elite made him, in reality, not the deputy *voivode* (1945-1964) but the main manager of voivodship administration (see the memoirs of Olszewski¹⁶⁸ and Gierek¹⁶⁹). However, his inter-war career in administration and, some suggest, his Silesian origins, made it impossible for him to hold the position of *voivode* (he could only achieve the position of deputy *voivode*) until 1964. Ziętek's career was also distinctive as he stayed in power for thirty years even though during the socialist period many regional political leaders changed quickly and their personalities and policies faded into obscurity.¹⁷⁰

The second area in which the influence of Ziętek on Zawadzki seems to have been important was in the formation of the voivodship administration, especially personnel policy encouraging the employment of Silesians. The voivodship administration was heavily based on inter-war patterns; for example, the role of local government in the voivodship. This improved the performance of the administration during the socialist period when political criteria often dominated over economic ones.¹⁷¹ Based on *voivode* Grażyński's *Sanacja* period model, Ziętek formed his own type of insurrectionaries' party – the Union of Veterans of Silesian Risings. On the board of the Union were close colleagues of Ziętek, who were appointed senior civil servants or sub-prefects and town mayors.¹⁷² The Silesian insurrectionaries were among the limited number of Silesians employed in the regional administration, as the fact that they had participated in the Silesian Risings confirmed their Polish nationality and weakened accusations of national betrayal because of the *Volkliste*. Statistical data quoted by Błasiak (1990) confirm the different regional composition of the voivodship office from that of the voivodship committee. In 1946, more than half of the senior civil servants in the voivodship office were Silesians, whereas in the voivodship committee the number of Silesians was marginal. In fact, Ochab openly declared a discrimination policy towards Silesians.¹⁷³

¹⁶⁸ Walczak 1996

¹⁶⁹ Rolicki, 1990 (b)

¹⁷⁰ Szewczyk, *Gość Niedzielny*, no. 33, 1988.

¹⁷¹ Walczak, 1996: 130.

¹⁷² Walczak, 1996: 203.

¹⁷³ Walczak, 1996: 219.

The smallest number of Silesians was in the militia and the security forces. This was in contrast to the inter-war period when natives were dominant in the police. In the socialist period, inhabitants of the Dąbrowa basin dominated in both institutions. The predomination of Dąbrowans is important as the number of abuses was extremely high there and this had a strong impact on the popular perception of the communist authorities and helped to nurture animosity towards Dąbrowa.¹⁷⁴

Walczak (1996: 135) believes that the under-representation of Silesians in the voivodship political and administrative authorities and the arrival of cadres from Dąbrowa was firstly rather a result of the lack of qualified (inter-war) local cadres. The second reason was that Silesians themselves were not interested in working in administration but preferred to look for jobs in industry. This moderate opinion is in contrast to popular arguments among local scientists. For example, Błasiak (1990), Smolorz (1990) and Woźniczka (1996) suggest that the domination of Dąbrowa inhabitants was mostly due to their exclusive policy and discrimination of Silesians.

- Upper Silesia during the Stalinist period, 1948-1956

In 1948, extensive changes of personnel took place among the Silesia-Dąbrowa voivodship elite. In just one year, the voivodship first secretaries of the voivodship committee changed three times (Ochab, Nowak [for only five months] and again Strzelecki) and at the same time *voivode* Zawadzki was replaced in the administration by Jaszczuk.

These rapid changes of personnel reflect the turbulence at a national level at the beginning of Stalinism. During that phase, the members of the voivodship elite, Zawadzki (in 1948) and Jaszczuk (in 1950), were promoted to the central elite. Like the first period (1945-1948), this period saw the continuation of the rule of newcomer first secretaries of the voivodship committee: Strzelecki (1948-1950) and Olszewski (1950-1957). *Voivodes* Jaszczuk (1948-1952) and Koszutski (1952-1954) were also newcomers. However, in 1954, a Silesian, Nieszporek, was appointed.

¹⁷⁴ Błasiak, 1990.

As in the take-over period, the Stalinist elite was made up of inter-war communists (KPP). However, in contrast to the first period, not all of them had spent the war in the Soviet Union: Jaszczuk spent the war in a German concentration camp while Strzelecki fought in the communist resistance. However, the fact that not all of them were Soviet-bred communists did not mean political liberalisation. Instead, it was a period of further strengthening of the communist position. The total elimination of political enemies and Stalin's declaration in 1947 in Szklarska Poręba, led to the introduction in Poland of the most orthodox version of socialism.

The shape of the regional elite during the Stalinist period was influenced by three main policies: first, the total centralisation of power and complete subordination of lower levels of administration; second, internal purges of the administrative and political elite; and third, the composition of the regional elite was shaped by the introduction of rigorous political criteria in the appointment of administrative personnel.

The most fundamental principle of Stalinism was the total political subordination of Poland to the authorities of the Soviet Union. This meant the centralisation of power at national level, with the communist party considered as implementing the 'only proper vision' of socialism. In such a system, the role of the regional elite was reduced to the implementation of directives from the central communist elite. This went to such an extreme that, for example, even the number of lamps for specific streets was decided by the central authorities.¹⁷⁵ At the height of the Stalinist period the economic plans prepared at the centre totally subordinated regional and local interests to the central elite's definition of the national interest.¹⁷⁶

During this period Upper Silesia's resources were heavily exploited. The lack of any long-term planning was to cost the region dear, especially regarding some very serious ecological and health problems. This extensive development of Upper Silesia was in contrast to the inter-war period. As a result, at the beginning of the nineties, the native regional elite regarded the economic development that had taken place during the socialist period as the expression of unequivocal subordination of regional interests to national ones – hence the concept of 'internal colonisation'.

¹⁷⁵ Walczak, 1996: 282.

¹⁷⁶ Regulski and Kocan, 1994.

This unquestionable subordination of the regional elite to the aims proposed at the central level is illustrated in the way Katowice town was renamed Stalinogród by the voivodship committee (1953-1956). Three days after Stalin's death, Bierut informed Olszewski that the voivodship committee was to propose renaming the town.¹⁷⁷

Secondly, Stalinism also fomented internal conflicts within the communist national and regional elites. The attacks on the 'anti-socialist' opposition that had characterised the take-over phase continued, but now there were also intensive purges within the communist elite, with the accusation of nationalism being the main weapon. As with the political terror in the central elite, purges and imprisonment took place among the Silesian elite. The internal fighting within the regional elite led to substantial weakening of the take-over phase elite. For example, Bożek, the deputy *voivode* until 1950, was dismissed (at that time there were only three deputy *voivodes*). The former deputy *voivode* of 1945, Wengierkow, was imprisoned and Ziętek survived Jaszczuk's rule only as a second-rate official. The rare exception to these purges among the regional political and administrative elite was the first secretary of the voivodship committee, Olszewski (1950-1957), who remained for the whole seven years. According to Albert (1994: 208), he was one of the strongest voivodship committee secretaries at that time. As a result, he could conduct a relatively independent policy in which, for example, he tried to distance himself from the attacks on nationalism. He tried to change the negative attitudes towards Silesian culture and raise the number of Silesians recruited into the voivodship committee. Thus, among the Stalinist regional elite, according to Szewczyk (1988), Olszewski could be positively singled out.

The composition of the regional administration was deeply affected by political purges. The purges were directed against so-called 'political enemies' outside the communist party who were dismissed, having been accused of nationalism. In Upper Silesia, this had serious consequences as Silesian insurrectionaries, the tiny part of native society which due to the employment policy of Zawadzki (and Ziętek) worked in the administration, were now dismissed and sometimes imprisoned. The vacancies thus created at all levels of regional administration were filled with appointment of blue-collar workers. This extreme rise of ideological orthodoxy marks the beginning of the rule of the new *voivode*, Jaszczuk. On his arrival, he declared purges within the regional

¹⁷⁷ Lewandowski, *Śląsk*, no. 9, 1996.

elite, a 'fight with right-wing national deviation' as 17 per cent of the voivodship office civil servants were still former inter-war employees.¹⁷⁸ The purges in regional administration were backed by the first secretary of the voivodship committee, Strzelecki.

The dismissal of experienced and highly-educated inter-war civil servants led to permanent changes in the administration as the ideologically-correct employees – blue-collar workers – were not effective. They too were, therefore, repeatedly dismissed. Thus, a combination of centralisation and the low efficiency of civil servants led to a state of complete chaos in administration.¹⁷⁹ This was true especially after 1950, when the last element of effective functioning of administration was eliminated, as until then, autonomous local government had been subordinate to state administration.

This preference for the 'ideologically-correct' candidates (ie, blue-collar workers) was most evident at the highest level of voivodship administration. Nieszporek, who was appointed voivode in 1954, had only a primary-school education, unlike *voivodes* Jaszczuk and Koszutski both of whom had MSc degrees, but he was 'ideologically correct'. He was a former coalminer, an inter-war communist activist (KPP) and a Silesian. At that time, according to Walczak (1996), Warsaw wanted to have a Silesian *voivode* in the region.

Nieszporek (1954-1964) was the first Silesian *voivode* since the war, although after him, during the socialist period, there were two more Silesians: Ziętek (1964-1975) and Kiermaszek (1975-1980). In fact Silesian *voivodes* ruled in administration for more than half of the socialist period. This fact suggests that although, in general, the position of first secretary of the voivodship committee was more important than that of *voivode*, the popular myth of being ruled by aliens, mostly from Dąbrowa, should be interpreted more cautiously.

After Zawadzki (1945-1948) and the short tenure of Nowak (May 1948-October 1948), the rule of the coalminers started again from 1954 and continued nearly without break until the end of socialism. This extended period began with Nieszporek (1954-1964), and after 1957 four coal miners were also the first secretaries of the voivodship

¹⁷⁸ Walczak, 1996: 249.

¹⁷⁹ Walczak, 1996: 261.

committee: Gierek (1957-1970), Grudzień (1970-1980), Żabiński (1980-1982), and Ferencztajn (1983-1987).

- National communism in Upper Silesia, 1956-1970

The appointment of Gierek in 1957 began the long rule of first secretaries of the voivodship committee from Dąbrowa: Gierek (1957-1970) and Grudzień (1970-1980). Both had fairly similar careers. Gierek and Grudzień both finished their education early (although after their promotion they officially received MSc degrees) to start work in the coalmines; and during the inter-war recession, they worked in French coalmines. After their return to Poland, their careers were also similar as both started to work in the voivodship committee of Katowice.

The similarity of Gierek's and Grudzień's professional experience is reflected in their similar policies concerning the development of regional heavy industry. Their regional policies, however, had some clear differences: for example, Grudzień's rule was marked by totalitarian tendencies and the regional elite during his rule was extremely arrogant. Relations with the regional Catholic Church became tense, and discrimination against Silesians was aimed at eliminating their regional distinctiveness.

The year 1957 was also a watershed in that, with Gierek's appointment, power shifted from the Soviet branch of communists to the 'French elite' of the coalminers, Gierek and Grudzień. Furthermore, after that, the new first secretaries of the voivodship committee were not newcomers, although they came from the same part of the voivodship (Dąbrowa). Their extended period of 'Dąbrowan power' reinforced the myth of domination by Dąbrowans.

Examination of Gierek's rule will concentrate on:

1. his industrial policy and his vision of regional development;
2. co-operation with the administration;
3. Silesian participation in voivodship institutions.

First, the political turnover in 1956 led to the strengthening of the role of the administrative authorities. After that, the voivodship committee concentrated most of its energy on industry, leaving other issues to be decided by the voivodship administration. Concentration on regional industry was important for Gierek as the region was noticeably losing its dominant economic position. In 1950, the voivodship made up 36.5 per cent of state production; however, in 1970 it accounted for only 18.6 per cent.¹⁸⁰ Thus, the regional political elite – the ‘coalminers’elite’ – wanted to preserve the region’s prominence by concentrating solely on heavy-industry development, despite Gomułka’s plans.¹⁸¹ In other words, it was the interests of the regional elite that opposed the central elite plans of modernisation of the region by gradually limiting the role of heavy industry.

Despite Gierek’s autonomous (and often illegal) actions concerning heavy-industry, in politics he wanted to preserve Gomułka’s support and he demonstrated his political devotion by promoting ideological orthodoxy. For example, in 1968, Gierek organised the first ‘indignation march’ against student protests, thereby showing ‘full support’ for Gomułka’s policies. The voivodship was ‘famous’ throughout the rest of Poland for its ideological rigour, and thus most social scientists and artists had left the area.¹⁸² However, during Gierek’s tenure, the exception was his attitude towards the Catholic Church, which was not attacked on ideological grounds. As a result, the subsequently-formed regional opposition was closely tied to the Catholic Church.

Gierek also wanted to gain the support of regional society by a substantial improvement of living standards. He tried to balance economic development with the improvement of living conditions by building new flats and improving the supply of food and other goods. However, the best supplies went to the coalminers.¹⁸³ During Gierek’s rule, standards of living in Upper Silesia were significantly better than in the rest of Poland. This was during a period of extensive development when the social needs of society were not recognised by national communist authorities.

¹⁸⁰ Walczak, 1996: 430.

¹⁸¹ Walczak, 1996: 432.

¹⁸² Walczak, 1996: 334.

¹⁸³ Hirsowicz, 1980: 122.

During this period Gierek's *de facto* autonomous regional policy,¹⁸⁴ rich financial resources available to the region and the much better living conditions in Upper Silesia created a situation that strongly resembled inter-war conditions. In the inter-war period, the regional authorities similarly had wide political autonomy, the region had numerous economic privileges, and living standards were much higher than in the rest of Poland. Gierek's achievements – the substantial economic development of Upper Silesia and improvement of living standards in the region coupled with the importance of heavy industry – led to his appointment as first secretary of the communist party in 1970.

The second issue under investigation in relation to Gierek's rule is his co-operation with the administration. This good co-operation with the administration and the especially close relationship between Gierek and Ziętek, with Gierek showing ostentatious respect to Ziętek,¹⁸⁵ led to the previously-mentioned significant improvement in living standards in Upper Silesia. Smolorz (1990) suggests that although Gierek had had a very strong political position for many years, nevertheless, apart from his political power, Gierek stood in the shade of Ziętek, who was seen by regional society as a charismatic leader in 'the alien world of socialist *apparatchiki*'. However, the popularity of Ziętek did not weaken the co-operation and friendship between Gierek and Ziętek. According to Walczak, the region's development was predominantly due to Ziętek's abilities, and Gierek's role was limited to political patronage, making autonomous actions possible.

At that time (after 1956) the voivodship administration was strong as it had relative autonomy in its decision-making process due to its financial and 'legal' autonomy. The voivodship committee limited its role to supervision of the top posts in administration. The voivodship office had substantial financial resources as it kept 35 per cent of regional revenues.¹⁸⁶ Moreover, Gierek's financial resources were also boosted by unofficial inflows from heavy industry, which 'sponsored' the building of new roads, shops, flats, recreation centres in the neighbouring mountainous areas and new factories for unemployed women.

¹⁸⁴ Walczak, 1996: 429.

The following quotation confirms these real autonomous actions: 'These independent actions of the regional political and administrative elite, which made possible intensive regional development, led to popular comparison of Upper Silesia with Katanga in Zaire. This rich province in Africa wanted to preserve its richness by declaring its independence' (Gierek, 1993: 33).

¹⁸⁵ Walczak, 1996: 391.

¹⁸⁶ Walczak, 1996: 326.

Gierek's role was also to preserve political patronage for Ziętek's initiatives, which often went against the official policies of the national elite. The intensive regional development was due to semi-legal adaptation to the centralised and ineffective structure of the state. For example, during a voivodship committee meeting, Gierek declared: 'There are rules, but life often suggests something else'.¹⁸⁷ Thus, regional development was achieved 'even [by introducing policies which were] breaking the existing law'.¹⁸⁸ For example, illegal actions were sometimes used to exaggerate the needs of regional heavy-industry and the extra money being spent on improvement of living conditions. However, it was clear that if the true destination of the funds were declared by the authorities, money would not be received from the central budget.

There is little data on the third issue under investigation, that is the personnel policy in the voivodship administration and politics and Silesian participation. The sole analysis is Walczak's reconstruction of personnel policy on the basis of the regional origins of civil servants. According to Walczak (1996: 333), after 1958, the documents concerning the voivodship office directors and the voivodship committee secretaries did not indicate promotion according to the regional origins of persons who were promoted. He takes this fact to suggest that because the promotion of Silesians was after that date no longer subject to 'political correctness', there were no limiting quotas for the advancement of Silesians in voivodship institutions. In other words, the formal barriers to the promotion of Silesians were dropped, as had earlier been the case. Although 'regional quotas' enabled the minimal participation of Silesians, at the same time, they also limited Silesian promotion in that the numbers could not exceed the strictly-defined quotas. However, despite this 'regional opening', there was no substantial increase in the number of Silesians in voivodship institutions.

Given the lack of scientific research concerning the participation of Silesians, some light is cast on this issue by the memoirs of the voivodship committee secretaries, Pyka and Szydlak, who were both Silesians.¹⁸⁹ Pyka suggested that the appointment of Silesians was restricted. He emphasised the animosity felt towards the promotion of Silesians to senior political positions or to the Ministry of the Interior. This was due to their close ties with relatives living in West Germany (the result of the post-war

¹⁸⁷ Walczak, 1996: 427.

¹⁸⁸ Gierek quoted in Rolicki 1990.a: 43.

¹⁸⁹ Walczak, 1996.

deportations), which presumably made them more susceptible to infiltration by foreign intelligence forces. However, Szydłak did not agree with Pyka. According to Walczak, it is most probable that the political restriction of Silesians applied to only a few positions, where their promotion was limited for security reasons.

Moreover, Walczak's (1996: 344) analysis suggests a higher percentage of Silesians in the voivodship committee than in the voivodship office chaired by Ziętek. This fact is even more difficult to explain and needs further scientific investigation. However, the opinion widely held by regional journalists suggesting the deliberate elimination of Silesians from voivodship institutions has to be considered more carefully. Also, at least to some extent, the traditional Silesian preference for work in industry has to be taken into account. However, irrespective of the cause of the absence of Silesians in the voivodship political and administrative elite, the natives' sense of persecution was actually felt, and this was very strongly expressed at the beginning of the nineties.

The second cause, in addition to doubts about the national identity of Silesians and certain political restrictions mentioned above strengthening the Silesian sense of political persecution, was the intensive influx of newcomers after the war. After 1958, native Silesians formed less than 50 per cent of the regional population. This was in striking contrast to the inter-war period, when newcomers made up only four per cent of the regional population. In the inter-war period, newcomers had arrived to take the few top positions in administration and industry. In other words, they had come to form the regional elite. After the Second World War a large number of blue-collar workers arrived, mostly from backward, rural areas, often gaining promotion to middle and lower positions over natives.

- The promise of economic and social prosperity, 1970-1980

In 1970, when Gierek became First Secretary of the communist party, his powerful deputy in the voivodship became first secretary of the voivodship committee. Thus, Gierek's patronage substantially strengthened Grudzień's position. According to Walczak (1996: 396), Grudzień did not have either the character or the intelligence of Ziętek, but his devotion to carrying out Gierek's whims led to a situation in which more and more duties came under his supervision. His position was also further strengthened

by his control of regional *nomenklatura* as he was the Personnel Secretary of the voivodship committee.

At the time of his promotion, Gierek recognised that the political support of the Silesia voivodship was crucial to the preservation of his power.¹⁹⁰ Thus, choosing as his successor an authoritarian and devoted secretary was especially important in the period of the extreme social isolation of the elite. For example, Gierek, in his memoirs, describes a situation when even ministries did not identify with the official state policy.¹⁹¹

However, during Grudzień's ten-year-long rule, he was not only devoted supporter of Gierek's policy but he also developed strong totalitarian tendencies. His policies went to such an extreme that they were even in contrast to the more open policies of the central authorities. In his memoirs, Gierek observed that Grudzień was a megalomaniac and celebrated his personality cult on an unprecedented scale.¹⁹²

Analysis of administrative performance during the Grudzień's tenure will focus on four main issues:

1. his industrial policy;
2. the subordination of the voivodship administration to the voivodship committee;
3. the territorial administrative reform;
4. his attempt to eliminate the cultural distinctiveness of the Silesians, which was directly related to the configuration of the post-Solidarity native Silesian elite at the beginning of the nineties.

First, Grudzień's tenure led to continuous single heavy industry development, which in this period began to resemble a Stalinist caricature of development as mineral resources, labour, and ecological repercussions were completely disregarded. At that time, several gigantic heavy industry complexes were built, which were to be exemplaries of the advancement of the socialist economy, among them Katowice Steelworks. This over-investment in the region also enhanced the position of the regional *nomenklatura*.

¹⁹⁰ Gierek quoted in Walczak 1996: 464

¹⁹¹ Rolicki, 1990. a: 141.

¹⁹² Gierek quoted in Rolicki 1990. a.:148

Grudzień's regional policy becomes very clear when one studies his investment policy, as his priorities were very evident. During his tenure there were only two large-scale projects in the region that were somehow not linked to investment in the heavy industry sector. The first was the luxurious voivodship committee headquarters, which gave rise to legends about its extravagance and aroused the disapproval of regional society. The second construction was the militia voivodship office. Schöpflin (1993: 174-5), writing about the Polish national elite of that time, emphasised that it manifested arrogance on a scale unprecedented in other Eastern European countries. However, it appears that the regional elite headed by Grudzień went to an extreme which surpassed even the behaviour of the national elite. Thus, regional society perceived the social structure as 'them' – the rulers – and 'us' – society.¹⁹³ At the same time, Grudzień's rule in the voivodship left Upper Silesia behind other regions in the creation of an opposition. In other big towns, monitoring of the intelligentsia was relatively weak, and opposition was gradually formed from the mid-seventies onwards. In the Katowice voivodship, political supervision was rigorous, and all of the more liberal intelligentsia migrated to other regions.

The second feature of Grudzień's rule was the total subordination of the voivodship administration. After 1972, Ziętek's administrative activity was increasingly paralysed by Grudzień's close monitoring. Paradoxically, Ziętek's position had been stronger when he was a deputy *voivode* than when he became a *voivode* during Grudzień's rule. Ziętek also lost his voice in the choice of the senior civil servants in the voivodship office, who were replaced by Grudzień's appointees. He appointed his close associates, voivodship committee secretaries as new deputy *voivodes*. Grudzień, in contrast to Gierek, refused from the beginning to accept that something could be decided in the voivodship without his participation in the decision-making process. Thus, Grudzień's attacks on Ziętek were natural as the latter was the only person who dared to criticise his decisions openly.¹⁹⁴ At that time, the voivodship administration began to receive detailed instructions from the voivodship committee – so-called 'intervention telephone calls'. As a result, during Grudzień's rule the voivodship committee became the sole institution wielding any power in the voivodship, and the voivodship administration was

¹⁹³ Marody, 1993, Gierek quoted in Rolicki 1990.a.: 134

¹⁹⁴ Smolarz, 1990.

totally dependent and passive.¹⁹⁵ This totalitarian style of Grudzień's rule, which is so evident in his complete subordination of the administration, is an interesting example of the extreme distortion of regional policy under socialism. It is investigated here in detail as it is believed to have had a crucial effect on the relationship between the regional elite and regional society.

In 1975, Ziętek 'retired'; Kiermaszek, who had been first deputy *voivode* since 1973, and Ziętek's close colleague for ten years, was nominated to succeed him. Although Kiermaszek was not a Grudzień favourite, his administrative experience and the pressure of time forced Grudzień to accept his candidature.¹⁹⁶ There is little data on Kiermaszek's rule. According to Pustułka,¹⁹⁷ he continued Ziętek's policy and tried to consult with Ziętek about most of his decisions. This was to prove to be one of the reasons for his dismissal. However, due to his lesser abilities and weaker personality, his tenure was evaluated as being worse than his predecessor's. By contrast, Walczak believes that in the middle of Grudzień's rule the change of *voivode* was not important and that nobody could have changed the totally subordinate role of the voivodship administration, whatever his personal abilities were.

The third issue which had a crucial influence on regional administration during Grudzień's tenure was the territorial reform introduced in 1975, after which the political power of the regional elite was significantly weakened. The demand to return to pre-1975 territorial division was also the main proposal of the regional elite after the fall of communism, which was seen as a pre-condition for substantial decentralisation of power and finances.

The main reason for Gierek's reform was to bring about the subordination of the regional level authorities by fragmenting them. Moreover, the new First Secretary wished to appoint his own political cadre at the regional level.¹⁹⁸ The administrative reform meant for Grudzień a restriction of his competencies as the Katowice voivodship became just one of 49 voivodships. The reform led to the formation of two new voivodships with capitals in Częstochowa and Bielsko-Biała, out of the single Katowice voivodship. The Katowice voivodship was weakened as its population decreased by 25

¹⁹⁵ Walczak, 1996: 490-492.

¹⁹⁶ Walczak, 1996: 501.

¹⁹⁷ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 23-25 September 1994.

¹⁹⁸ Gierek quoted in Rolicki, 1990.a.: 121.

per cent, and its territory by 60 per cent. However, Grudzień was able to ensure that nearly the entire coal production would continue to be located in the Katowice voivodship (despite the drawing of voivodship borders against traditional regional identifications).



Map 4: The administrative division of Poland in 1975 (source: Davis, 1981 volume: 2 p. 612)

Fourth, Grudzień's regional policy was aimed at the elimination of Upper Silesia's cultural distinctiveness. During his tenure, only one Silesian worked in the voivodship committee.¹⁹⁹ Grudzień also wanted to weaken Silesian tradition, for example, by the liquidation of traditional Silesian districts. His policy of persecuting Silesians was reinforced by Gierek's emigration policy. In his efforts to improve relations with the German Federal Republic, Gierek agreed to demands for the repatriation of the 'German population' living in Poland. This policy of emigration was conducted by Gierek, although the voivodship committee and Ziętek tried to protest against it on the grounds that it would actually lead to Silesian emigration. As a result of this emigration policy, of the total of approximately 500,000 Silesians, the 120,000 who declared German nationality left. The rest, about 380,000 people, stayed in Poland.²⁰⁰

The emigration of Silesians was caused not only by their drifting towards German nationality but was, for the majority, a result of the economic and political weakening of the Polish state.²⁰¹ Moreover, it also reflected the lack of opportunity for Silesians to preserve their own cultural identity within Poland. Equally important was the reuniting of Silesian families, divided by the immediate post-war deportation. This emigration revived the sense of 'national distrust' towards Silesians among Poles from other regions. In this context, it is worth adding that the German minority was estimated to make up four per cent of the population of the Katowice voivodship in 1993, according to voting for minority parties in elections. (There is no data concerning the seventies.²⁰²)

- The period of uncertainty in the Katowice voivodship, 1980-1981

On 28 August 1980 the first coalmine went on strike in Jastrzębie (the Silesian part of the voivodship). In the next few days the strike spread to the majority of the region's coalmines. On 3 September 1980 the Jastrzębie Agreement was signed, just five days after the Gdańsk national agreement, which established social guarantees and new political rights. However, the Jastrzębie Agreement was concerned with only the social conditions of work in the coalmines, and regional issues. This agreement was signed

¹⁹⁹ Smolorz, 1990.

²⁰⁰ Walczak, 1996: 488.

²⁰¹ Despite, the fact that the living conditions in Upper Silesia were much better than in the rest of Poland, in the same way as in the inter-war period, they were relatively much lower than in Germany.

²⁰² Walczak, 1996: 490.

with one particular occupational group, the coalminers. As a result of this success the coalminers recognised their political strength in the new regional Solidarity movement.²⁰³ The Jastrzębie Agreement also shows another feature characteristic of Upper Silesia – the weak role of the regional intelligentsia. During the Jastrzębie negotiations, the leaders of the strikes were not assisted by regional intelligentsia advisers, unlike their counterparts in the earlier Gdańsk negotiation.

Despite this delayed support for Solidarity, the movement quickly gained strong support in the region. According to Holzer (1990: 129), Upper Silesia was the strongest region in the movement since at the beginning it accounted for one third of Solidarity members. For example, in Bytom, 80 per cent of workers joined Solidarity.²⁰⁴

In 1980, as a result of the formation of Solidarity, the change of the communist political leadership extended to the regional level. Within a few months, nearly all the first secretaries of the voivodship committee were changed and a new first secretary Żabiński, arrived in Katowice. He was the first not to have been an inter-war communist activist and was also the first Silesian to hold this position. Żabiński's rule should modify the evaluation of rulers whose origins were in Dąbrowa, especially of Zawadzki (so often accused of national betrayal), as it was Żabiński who had been groomed by the Soviet authorities to be the next First Secretary of the communist party in the event of Soviet intervention, due to his devotion to the Soviet authorities.²⁰⁵ After Żabiński, all other first secretaries of the voivodship committee were Silesians (Gorywoda) or newcomers (Messner and Ferensztajn) who had, however, been tied to Upper Silesia for decades by their residence or place of education and by their further professional careers.

Like his immediate predecessors Gierek and Grudzień, Żabiński was a coalminer, although very early on he began to work in the communist youth organisation and later in the voivodship committee. Żabiński's professional career is a model *nomenklatura* career as his political activity made up for his low level of education (although like Gierek and Grudzień he formally received an MA degree after working in a high

²⁰³ Thus, their earlier privileged position in the socialist regime, due to the economic importance of the mines, began to be paralleled by their important role in the development of regional Solidarity.

²⁰⁴ Ash, 1983.

²⁰⁵ Dziadul, 1991

position in the party apparatus). As continuation of a successful *nomenklatura* career depended on the maintenance of the predominant position of the party, he was one of the most devoted defenders of its interests. In autumn 1980, he organised the Katowice Party Forum, an association uniting the most conservative party forces inspired by Stalinist orthodoxy. Thus, he was in opposition to the 'moderate' rule of Jaruzelski and demanded closer co-operation with the Soviet Union, expecting their intervention. From the beginning of his rule he was clearly in conflict with the Solidarity opposition, using all available methods, often Machiavellian ones.²⁰⁶

At that time, changes similar to those in the voivodship committee took place in the voivodship administration, where the *voivodes* changed twice: Legomski (June 1978–December 1980); and Lichoś (December 1980–December 1981). Legomski and Lichoś were both from Dąbrowa, both represented the *nomenklatura* type of career, and both during their tenures co-operated closely with the voivodship committee.

- From military coup to negotiation in the Katowice voivodship, 1981-1989

The imposition of martial law in December 1981 in Upper Silesia showed two main features: first, the strong resistance of blue-collar workers, and second, the long silence of the opposition assisted by the emigration of regional leaders. In December 1981, Upper Silesia showed strong resistance as about 50 firms went on strike out of 200 in the whole country. As in August 1980, the strikes in December 1981 were concentrated mostly in coalmines and big 'socialist' plants. Seventeen coalmines – one third of the total number - went on strike. The strength of the opposition was also shown by the prolonged strike in the Ziemowit coalmine, the longest strike in the country, by more than 1,500 coalminers, which only ended on 24 December, when the food supply ran out. Holzer and Leski (1990: 17) believe that the pacification of the region was exceptionally brutal. The number of militia and forces gathered there was large. Upper Silesia was the only region where the use of force by the militia while breaking strikes led to nine deaths. Jedynak, the regional leader during the underground period, wrote that after the imposition of martial law the division between 'obedient' Upper Silesia and the rest of Poland disappeared: the resistance to martial law washed away the

²⁰⁶ Mink, 1992: 50.

region's socialist stigma. The region's support for the Solidarity opposition was recognised by the country and even more the region became the leader of the opposition protests.

Paszkowski's rule is negatively evaluated due to his 'successful' breaking of the opposition, the results of which are, according to some, still felt in the region.²⁰⁷ In addition, he was criticised for not being very creative (according to one of my respondents in the voivodship office). *Voivode* Paszkowski represents the second professional group, the army officers, who, after the coalminers, dominated the regional elite during the whole socialist period. His age, at 65 years old, distinguished him from most of the voivodship administration, and all the voivodship committee first secretaries, with the exception of Messner. Messner was 53 at the time of his appointment, but all the other regional political leaders were men in their forties; only Ziętek was about the same age when he was formally appointed *voivode*.

A month after Paszkowski's arrival, a change took place in the position of first secretary of the voivodship committee: Żabiński was replaced by Professor Messner, a newcomer who had however, lived in Upper Silesia since his student years. He stayed in office until the end of 1982. He was later appointed Deputy Prime Minister and, in the period 1985-1988, Prime Minister. Writing about Messner, Rakowski (1991), a successor to the position of Prime Minister, defined him as a limited reformist unable to introduce tough reform although the need was severely felt by the communist authorities at the end of socialism. His successor, Gorywoda, was also considered a conservative politician.²⁰⁸ Długosz (1992: 180) considers Messner an outstanding professor and specialist in his area of accounting, which had a strong impact on his thinking, but sees him also as a person who stood in the shadow of Jaruzelski. He has a much better opinion of Gorywoda, who had a strong personality and was able to present his independent opinion to Jaruzelski, which, according to Długosz, was a rare quality among the administrative elite at that time.

Messner had been the first secretary since Ochab, in 1946, to have a Master's degree (in fact he had a PhD as well). His successors, Ferencztajn and Gorywoda, also had PhDs and Gorywoda, like Messner, was an academic. A similar trend towards the advent of

²⁰⁷ Pustułka, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 23-25 September 1994.

²⁰⁸ Dudek, 1997: 56.

academics into the political elite took place at the national level. For example, Rakowski recalls that in Jaruzelski's government there were eight professors – more than the numbers of generals. According to Staniszki (1982), this suggests the baroque phase of the socialist system preceding its fall. In this phase leaders were able to display ostentatious ornaments as camouflage but were not able to transform the system or adapt to changed conditions. These three appointments, of Messner, Ferensztajn and Gorywoda, were in contrast to the earlier *apparatchiki* careers of Grudzień or Żabiński, who last spent nearly their whole professional careers in political institutions (they received their extramural MSc degrees officially while working in the party apparatus). In contrast, the regional elite of the late eighties was formed by 'technocrats' who had spent several years in scientific institutions or universities and were later co-opted into the political elite.

The professional careers of Messner, Gorywoda and Ferensztajn were also similar in one more respect. All three successive first secretaries of the voivodship committee were also promoted from the regional elite to the central administrative elite: Messner became Prime Minister, Gorywoda Deputy Prime Minister (1983-1987), and Ferensztajn a minister (1987-1989). This exchange of personnel suggests that throughout the eighties in the Katowice voivodship, coalmining lobbies played a crucial role among the national elite.²⁰⁹ However, in the case of Gorywoda, his career went from central to regional level.

In the middle of the eighties, the Jaruzelski regime began to replace army officers in national and regional institutions with civilians. In the Katowice voivodship, the deputy *voivode*, Wnuk, took over Paszkowski's position. He was a young economist of Dąbrowa origin who had wide administrative experience: he had been deputy mayor of Sosnowiec (the capital of the Dąbrowa basin) before becoming deputy voivode. His career in administration was a rare example of an 'internal career' as in the socialist period he had worked since his graduation in local or regional administration. The second example was Kiermaszek, a close colleague and successor of Ziętek, who had worked in the voivodship office for more than two decades before his promotion.

²⁰⁹ Compare: Kuroń, 1995: 258 and Jaruzelski, 1992.

Wnuk's Dąbrowa origins, like those of Legomski and Lichoś at the beginning of the eighties, implied stronger recruitment from the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship. This seems to have been caused by stronger support from the Dąbrowa inhabitants for the socialist system.²¹⁰ Thus, the inhabitants of Dąbrowa more often chose professional careers in political institutions (as did Legomski and Lichoś), or graduated in subjects like economics (Wnuk) which were strongly politicised and offered promising avenues to *nomenklatura* careers. Wnuk was recognised as a man of wide perspective compared with his predecessor (according to my interview with the voivodship office elite member). A similar opinion was expressed by Pustułka²¹¹ who portrayed him as an elegant and educated man on the basis of interviews with members of the regional elite.

To sum up, the socialist period substantially hindered any effective performance of the administration in the transitional period. Reformers in power during the transitional period had to operate within a system that was extremely centralised and at the same time vertically fragmented. Thus, the regional administrative elite, after the fall of communism, saw as urgent the restoration of the historic territorial organisation and a three-tier administrative structure as a pre-condition for effective performance. This reform was to be assisted by the abolition of numerous territorial special administration units, whose powers were to be transferred to general administration units at local, district and regional levels.

First, on the whole, the impact of the socialist period on the present economic and political situation in Katowice voivodship, as well as on the regional administration, is to be considered negative. It left a legacy of ineffective administration at national and regional levels: structures were centralised and vertically fragmented, and political criteria dominated in the appointment of personnel in both the voivodship office and the voivodship committee. Moreover, these problems alienated society from the administration and strengthened negative social attitudes towards it. This encouraged the view that ordinary members of society should not engage in public life, leaving this domain entirely to *nomenklatura* members. The period left a legacy of a passive and subordinate regional society as a whole, with weak development of opposition and a

²¹⁰ For example, election results since 1989.

²¹¹ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 23-25 September 1994.

weakly-established intelligentsia. Thus, the recruitment-base for the post-socialist elite was much shallower than in other regions.

Secondly, the policy of the regional elite in the socialist period had negative effects on the preservation of Silesian regional identification and Silesian culture. The two events which were especially negative were the *Volkliste* issue and the emigration of the native population in the seventies. The socialist period also maintained the marginal participation of Silesians in regional administrative and political institutions, as well as at the national level, despite the great influx of the regional elite into central administration. The promotion of the elite of Dąbrowa origin and, to some extent, of newcomers (Messner) to the central administrative elite showed the crucial role of the heavy-industry lobby. After the fall of communism in 1989, as the role of this sector decreased, the influence of the regional elite was consequently diminished substantially. The situation did not change between 1993 and 1997, during the post-communist rule.

Thirdly, the socialist period, with its vision of the regional development of heavy industry, preserved the inter-war opinion of the privileged position of the region (which will be referred to later). However, the extensive regional development that took place during the socialist period was marked by extreme economic wilfulness. This can be illustrated by the building of gigantic and economically irrational constructions and by a blatant disregard for the environmental consequences of such developments. In the long run these policies led to deep and prolonged regional crises.

Finally, a sound evaluation of the legacy of the socialist period in the Katowice voivodship, about which a lot of myths now exist, demands further investigation, especially as most of the documents referring to this period are not yet available. Moreover, strict censorship during the socialist period made the regional press a poor source of data. Consequently, the main source of available data are fragmented interviews and the memoirs of a few members of the regional elite.

Conclusion

In this chapter three main historical periods were distinguished: the Middle Ages, the inter-war and the socialist periods. The first two can be characterised as positive sources of inspiration for the transitional elite while two opposite is true of the last period which was, above all seen as a threat to the regional identity. It was also viewed as a time of social exclusion of Silesians from the regional elite, and of economic irrationality. In the next chapter which follows just how alive these opinions were among the Silesian population and its organisations is examined. The debate on the regional past and especially the socialist period vividly raised by the Upper Silesian Union will be presented. Finally, reference to the socialist period will also be made in chapter four, where, within the investigation of *voivode* Ciszak's policies, attention will be paid to inspirations going back to socialism.

CHAPTER 3

THE REVOLUTIONARY RULE OF *VOIVODE* CZECH, 1990-1994

Every new government since 1956 has raised the issue of decentralisation, but little has been achieved. Consequently, far too much authority remained concentrated in the centre for it to be able to exercise it in an effective manner.²¹²

Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the rule of *voivode* Czech and the voivodship office in the first 'revolutionary' period, 1990-1994. The chapter starts with a description of the situation at the national level and the administrative reforms prepared there. The first section covers local government reform. Consideration of these reforms is essential to the investigation of the performance of both regional institutions: the voivodship office (in this chapter) and local government in the Katowice voivodship (chapter five).²¹³ The next section analyses why administrative reform remained unfinished. In particular, it emphasises the instability of post-Solidarity governments, which led to the package of parliamentary bills for further administrative reform not being prepared for introduction until 1993. Then it discusses the political reasons for delays in administrative reform after the taking over of power by the post-communists.

²¹² Taras, 1993: 19.

²¹³ The activity of local government in the period under discussion is presented separately in chapter five. This division is required due to the striking differences of opinions: the local government elite's positive attitudes towards administration in general and their own work in this area are in stark contrast to the negative attitudes towards administration in the voivodship office. This is related to the different administrative experience of the respective elites. Local government was re-established as an autonomous administrative institution, which significantly improved its performance. In contrast, the voivodship office was preserved as a 'socialist institution' totally subordinate to central government, and despite efforts by the voivodship office elite, opportunities to improve their performance were minimal. The local government elite saw themselves as effective in contrast to a highly frustrated voivodship office elite, who despite its efforts, saw the effectiveness of their administrative actions as extremely limited. In the following chapters six and seven (which analyse the Regional Contract and the regional administrative elite's view on further administrative reforms respectively) where the divisions between public administration and local government are not evident, their opinions will be analysed together.

The second part of this chapter concentrates on the regional level and describes the rule of *voivode* Czech and the functioning of the voivodship office throughout the post-Solidarity period. It starts with a description of the post-Solidarity take-over and an overview of the past and future of the region presented by the Upper Silesian Union, followed by an investigation of the appointment of *voivode* Czech and a sociological description of him. In presenting his regional policy, particular attention is paid to the territorial and structural dimension of the reform. Finally, the radical restructuring of the voivodship office and the shift of the voivodship office elite are investigated.

The poor performance of the regional administration (that is the voivodship office and, to a lesser extent, local government) in the period from 1990 to 1997, was influenced by the slowing down of administrative reform. The reform was 'unfinished' as it was limited to the lowest level – that of the communes – and it was not followed by the anticipated next stages of administrative reform, at district and regional levels. The need to bring administrative reform to its logical conclusion was felt most severely by the voivodship office elite. They eagerly awaited regional administrative reform, which was to transform the completely dysfunctional system inherited from the socialist period. They expected the reform to transfer substantial power and resources to the regions. The reform of territorial divisions was also expected to decrease the number of voivodships to between 12 and 17. This meant that the territory under the jurisdiction of the voivodship office in Katowice would expand about threefold. Thus, the performance of the voivodship office in the period under investigation was affected by the fact that the elite remained in a state of suspension waiting for the reform which they thought was inevitable. However, its inevitability did not prevent its postponement into the indefinite future. Local government was also affected indirectly by the lack of further reform, in that it was forced to function within a provisional, centralist structure of administration, with no co-ordination at the regional level.

3.1 Post-Solidarity rule in Poland 1989-1993

i. *The refolution and change of elite*

The performance of the voivodship office and local government elite in Katowice was shaped by the national transition (and by the administrative reform, which although limited, was a part of it). In 1989, the prolonged economic and social impasse that characterised the last phase of the socialist period induced the communists to begin the Round Table negotiations with the leaders of the Solidarity movement. Negotiations ended with an agreement to hold parliamentary elections in which the opposition would be allowed 35 per cent of the seats in the *Sejm*. This election resulted in an overwhelming victory for the post-Solidarity opposition as they won all of the available 35 per cent of seats in the *Sejm* and 99 per cent in the Senate, where all the seats were open to competition. The results of the national election unexpectedly led to the creation of the first non-communist government, led by Mazowiecki, and a virtually clean sweep of the communist elite from their political positions.

The post-Solidarity opposition was suddenly given extensive legislative and executive powers. At the same time the external conditions were favourable as the political crises in the Soviet Union made possible the introduction of radical reforms in Poland, which essentially re-established the democratic system and a free market economy.²¹⁴ The political and economic changes initiated in Poland in 1989 in the aftermath of the Round Table Agreement, as well as subsequent similar events in Eastern Europe, represent a fairly peaceful transfer of power accompanied by fundamental changes in the political, and consequently the economic, system. The absence of violence (with the exception of Romania) and the preservation of substantial power by the representatives of the *nomenklatura* (the *ancien regime*) modified the traditional meaning of revolution as it now revealed that did not necessary have to be violent.

Ash (1990: 14) proposes the term *refolution* to describe the changes in Poland and Hungary in autumn 1989. These, he argues, were a mixture of reforms initiated by

²¹⁴ Balcerowicz, 1995.

elites and revolutionary pressure 'from below'. In the case of Poland and in contrast to Hungary, it was initiated by workers' strikes and then followed by negotiations between ruling and opposition elites. However, in both of these countries there was interaction between the two processes.

These peaceful revolutions did not lead to the elimination of the *nomenklatura*. Thus, the new elites in Eastern Europe were formed by representatives of both the old and the new system.²¹⁵ Accordingly, Higley and Gulther (1992) refer to the congregation of elites formed as a result of negotiations at the top. On the other hand, like the classical revolutions, these revolutions made possible rapid career advancements for the opposition, particularly in areas which, until then, had been reserved for communists. Dahrendorf²¹⁶ mentions certain social groups which had been totally excluded from participation in public institutions until 1989 and which, during the transition, entered this sphere.

ii. Why was the administrative reform needed, and why was it halted?

After the fall of socialism in 1989, fundamental changes in the administrative institutions were initiated. There was also a redefinition of roles among different levels of administration as a consequence of the formation of local government at commune level and the partial decentralisation of power (a decentralisation that was expected to become deeper and to extend to the next levels of territorial administration as time went by). Thus, it is necessary to give a more detailed description of the local government reform and of proposals for further reform of the administration at district and regional levels before moving on to consider the responses of the regional elite.

a. The re-establishment of local government in 1990

The local government reform introduced in 1990 will be discussed from three main aspects. First, the fundamental importance of the reform; second, an explanation of why, despite the importance of reform, only its more moderate version was introduced,

²¹⁵ Pawlak, 1994: 94.

²¹⁶ Dahrendorf, 1993: 87 after Eckstein 1984.

as the reform was limited to the lowest level; and third, the speed with which the reform was introduced. The discussion will also focus on the political weakness of the reformers, who did not have wide social support but wished to implement reform before the powerful but fragmented opposition could consolidate.

As early as the Round Table negotiations, administrative reform – the re-establishment of an elective local government independent from the public administration – was already a crucial issue. Solidarity raised the issue at the Round Table negotiations during the spring of 1989, and their delegation presented a framework of local government reform. Accordingly, this reform was a priority for the first post-socialist government of Mazowiecki: all the main bills were passed during the first eight months of his tenure. The first local election took place on 27 May 1990. This was immediately followed by the re-establishment of autonomous local government at the commune level.

This reform also has to be seen in the context of the political situation, as it was introduced almost immediately after the Round Table Agreement with the then ruling communists. This was the first free election, as the national election in 1989 had been only semi-democratic. The importance of this reform was twofold: first, local government was to become the first effective administrative institution, due to the establishment of its property, financial independence and legal rights, and second, it was to be the first elective unit and thus truly representative of the interests of local communities.²¹⁷ The Solidarity elite intended this reform to have an impact on administration at higher levels. They expected local government to become the main reformist centre, applying pressure from below for the further restructuring of the higher levels of the administration.

It was believed that local government would be the voice of the local communities and, after a few years, when the next stage of reform would be launched, the district and regional societies and their elites would be significantly strengthened. Democratic local governments would influence public discussions on, for example, the number and size of regions which were to be formed and whether they would be self-governing bodies, or at the same time both self-governing and organs of central government. It was

²¹⁷ As a consequence of the socialist period, the social structure was generally seen in terms of 'us' (society) and 'them' (the communist elite) and thus society as a whole tried not to engage in public life.

believed that these issues would be discussed by gradually formed local and regional societies.

The significance of local government reform was also related to the fact that it was expected to destroy the political monopoly of *nomenklatura* by dismantling it 'from below'.²¹⁸ This was especially important since the Round Table Agreement promised to preserve some power for the communist side at the national level. Pokładecki (1995) describes this administrative reform as the 'self-government revolution', which affected the most centralised base of the state. He considers this as one of the most important elements of the transition of the political system to democracy, especially as the Round Table Agreement enabled the peaceful shift of political leadership by promising to preserve some power for the communist side. The eradication of the *nomenklatura* system from the bottom up is very significant in this context. Economic considerations were also an important argument for local government reform as Mazowiecki's government wanted to decrease the public deficit.²¹⁹

In sum, the reformers assumed that democratisation and the formation of civil society would first consolidate at the lowest, grass roots level and then spread to the higher levels. The logic of this programme was that the reform of central administration would be the final stage. Local government reform was seen as an element of a wider administrative reform with significant social and political implications. The whole administrative structure was seen as distorted as a result of socialist reforms; these had led to extreme centralisation and vertical fragmentation of administration. Thus, the formation of an effective administrative structure implied the need for a systemic administrative reform, decentralising power to the lower units of administration: regions, districts and communes.

b. The gradual approach to regional and district reforms

First, the lower administrative units had to be strengthened, as the existing 49 voivodships were too weak to be able to perform new tasks. After formation of about 12 regions, decentralisation of tasks currently performed by voivodships demanded

²¹⁸ Pokładecki 1995.

²¹⁹ The comparison of local government performance is presented in some detail in chapter five.

formation of a supra-local body of districts. Thus, local government reform was discussed in the context of the establishment of a three-tier structure of administration: regions, districts, and communes. Mazowiecki's government seriously considered the reform of the next levels of the territorial administration: districts and regions. There were proposals for the formation of between 12 and 17 large regions. The 49 regions would be merged, and replaced with the new regions equipped with substantial responsibilities and financial powers. The territorial structure was to be similar to the inter-war period structure. But this radical project of administrative reforms was rejected.

Opponents argued that the regional and district reform would be very costly due to the huge scale of reorganisation of administrative offices that it would entail. However, the main argument was political: reform along these lines could seriously destabilise the country. Regulski, who in Mazowiecki's government was the Government Plenipotary for Local Government Reform, noted that the introduction of administrative reform from the lowest level (with districts and regions to be formed later) was seen as the best solution. It would make possible the creation of the administrative structure from the bottom up, which would be the most favoured by local and regional society. In consequence, reform at the regional level was postponed until a period when local and regional awareness would have risen and local government would have gained both experience and a strengthened position.²²⁰

Regulski and Kocan (1994) recall that from the beginning the reformers had met with a well-organised opposition. At the same time they emphasise that the local government reform was prepared by a relatively small (and isolated) group of academics, who did not have strong social and political support. The significance of the re-introduction of autonomous local government was hardly appreciated by a society at large, which, after the period of authoritarian rule, did not fully understand the significance of these democratic changes: since the Second World War there had been no local democratic tradition in Poland. This contributed to a near-total lack of comprehension as to the role of elective local government administration.

²²⁰ Regulski and Kocan, 1994: 53.

These changes were not supported by the public institutions at the centre either. The public administration wanted to preserve its domination (and hinder the formation of local and regional governments, which would be responsible to local and regional societies instead of, as until now, to the central administration). The re-establishment of local government autonomy required the public administration to give up certain tasks and delegate them to local government (at commune level and later to local government at the district level and to regional government). This greatly disturbed the public administration. Until reform was established, each of the numerous ministries would exercise power through its special separate administrative units at regional and local levels. After the reform, the responsibilities for the administrative units at local level would be united in the local government office. This was supposed to lead to better recognition of local aims as well as to the improvement of economic performance. Thus, local government reform led to strong opposition from ministers who did not want their powers limited by the delegation of responsibilities to local government. This decreased local government's sphere of responsibility, and the division of tasks was based on political decisions more related to powers of certain industrial sectors than to objective criteria.²²¹

Moreover, local government reform was prepared in a quite difficult political situation as the Polish parliament was only in part democratically elected and the communes until then were the lowest level of public administration. As a result, reform had to overcome several barriers simultaneously.²²² At the same time, such a quick call for local elections after the formation of the first non-communist government was important in the situation of the unfinished revolution. Mazowiecki did not consider it wise to call for another fully democratic parliamentary election as this could destabilise the country. As a result, the local elections in 1990 were a substitute for a national election. Thus, the local government became the first institution to be elected in a completely free election since the end of the Second World War, an event of particular symbolic importance.

The fact that this was the first free election created considerable self-confidence in local government. The local government elite sometimes saw itself as the only institution that really represented society as the parliament was still only semi-democratic. Thus,

²²¹ Regulski and Kocan, 1994: 61.

²²² Regulski and Kocan, 1994: 59.

its members saw themselves not only as representatives of their local communities but also, by virtue of being the first fully democratic institution, as advocates of further reform in general.²²³ Thus, they even believed that they should oppose the centre which was still seen as conservative and interested in maintaining the *status quo*.

iii. Solidarity rule – the delay of further administrative reforms and personnel policy

The performance of the voivodship office at this time was directly influenced by two factors. First, after the rapid start on systemic administrative reform with the reform of local government in 1990, the further stages of reform at the district and regional levels were delayed. The voivodship office was therefore functioning in a state of suspension, expecting inevitable further regional reform which would put an end to the extreme inefficiency of administration at that level – a situation that it regarded as both unacceptable and untenable. Most of all, it expected that the 49 small voivodships would be replaced by a few strong regions.

Second, the personnel changes in administration, especially concerning the appointment of *voivodes*, were also an important factor influencing the performance of the voivodship office administration. The personnel policy in administration is also interesting in the context of increasing politicisation during Pawlak's tenure, which led to the appointment of the next *voivode* of Katowice, Ciszak, in 1994.

In considering the causes of the 'unfinished reform' during the post-Solidarity period, three main factors must be taken into account. First, the sudden shift of power to the post-Solidarity governments resulted in the absence of a vision of systemic administrative reform; second, the fragmentation of the Solidarity opposition, and strong personal conflicts within the post-Solidarity leadership, further delayed the work on reform; and third, the increasing isolation of the post-Solidarity elite from society led to a shift of power in 1993 to the post-communists. The post-communists wanted to preserve the existing territorial administrative divisions and delayed the formation of effective regional administration, forcing the voivodship office to continue operating within 'provisional' structures.

²²³ For example, opinion of Dziewior, Mayor of Katowice, *Sejmik Samorządowy*, August 1995.

a. Mazowiecki's government – the absence of a vision of systemic administrative reform and his personnel policy

The 'unfinished reform' resulted from both the lack of a comprehensive scheme for dismantling the structure of the socialist state, and the lack of any complete vision of the administrative institutions by Mazowiecki's government or anybody else in the post-Solidarity elite.²²⁴ Later, the comprehensive reform of the administration was delayed by the instability of the post-Solidarity period as the government changed four times between 1989 and 1993. The lack of qualified personnel also hindered any quick transition from the administrative institutions left by the socialist system.

During Mazowiecki's government an almost complete change of personnel at voivodship level took place. During the eighteen months of his tenure 44 out of 49 *voivodes* were dismissed.²²⁵ *Voivode* Czech was appointed during this period and he 'maintained' power throughout the next three governments as personnel changes during the post-Solidarity period were rather limited.²²⁶ However, the pace and scale of the change of administrative personnel as a whole, and especially in the top positions in ministries, during Mazowiecki's tenure were far from revolutionary. The change of *voivodes* was the most radical among the personnel changes, while the smallest changes occurred in the Ministry of National Defence and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. The limited change in these ministries, which continued to be dominated by personnel appointed in the socialist period and headed by post-communist ministers, was predominantly due to the fear of disobedience or rebellion, which could not be ruled out. Mazowiecki's policy was interpreted by Dudek (1997) as a conscious attempt to unite the whole of society around the most basic national interests, and to erase the past divisions that arose during the socialist era, between those who were members of the *nomenklatura* and worked in administration and those who were outside its institutions.

The more radical change in the ranks of the *voivodes*, compared to that of top officials in ministries, seems to have been encouraged by pressure from regional post-Solidarity

²²⁴ Dudek, 1997: 81.

²²⁵ Dudek 1997: 83-84.

²²⁶ During the next three post-Solidarity governments, each lasting about a year, personnel changes in administration were relatively limited, with about one fifth of *voivodes* changed by each government.

elites demanding the dismantling of regional *nomenklatura*: for example, the dismissal of *voivode* Wnuk and the appointment of *voivode* Czech in the Katowice voivodship.

During Mazowiecki's tenure, former *nomenklatura* personnel dominated the national elite. However, by time of the second government of Bielecki the new elite had already begun to predominate. Sztumski (1997: 138 and 142) argues that participation in the underground Solidarity ('combatant origin') was the main criterion in decisions surrounding promotion, taking precedence over qualifications and the moral evaluation of candidates.

b. The fragmentation of the post-Solidarity elite

The recognition of the Solidarity opposition (illegal during socialism) and the parliamentary election in 1989 radically changed the situation of Solidarity.²²⁷ The fragmentation of the post-Solidarity elite began very early, with the division of Solidarity into two camps: the supporters of Wałęsa, and those of Mazowiecki. This initiated the process of the formation of several post-Solidarity parties and the gradual disintegration of a post-Solidarity elite, unable to unite around common aims.²²⁸ The Solidarity opposition was united during the socialist period through having a common enemy. However, with the fall of communism and the disappearance of the common enemy, the main mechanism of their integration suddenly ceased to exist. The political situation changed radically, and the social structure was also going through an equally radical transition. Solidarity had to adapt to this new situation. At first, they responded to the new conditions by extreme fragmentation along various political, social, religious and economic lines. At the same time, the perception of common interest and the integration of various small parties and groupings were slow. Often, the main element distinguishing the various post-Solidarity parties and groupings was not their political agenda but their political leaders.

²²⁷ In this work referred to as 'post-Solidarity' after that date, to distinguish it from the Solidarity opposition in the period 1980-1989.

²²⁸ Wałęsa started this 'war at the top' by attacking Mazowiecki, the Prime Minister of the first non-communist government (despite having been earlier proposed by him for this position).

Moreover, recognition of the legitimacy of the state and the authority of administrative institutions was also slow. Being in opposition, and criticising the functioning of the state, were still understood to be positive and patriotic behaviour. As a result, some of the post-Solidarity elite decided not to accept public office but preferred to stay in opposition.²²⁹ In addition, individual opinions were still highly valued, and subordination to the formal party agenda was seen as 'a betrayal of free thinking and individual courage'. For instance, deputy Prime Minister Goryszewski voiced opinions that were sometimes radically at variance with the formal policy of Suchocka's government.²³⁰

The conflict between Wałęsa and Mazowiecki eventually led to the fall of the Mazowiecki government. This marked the beginning of a period of weak, short-lived governments all of which were unable to form a coherent policy. The post-Solidarity governments, each lasting less than a year, were therefore not able to introduce comprehensive administrative reform. The exception was a set of administrative reforms prepared by Suchocka's government (the last post-Solidarity government). The reforms covered district and regional reform, reform of civil servants and the central administration. However, these were rejected by the next parliament, which was post-communist.

To sum up, during their rule in the period between 1989 and 1993 the post-Solidarity parties were divided by personal ambitions and sometimes the extreme value of individuality among politicians. As a result, they were not able to unite around common agendas and interests. This delayed the introduction of coherent government reforms.

c. The Solidarity governments' isolation and the return of the post-communists

In 1993, the victory of the post-communists in the national election forced post-Solidarity, for the first time, to unite around common aims. The post-Solidarity elite began to be aware that it needed to preserve its electoral support if it was to be able to continue its own vision of reform. It also concentrated more attention on its personnel policy and on how its politicians should communicate with society.

²²⁹ Wasilewski, 1994: 15.

²³⁰ Dudek, 1997: 232.

iv. The proposals for district and regional administrative reform

In 1993, the last post-Solidarity government of Suchocka prepared the second stage of administrative reform. The reform was planned to begin with the reintroduction of self-governing districts above the communes (which had been reformed in 1990); this would be followed by the formation of a few large and strong regions by merging the territories of the existing 49 voivodships. The district and regional administrative reforms were aimed at substantial delegation of power according to the principle of subsidiarity. There were different proposals concerning the number of new regions to be created; the numbers mentioned were 12, 17 or 25. The division into 12 regions seemed to be best suited to attracting foreign co-operation, and was closest to European standards of relatively large units. The new regional authorities were also to integrate the administration at the regional level: numerous special administrative units directly subordinate to ministers were to be replaced by a general administration subordinate to the *voivode*.

These proposals for the creation of a few strong regional units formulated by the post-Solidarity elite were, to a large extent, based on the inter-war system. There were three main arguments for the territorial reform: political, economic and social. From the point of view of the regional elites, the core of regional administrative reform was related to the political argument, the redrawing of voivodship boundaries and the redefinition of the responsibilities of the centre and regions. This was expected to involve substantial delegation of power to the regional level. One result would be to insulate the regional administration from the effects of political instability at the centre (this had been an important consideration during the inter-war period as well).

The partial reform of 1990 had remained the 'district' and regional levels, and their relationships with the centre as they had existed under socialism. Thus, the quality of performance of the administration above local level was very low. In other words, improvements at district and regional levels and at the centre depended on the elimination of such extremely dysfunctional features of socialist administration as excessive centralisation and vertical fragmentation. However, this could be done only after the reform of the territorial division of the state by the formation of big and strong territorial units.

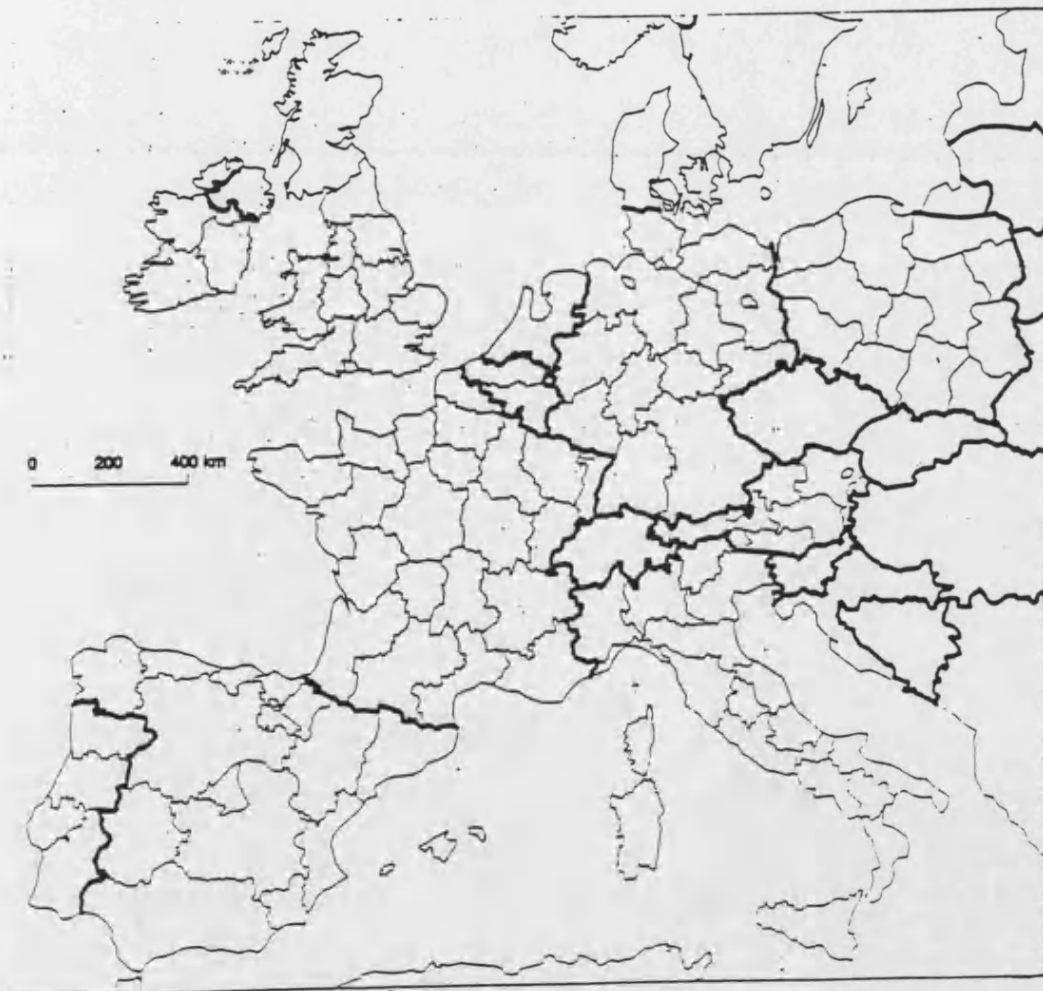
The second argument raised by post-Solidarity was an economic one. They argued that although territorial reform would be costly in the initial stages, in the longer term the creation of large decentralised regions on the western European model would lead to economies in public expenditure, greater flexibility and improved efficiency in government. Moreover, they argued that co-operation within the EU necessitated the formation of strong regional units, similar in size to the German *Länder* or the French provinces (the majority of western European countries are divided into regions several times larger than the voivodships of the socialist period). This, according to Hryniewicz, (1995) would enable them to be equal partners in regional exchange and enhance co-operation.²³¹ Furthermore, the introduction of larger voivodships would help to create a better environment for investment. It is easier for larger regions to advertise their economic potential and generate independent centres such as scientific and university institutions. Moreover, larger regions may develop their own banking facilities and produce highly-qualified professionals that meet international expectations. The larger voivodship structure also seems to be much better for efficient industrial restructuring, as it is argued that the structure of administration can facilitate the modernisation of industry, encourage the arrival of new technologies and increase export production potential.²³²

A final and sociological argument was presented by the post-Solidarity governments. They proposed that as society is integrated around traditional local and regional borders, the reform should re-establish these regions. Only after the establishment of such regions would the formation of a fully-fledged democratic system, with strong social participation, be possible.²³³

²³¹ See maps: 5, page 132.

²³² Hryniewicz, 1995: 33-34.

²³³ Surażka, 1993: 92.



Map 5: The Suchocka government's proposals for the administrative division of Poland into 12 voivodships similar in size to other European regions (source: Koter, *Wspólnota*, no. 20, 1996, p.8)

Unexpectedly, after the vote of no-confidence in Suchocka's government, President Wałęsa decided to dissolve parliament. The newly-elected parliament led to the formation of the post-communist government of Pawlak, which, wishing to preserve the *status quo*, suspended district and regional reform.²³⁴ It was only after intense political pressure that the most advanced element of the district reform – the Pilot Programme aimed at the formation of town-districts – was introduced.

3.2. Czech's tenure in the voivodship office, 1990-1994

i. The post-Solidarity take-over of the voivodship office, 1990-1994

The shift of power to the Solidarity elite started at the national level. After the Round Table negotiations in April 1989 between the communists and the Solidarity opposition, the non-communist government of Mazowiecki was formed. This government was exceptional, in part because it was the first government for many years without ministerial representation from the Katowice voivodship. This fact is extremely significant and can be interpreted as a substantial weakening of the position of the heavy industry lobby.²³⁵

The Solidarity movement's surge to political power at the national level led to changes in the regional and local elite in the whole country. Two parallel processes took place: first, the appointment of new *voivodes* of Solidarity origin. As noted above, during Mazowiecki's rule from August 1989 until December 1990, 44 out of 49 *voivodes* were replaced.²³⁶ Second, eight months after the national election on 27 May 1990, local government elections were held. Throughout the country power went to the Citizens' Committees, which took 45 per cent of the votes.²³⁷

The first Citizens' Committee was formed as an advisory body to Wałęsa during the Round Table Negotiation in December 1988 and were characterised by the presence of the intelligentsia and even intellectuals. During the parliamentary election in 1989, the

²³⁴ Pawlak's vision of administration is presented in chapter five in the section on the introduction of the Pilot Programme.

²³⁵ Domarańczyk, 1990: 156.

²³⁶ *Życie Częstochowy*, 14 January 1994.

²³⁷ Surazka, 1993: 86.

Citizens' Committees organised the Solidarity campaign, as they did later during the local elections in 1990. The Citizens Committees united people of various political views around one common idea: opposition to the socialist regime. After the parliamentary election in 1990 post-Solidarity parties began to form and the Citizens Committees movement slowly disappeared. This was hastened by Wałęsa's efforts to eliminate the intelligentsia from the Solidarity movement and limit Solidarity to a trade union organisation with a strong blue-collar character.

In the Katowice voivodship, the emergence of a new regional elite of Solidarity origin in both the voivodship office and local government took place at the same time as in Poland as a whole. The new *voivode* was appointed on 25 May 1990 and the local elections took place two days later. Consequently, reforms in these two types of administration influenced each other and strengthened the new post-Solidarity regional elite. The post-Solidarity regional elite in the voivodship shared most of the characteristics of the national Solidarity elite (a history of participation in underground organisations, membership of the Citizens' Committees, lack of experience of work in public institutions, or origins in the intelligentsia). However, the elite in the Katowice voivodship also had a very particular and distinctive character that set them apart from their counterparts in other regions. This was directly related to the regional policies they proposed.

The return to democratic politics in 1989 in Upper Silesia led most of all to actions aimed at preserving the regional identity of the native population and the promotion of their democratic participation in the public life of the region. Thus, in Upper Silesia the local election was also seen as an opportunity for native Silesians 'to rule in the region themselves', as they used to say. In the voivodship office, the preservation of regional identity was at the heart of Czech's regional policy. At the same time, the most distinctive feature of the new revolutionary period elite which arrived in 1990 (directors of the voivodship office appointed by *voivode* Czech and councillors elected in local elections) was their Silesian origins. The pre-dominance of Silesians among the regional elite further strengthened their policy for the preservation of regional identity. It was also a primary influence on their views of how the regional administration should be organised. In this chapter, these two phenomena will be investigated during Czech's tenure.

ii. *The Upper Silesian Union and its vision of regional policy, 1989-1990*

At the beginning of the transition the most important source for the recruitment of the new native Silesian cadres was the Upper Silesian Union, an organisation which at that time participated in the movement of the Citizens' Committees.²³⁸ The Upper Silesian Union tried to answer some burning questions: who are we Silesians? What is our history? What is our relationship with Poland? This need for native Silesians to reinterpret their own history was especially intense after the period of socialism, which many of them saw as a time of severe persecution and the nearly successful attempt to eliminate their distinctive identity.

Thus, during the first phase of the formation of the regional elite (ie the revolutionary period roughly coinciding with *voivode* Czech's rule, 1990-1994), the political scene was dominated by the Upper Silesian Union's intelligentsia and by their vision of regional policy. Their members were connected to the main economic and political forces in the region.²³⁹ Thus, the Upper Silesian Union's policy is investigated more closely.²⁴⁰ The Upper Silesian Union, like the *Sanacja*, declared that it was not a political party.²⁴¹ Like this inter-war organisation it also formed an 'umbrella party' and its institutions attempted to cover the whole of the regional elite (in both the 'wide' and 'narrow' sense of the term). However, in contrast to the *Sanacja*, the Upper Silesian Union united mostly the native population.

²³⁸ A similar revival of regional movements took place in other Polish borderland regions such as Greater Poland and Pomerania (Szczepański, 1994: 85). However, it was only in Upper Silesia that regional movements with a separatist character arose, like the Movement for Silesian Autonomy (Wódcz, 1993: 17). There were also regional organisations of the German minority. The estimated number of the German minority was about 70,000 in the Katowice voivodship, and additionally 200,000 more in the Opole voivodship (Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański 1994: 35).

²³⁹ Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański, 1994.

²⁴⁰ All quotations come from the policy documents of the Upper Silesian Union, written at the turn of 1989/1990 before the nomination of *voivode* Czech and the May 1990 local government election. The quotations have been selected to present the Upper Silesian Union's policy at the time of its formation as its policy has evolved since then.

Consequently, to maintain precision (relating to the differences of opinion within the movement itself) in the second part of the chapter, concerning regional policy, most of the opinions presented are quotations from *voivode* Czech's interviews in the local press.

²⁴¹ The fact that Upper Silesian Union members belonged to various political parties makes it difficult to estimate correctly the number of Upper Silesian Union members among the elected councillors, MPs and the voivodship's civil servants.

a. The revitalising of regional culture

The Upper Silesian Union was particularly aimed at revitalising the native culture of the region and uniting native Upper Silesians independently of their political attitudes.²⁴² Most of the cultural values emphasised by the Upper Silesian Union were, according to them, formed when Upper Silesia belonged to Prussia. This distinguished the cultural heritage of the area from that of other parts of Poland. According to the Upper Silesian Union, these values are, above all, an attachment to Christian values, a work ethos, and commitment to social equality.²⁴³

The debate on the revitalisation of the regional culture was put into an historical context by means of reference to the two recent periods when Upper Silesia had formed part of Poland: the socialist and the inter-war periods. The socialist period is presented first; this was naturally assessed very negatively by the Upper Silesian Union. Its opinion of the inter-war period was quite the opposite; in fact it was very positive and, as will be revealed, not always realistic (some much weaker references are made to the Medieval period – the period of Polish Piast's rule).

b. The condemnation of socialism

The formation of the Upper Silesian Union, as its documents show, was basically a reaction to the socialist period. In the Upper Silesian Union declarations, the entire socialist period, and all the actions of the then ruling elites, whether regional or central, were described negatively as totalitarian. The Upper Silesian Union condemned centralisation and the economic policies carried out then: they were seen as the cause of the region's increasing economic backwardness. The state or its centre was compared to 'a gigantic sucking pump living at the expense of its borders, these peripheries [regions]'.²⁴⁴ They also claimed that socialist rule had caused a decline in living standards, ecological crises, the disintegration of Silesian culture and the elimination of the native elite.²⁴⁵ However, the major explanation for the Upper Silesian Union's uniformly negative assessment of the socialist period was the perceived threat to the

²⁴² Declaration of the Upper Silesian Union 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990: 2.

²⁴³ Declaration of the Upper Silesian Union, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990: 2.

²⁴⁴ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. b.: 2.

²⁴⁵ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. a.: 6.

identity of the Silesian population: the whole period was unequivocally condemned as endangering the preservation of the regional culture and identity of Upper Silesia. For example, Chojecka very emotionally described the whole socialist period as one big trauma due to the treatment of the Silesians:

Out of it rose the immense collective trauma of lack of appreciation and hunger for respect by the native population. At the least, their sense of alienation.²⁴⁶

This 'trauma' was caused especially by national distrust directed towards Silesians,²⁴⁷ which prevented them from ruling in their own region ('their own home', as they used to say). Moreover, the Upper Silesian Union held that the region had been ruled by 'aliens' (newcomers) who did not have even a basic knowledge of Silesian culture and history. This limited even further the freedom of the natives to preserve their own identity as, for example, the quotation below by the same author indicates:

One more thing which is especially predominant in Upper Silesia is its decades-long complete lack of freedom to rule in *its own state* [my italics]. Also because people who were sent to rule came as a result of abrupt decisions, they thus came without knowing anything about the region.²⁴⁸

The Upper Silesian Union declarations mentioning the rule by 'alien' people, who were sent to the region abruptly without having been prepared for their role, and the exclusion of Silesians from public life all point to the renewal of the inter-war conflict between natives and newcomers. However, the Upper Silesian Union's documents emphasising the Dąbrowa-Silesia conflict during the socialist period suggest that this dimension was especially important and it was re-shaped mostly as a conflict of the Dąbrowa elite versus the natives.²⁴⁹

This unambiguously negative assessment of the socialist period is not entirely borne out by the facts. Upper Silesia was possibly the most economically and politically privileged region during the socialist period.²⁵⁰ The fact that economic development was accompanied by severe ecological deterioration is indisputable. However, the

²⁴⁶ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. b.: 2.

²⁴⁷ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. a.: 6.

²⁴⁸ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. b.: 3.

²⁴⁹ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. a.: 6

²⁵⁰ Hirszowicz (1980), Schöpflin (1993).

The privileged character of the region is also indicated by the fact that Upper Silesia had the highest wages in the whole of Poland, even higher than in Warsaw (*Rocznik Statystyczny Województw*, 1988:70).

completely negative assessment seems to be exaggerated. It is likely that these negative perceptions were strengthened by Upper Silesia's history of being the most privileged region in Poland and by comparison with the 'golden age' of the inter-war years when the Upper Silesian Union considered Upper Silesia to have been the most developed region in Poland.

As we have seen in the preceding chapter, after its incorporation in 1922, Silesia was distinguished by its political and financial autonomy throughout the whole inter-war period. The fact is, the weaker role accorded to heavy industry after the transition in 1989 threatened Upper Silesia's privileged position. The political position of the Katowice voivodship elite compared with the socialist period was also significantly weakened (as indicated by the composition of Mazowiecki's government, where there were no ministers from the region). Furthermore, during the transition, living standards had fallen substantially, and this was especially noticed in Upper Silesia, which had grown accustomed to its privileged status. Thus, criticism of the socialist period central government rule was prompted by a negative evaluation of the situation during the transitional period and its prospects for the future. This is illustrated by Otte, one of the Upper Silesian Union's leaders who referred to the worsening of the living conditions:

Forty years of socialism brought Upper Silesia enormous devastation due to central government policies. This region became an internal colony, significantly below the country's average measured by the index of living-standards.²⁵¹

The Upper Silesian Union's assessment of socialism as internal colonisation of the region has to be seen in the wider historical perspective going back to Prussian rule. At that time, Upper Silesia became a centre for the production of raw materials and simple industrial goods,²⁵² with much lower living conditions than the western German territories.²⁵³ In addition, ethnic divisions were aligned with class divisions. It was at this time that Polish-speaking Silesians began see the region as ruled by 'alien' outsiders, beginning with the Germans. In the inter-war period, the rulers changed to Poles from other regions, and finally, after the war, the 'aliens' came from Dąbrowa.²⁵⁴ Smolorz, a Silesian journalist, sees this myth of being ruled by 'aliens' as having been

²⁵¹ Otte quoted in *Nasza Gazeta*, a special edition from annex 9 of *Memoriał w sprawie odwołania ...1992*: 5.

²⁵² Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański, 1994.

²⁵³ Rose, 1935.

²⁵⁴ Kutz quoted in Walczak, 1996: 21.

rooted in past centuries and uncritically presented by Silesian regional organisations to put the blame on ‘others’:

There is in us, Upper Silesians, a gigantic complex, which force us to believe endlessly that for centuries we were have been persecuted and nobody has let us spread our wings. We were not allowed to be in power – as the legend says – and continuously, ruled by activists sent from anywhere. But maybe we were not so terribly unappreciated as was repeatedly claimed by the regional activists full of complexes.²⁵⁵

c. The inter-war and medieval inspiration

Whether justified or not, this extremely negative evaluation of the socialist period and its administrative structures had a great impact on the Upper Silesian Union’s proposals for administrative reform. They were aimed at radical decentralisation, and sometimes autonomy was mentioned. The view of the socialist period as endangering the preservation of the region’s identity and culture also led to the Upper Silesian Union’s attempts at cultural renewal based on inter-war and medieval inspirations. The inter-war model was also proposed for the voivodship administrative reform, as a guarantee of its effectiveness, as opinion of *voivode* Czech, on the day of his nomination illustrates:

Till the Second World War cultural conditions in Upper Silesia were very high. What happened later was the decline from the level achieved earlier – and I look stubbornly back to those lost values.²⁵⁶

The inter-war period is presented as a golden age, overlooking such negative features for the natives as high unemployment and the domination of the regional elite by newcomers. The important difference is that this period did not lead to the above-mentioned endangering of regional identity and its culture, as the socialist period did. Moreover, the inter-war period had one particularly important feature, regional autonomy, which guaranteed decentralisation of the decision-making process. Thus, most decisions were taken in the region and some of the inter-war institutions – for example local governments – were dominated by natives. At the same time, autonomy, according to the Upper Silesian Union, made possible the maintenance of a high level of economic development and much better living standards than in the rest of the country.

²⁵⁵ Smolorz, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 3-5 June 1994.

²⁵⁶ Czech quoted in *Gość Niedzielny*, no. 23, 1990.

As a result, the Upper Silesian Union contrasted regional development in the inter-war period with that of the socialist period. It also believed that despite the scepticism towards autonomy outside Upper Silesia, it should be the inspiration for a democratic and decentralised administrative structure, as the opinion of Chojecka, in one of the Upper Silesian Union's official documents, indicates:

I have noticed an interesting phenomenon. Up to now, even in independent circles, the advocates of autonomy are not very favourably viewed. They are, from the beginning, held guilty of the sin of separatism. However, is it not the case that our state is moving in the direction of a new form of autonomy? The concept of self-government assumes autonomy. Here let's not be afraid to recall the Silesian tradition of autonomy in the inter-war period – its self-governing character – as our experience preceded that of other regions: Lesser Poland, Pomerania, Mazovia. We have a tradition of Silesian autonomy, of self-government. Let's not feel ashamed of it.²⁵⁷

Thus, the inter-war period began to be idealised and seen as a golden age. Inter-war regional administrative institutional design was regarded as a model solution for the present-day administrative problems. In 1989, the administrative concepts were only beginning to be formulated and were thus quite imprecise as will be seen when Czech's concept of administration is examined later in this chapter. Nevertheless, Upper Silesian Union references to autonomy, implying a marginal role for central government, can be interpreted, despite its denials, as having separatist hints (the above quotation is a good example). However, its statements were so vague (whether deliberately so is not clear) that a number of interpretations are possible. It is possible, for example, that autonomy (meaning self-government) was being proposed for all of the new regions and not just for Silesia. This possibility has to be taken into account when analysing the positions taken by the Upper Silesian Union.

After 1989 the public debate concentrated on the national political and economic issues. Regional identification throughout most of Poland was rather weak and, in most of the regions, regional and local issues were seen as subordinate to those of the national transition. Thus, the strong regional identification expressed by the Upper Silesian Union, its emphasis on the regional scale of problems and its demands for the decentralisation of power and for regional autonomy were quite unique.²⁵⁸ This can be explained only by the strong regional identification created by several centuries of separation from the Polish state, as a result of which regional identity was much

²⁵⁷ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. b.: 2.

²⁵⁸ Compare also quotations of *voivode* Czech in later parts of this chapter.

stronger in Upper Silesia than in other parts of Poland. Thus, for the native Upper Silesian elite, Polish nationality was expressed by close identification with the region, while identification with Poland as a whole country was blurred. In other words, on many occasions the region was identified with Poland as a whole, although sometimes as the sole and only motherland.

It seems this overwhelming concentration on the regional perspective could be favourable to the development of separatist tendencies in the long run, although such opinions seem to have been embryonic. Thus, at the time they were rather implied in statements by Chojecka, one of the Upper Silesian Union leaders, and by Czech on the idea of Euroregion and Greater Silesia (see quotations below). For example, in the following extract, Chojecka, (despite her fierce defence against the accusation of separatism) talks of Silesians, not as part of Poland, but as a 'nation', and compares the Silesians' search for identity to the exodus of the Jews from Egypt:

Where does the similarity to the Biblical exodus from Egypt lie? It is in our enslaved *nation* [my italics] taking its own fate in its hands and deciding for a fate full of risks: break with the world assuring a relatively stable minimal existence, [...]. They go, leaving a country of little stabilisation, and what waits for them is not a land of milk and honey but a desert, misery, despair and the great unknown.²⁵⁹

It is likely that memories of the inter-war period were even more precious as a source of inspiration as the only other period of union with Poland was in the Middle Ages. In consequence, the two periods – inter-war and socialist – were seen in an idealised black-and-white perspective. This type of perspective seems to have been enhanced by the Upper Silesian Union members' experience of the anti-socialist opposition, when uncompromising, romantic attitudes against the socialist authorities were considered a virtue. These attitudes were radicalised further by the experience of imprisonment after the introduction of martial law.²⁶⁰ However, this type of attitude seems best suited to totalitarian times, when the existence of legal opposition was considered to be a threat to the state. Nevertheless, this bifurcated black-and-white perception of politics survived the transition to democratic rule after 1989, and the virtue of compromise among various political options was not recognised.

²⁵⁹ Chojecka, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990. b.: 2.

²⁶⁰ 'My conception of regional policy was formed finally in ... prison!' (*voivode* Czech quoted in Kurier Zachodni, 10-11 January 1992).

The second source of inspiration, in addition to the inter-war period, was the Silesian tradition during the Piast rule. This is illustrated by the words of Klasik one of the Upper Silesian Union's leaders:

The Upper Silesian Union defines Upper Silesia's territory by referring to its history and culture deeply rooted in its Slavonic and Piast past. The task is to also recognise our heritage from later centuries, formed not just by one nation and not only by people living here for centuries.²⁶¹

This demarcation of Upper Silesia's territorial extent, referring to periods when the region had multi-national character including Czechs, Germans and Poles, has serious consequences for the territorial claims of the new region to be formed, given the historic ties with Moravia in the Czech Republic. These ties were often underlined. The ties with the other 'nation living here for centuries' – implicitly the Germans, were not stated at all. This was probably because of the sensitivity of the possible irredentism, as a result of the shift of the post-war borders westward and the mass emigration of Silesians. But the issue of relations towards German Silesians is not so clear, and is even contradictory, for example, the attempts of Buszman, one of the Upper Silesian Union's leader and the chairman of the voivodship assembly, to create a German Consulate without consulting with the Foreign Ministry seem to be suspicious.

iii. The appointment of the new post-Solidarity voivode

The appointment of *voivode* Czech resulted from the efforts of the regional elite of the Solidarity movement to introduce its own representative after the electoral victory at national level. The attack on *voivode* Wnuk had an unequivocally political character. In the middle of January 1990 *voivode* Wnuk was attacked by the chief of the Dąbrowa-Silesia Solidarity Trade Union for his *nomenklatura* background and for having backed the imposition of martial law. The Trade Union did not however propose a candidate of its own.²⁶² As a result, at the beginning of April the initiative was taken by the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia (KIK), an organisation with a well-established structure of leadership, developed during its decade of existence. In 1989, after political liberation, the Upper Silesian Union was formed on the basis of the KIK. These close personal ties

²⁶¹ Klasik, 'Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego', 1990: 6.

²⁶² *Gazeta Katowicka*, 25 May 1990.

between the KIK and the Upper Silesian Union reflect the traditionally strong attachment of Upper Silesians to Catholicism. Together, these two institutions decided to propose Wojciech Czech. Czech was one of the leaders of the KIK and a member of the Social Council of Katowice Diocese, as well as one of the founders of the Upper Silesian Union.²⁶³ An appeal to the Union of Citizens' Committees was sent to Prime Minister Mazowiecki in support of his candidacy.

In the middle of April, Czech and four other candidates for the position of *voivode* proposed by other Solidarity-derived regional organisations were invited to the Palace of the Upper Silesian Bishop for a meeting where representatives of the OKP (the Parliamentary Solidarity Club of MPs) were gathered. The vote was for Czech.²⁶⁴ However, Czech's candidacy was not supported by the Solidarity Trade Union, which was fighting to preserve its influence. This led to a prolonged discussion on the part of the Solidarity-derived organisations over the division of votes in the '*voivode* election'. Eventually the Union of Citizens' Committees was successful in proposing negotiations between the main political forces of the regional Solidarity movement and representatives of the Catholic Bishop of Katowice. This struggle within the post-Solidarity regional elite showed that the conflict was concentrated around personal influence rather than political programmes, and also highlighted the crucial role of the Catholic Church in the region.²⁶⁵ This selection had an elitist character as the new *voivode*, Czech, was chosen at a meeting of the regional (Solidarity-based) elite on 14 May 1990, but his candidacy was unknown to the general public in the region.²⁶⁶ His candidacy was later approved by Prime Minister Mazowiecki.²⁶⁷

As in the preceding chapter concerning the inter-war and socialist periods, discussion of the regional policies pursued by the *voivodes* will be preceded by a sociological description of the main agents – *voivodes* Wojciech Czech (1990-1994) and Eugeniusz Ciszak (1994-1997).²⁶⁸ This description will investigate their regional origins, education, administrative qualifications and career development. The second issue dealt

²⁶³ *Biuletyn Związku Górnośląskiego*, 1990.

²⁶⁴ This procedure was not exceptional as on many occasions during the national election the national Solidarity leaders asked the regional church authorities to recommend candidates for election as the members of the Citizens' Committees and the Church had also participated actively in the Round Table negotiations in 1989 (Geremek, Żakowski, 1990).

²⁶⁵ Błasiak, Nawrocki, Szczepański, 1994: 26-27.

²⁶⁶ *Kurier Zachodni*, 10-11 January 1992.

²⁶⁷ Prime Minister Mazowiecki was also a KIK activist.

²⁶⁸ See table 6, page 145.

with is their regional policy. Third, their employment policies in the administration of the voivodship office will be examined using a sample of the administrative elite (directors of departments).

Table 6: The transitional period *Voivodes* in the Katowice voivodship, 1990-1997

NAMES OF <i>VOIVODES</i> OF THE KATOWICE VOIVODSHIP, 1990-1997	PERIOD IN OFFICE	REGIONAL ORIGINS	ACHIEVED EDUCATION	PROFESSION AND WORK EXPERIENCE BEFORE PROMOTION	POLITICAL CAREER
1. WOJCIECH CZECH (1945 -)	(25 May 1990–1 March 1994)	Silesian	Technical University of Cracow 1968 MSc in Architecture History of Art Jagellonian University	1968-1981 Architectural and environmental institutes 1981-1986 Director of the Environment Protection Institute 1986-1990 Lecturer at the Technical University of Silesia	1956-1987 In youth organisations (scouts) 1980 Member of Solidarity In 1981 Political prisoner One of the founders of Katowice Branch of the Committee of Catholic Intelligentsia One of the founders of Upper Silesian Union
2. EUGENIUSZ CISZAK (1929 -)	(1 June 1994-21 Oct 1997)	Newcomer	The Technical University of Silesia MSc coal mining 1956-1964 Lecturer at the Technical University of Silesia 1956-1983 In coalmining research institutes 1964-1968 In India 1983-1987 Deputy minister in Coalmining Ministry 1988-1989 In Geneva on the Coal Commission of the United Nations 1994 Chairman of Board of Coal Industrial - Trade Chamber in Katowice		Until 1989 in PZPR

iv. *Sociological description of voivode Wojciech Czech, 1990-1994*

The appointment of the first *voivode* – Wojciech Czech – after the fall of the communist regime resembled that of *voivode* Rymer in June 1922. Both careers could be classified as ‘combat’ types. This type of career was an exception in the inter-war period when emphasis was put on professional qualifications and only the first *voivode* was chosen because of his combatant merits. In 1922 the appointment of *voivode* Rymer, a Silesian, followed from his role in the Third Silesian Rising and in the formation of an indigenous Polish Upper Silesian administration. Czech’s career could also be defined as that of a ‘combatant’ due to his activity in the Solidarity opposition. In addition he was interned in 1981, after the imposition of martial law. It seems that participation in the Solidarity movement and ‘internment’ were ‘heroic events’ which played the same role in the selection process in 1989 as participation in the Silesian Risings had done in the twenties.

The appointment of a Silesian as *voivode* in 1989 was important too because it emphasised the government’s respect for the regional opposition, especially after the period of socialism, when out of 11 *voivodes* only three were Silesians.²⁶⁹ In 1922, the appointment of a native was in recognition of Upper Silesia’s efforts to be incorporated into Poland; similarly, in 1990, the appointment of a native was interpreted as recognition by the central government of Silesian’s own efforts to oppose the communist regime, especially during the imposition of martial law. The appointments of Rymer and Czech are also similar in that both had only limited knowledge of administration: Czech had not worked in administration at all, and Rymer had been the chairman of the Principal People’s Council and had had only a year’s experience of work in administration. The lack of administrative experience of Polish Silesians at the time immediately preceding incorporation into Poland was due to the fact that they had been excluded from work in administration²⁷⁰

In 1989 the situation was similar to that at the beginning of the inter-war period. The regional post-Solidarity elite’s aim to break with the *nomenklatura* cadres and appoint its own *voivode* meant that no potential candidates would have administrative

²⁶⁹ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 December 1994.

²⁷⁰ This resulted from their lack of professional qualifications since there were only a few who had finished secondary or high school.

experience, as all managerial positions in administration during the socialist period were taken by the *nomenklatura*. In addition to the fact that neither Czech nor Rymer had administrative experience, neither had the professional qualifications which could be expected to be best suited for a *voivode* – Rymer had not finished his secondary education and Czech was an architect. Judging by the criterion of qualification, the previous socialist *voivode* Wnuk, who was an economist, seemed better suited for the position.

However, there was one striking difference between Rymer and Czech despite the fact that both were native Silesians. Unlike Rymer, Czech had a high level of education: an MSc in Architecture, advanced courses in the History of Art and the experience of a few years of lecturing at university. This was extremely important as *voivode* Czech and his colleagues from the Upper Silesian Union were representatives of the educated Upper Silesian elite – the first native Upper Silesian elite since 1922 (earlier, the natives in the regional elite had been isolated individuals among the newcomer majority). Finally, it should be emphasised that *voivode* Czech was a typical representative of the new regional administrative elite at the beginning of the nineties. Like most of them he had participated in the Solidarity opposition, he was of Upper Silesian origin, he had shared the sense of mission. And like most of his colleagues, his policy was developed under the inspiration of the Upper Silesian Union, at least in the early stages.

3.3 The Regional Policy of Voivode Czech

Analysis of *voivode* Czech's regional policy concentrates on two primary issues:

- i. the territorial dimension of his vision of the future of Upper Silesia,
- ii. the structural dimension related to his demands for decentralisation of power and strengthening of voivodship (regional) administration.

i. *'From historic region to the concept of Great Upper Silesia' – the territorial dimension*

The first territorial issue will be analysed in the context of the revival of regional tendencies in Poland as a whole. The Round Table Agreement of 1989 had initiated political openness and led to a revival of regional cultures. This, in turn, raised questions regarding the re-establishment of the historical regions that had existed before 1975. The arguments were also economic, in that these big administrative units were expected to be more efficient and, at the same time, better suited to the needs of economic restructuring.²⁷¹ Similarly, *voivode* Czech believed that:

The economy cannot be restructured only within the borders of voivodships, especially of 49 voivodships.²⁷²

According to Jałowicki, in all regions except Upper Silesia the economic problems arising from the period of transition were at the centre of the debate on the restoration of the historic regions that had existed up to the 1975 reform. However, in Upper Silesia the economic agenda was subordinate to issues of regional and national identification.²⁷³ Under *voivode* Czech these regional sentiments found expression in three main issues:

- a. the demand for the traditional area of Upper Silesia to be re-united under a single regional administration
- b. the question of whether the Dąbrowa basin should stay as part of the new voivodship
- c. the traditional ties of Upper Silesia with territories now located outside Polish territories (which later evolved into the concept of Great Upper Silesia).

a. The traditional region of Upper Silesia

In relation to the first issue – the demand for the union of the traditional territories of Upper Silesia – *voivode* Czech called for union with Bielsko and Częstochowa voivodships which before the territorial reform in 1975 had formed part of the Katowice voivodship. This resembled the situation in the majority of other Polish regions, where

²⁷¹ Surazka, 1993: 99-100.

²⁷² Czech quoted in *Gazeta Katowicka*, 10 January 1992.

²⁷³ Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański 1994: 28.

the divisions created by territorial reform were beginning to be questioned. However, *voivode* Czech also wanted integration with Opole, a traditional, historical part of Upper Silesia that had been separated in 1950.²⁷⁴

Since the beginning I have emphasised that my policy cannot be limited to the Katowice voivodship. So the closest areas of interest are also the voivodships of Bielsko, Częstochowa and Opole, of course without infringing on the actions of the *voivodes* of those voivodships.²⁷⁵

These territorial changes proposed by the Katowice voivodship office were not supported by the *voivodes* of the neighbouring voivodships with their greatly-diversified industrial production. It was assumed that the Katowice voivodship elite wanted to burden the neighbouring voivodships with the costs of restructuring its heavy industry. These expansionist tendencies were especially evident in the drawing up of the proposed new region's borders along lines most favourable to Upper Silesia.²⁷⁶

b. The Dąbrowa basin question

The second issue – that of union with Dąbrowa – was presented less precisely. On the day of his appointment Czech stated:

The problem has arisen of what to do with Dąbrowa.[...] In my opinion, this land leans towards Silesia, especially in the economic area, in transportation, or more gradually in relation to cultural and economic ties. However, the inhabitants of Dąbrowa have to make the final decision.²⁷⁷

On another occasion he stated:

Its base [the new region] should be formed by the present Opole, Bielsko-Biała, Częstochowa and Katowice voivodships. However, the eastern border of Lesser Poland [the Dąbrowa basin] should be decided according to the demands of the inhabitants of these regions.²⁷⁸

These statements by Czech suggest some double standards in the formation of the region. Most of the territory incorporated into the region of Upper Silesia was to be

²⁷⁴ Opole had been the historical capital of Upper Silesia until 1922.

²⁷⁵ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnośląski*, 13 May 1994.

²⁷⁶ Błasiak, Nawrocki, Szczepański, 1994.

²⁷⁷ Czech quoted in *Gość Niedzielny*, no. 23, 1990.

²⁷⁸ Czech quoted in *Kurier Zachodni*, 10-11 January 1992.

decided on the basis of historical ties (and also by the borders of Catholic Church dioceses). Only Dąbrowa could be integrated at the request of its inhabitants as it had not fulfilled the condition of historical ties. Moreover, Czech spoke of integrating Dąbrowa with Upper Silesia, and not of uniting the two territories. This suggests that he did not view the two as equal and that he expected the people of Dąbrowa to look up to Silesia as a model to which they should adapt. This illustrates the widespread feeling of economic and cultural superiority towards Dąbrowa.

Upper Silesia and Dąbrowa were united in 1945. That is why this issue was directly related to the elite's view of the socialist period and the regional Dąbrowian personnel who ruled during that time: it was only then that those (in their opinion) very distinctive territories were re-united. Their distinctiveness went back to the time of the partitions, when Upper Silesia had belonged to Prussia and Dąbrowa to Russian Poland. The economic, political and especially the cultural division of these two regions between the Prussian partition and Russian Poland were emphasised. *Voivode* Czech and the native elite associated these divisions with the superiority of German civilisation, the long tradition of the rule of law and, most of all, with Europe. By contrast, Russia was considered a part of Asian (that is, wild, barbarian and totalitarian) civilisation. The socialist period was seen as a continuation of this due to the domination of Soviet-style authorities and centralisation. Thus, according to the elite, the division between Upper Silesia and Dąbrowa was not only a division between neighbouring Polish regions but a cultural division between Europe and Asia.

Błasiak²⁷⁹ sees this sense of Silesian superiority as a reaction to the degradation and disdain they had 'suffered' until then. The regional elite's opinion on the 'integration' of Dąbrowa into the Silesian voivodship during the socialist period was rather negative, in spite of the fact that economic motives had given rise to plans for a similar integration during the inter-war period. These had been shelved when the war broke out. In the context of Czech's doubts about the preservation of Dąbrowa as part of the voivodship Cieszewska accused him of pursuing a discriminatory policy. This policy was aimed not only at the inhabitants of Dąbrowa but also towards newcomers,

²⁷⁹ Błasiak, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 14-16 January 1994.

including those who arrived in Upper Silesia in 1945 from the 'lost territories' in the east.²⁸⁰

c. The concept of Great Upper Silesia

Reconstruction of *voivode* Czech's vision of Upper Silesia is to be put in the wider context of the region's future as viewed by two regional organisations: the Upper Silesia Union and the Movement for Silesian Autonomy. These organisations suggested regional autonomy, a proposal that was often interpreted as a hidden demand for separation. Was Czech's proposal for a Great Upper Silesia hiding autonomy proposals (and separatism)?

After 1992 it became evident that the regionalist tendencies in the Katowice voivodship were not limited to a demand for the unification of its traditional regions, as in the rest of Poland. In 1992 after the appointment of a new chairman, Joachim Otte, the Upper Silesian Union became the largest regional organisation, with 6,000 members. Its strength gave it the confidence not only to suggest regional autonomy, but to officially declare it as their aim.²⁸¹ The radicalisation of the Upper Silesian Union in 1992 is to be seen in the wider context of separatist tendencies within Upper Silesia itself, as well as outside Silesia, in Germany. In 1989, Otto von Habsburg, a member of the European Parliament, called for the renewal of the inter-war plebiscite. In 1993, Hupka, a leader of the Silesian Compatriots proposed a change in the Polish-German border as the existing line presented a state of political injustice.²⁸² In 1990, the rather tiny Movement for Silesian Autonomy (MAS) was also formed. Nevertheless, the organisation was important because of its radicalism. It proposed from the beginning, as the first stage, autonomy similar to that of the inter-war period and eventually 'full autonomy'. According to Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański (1994), this meant the creation of an independent state. Autonomy was seen as a solution to the social and economic problems of the voivodship.

²⁸⁰ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 December 1993.

²⁸¹ The other regional political forces were weak compared to the Upper Silesian Union, for example, the largest – the SLD – had 2,500 members and the UW 900 members (*Rzeczpospolita*, 24-25 April 1993).

²⁸² Błasiak, Nawrocki, Szczepański, 1994: 104-105.

The Movement for Silesian Autonomy shared with the Upper Silesian Union the strong criticism of central government; the concept of internal colonisation was used to explain the economic situation which existed in the voivodship. For example, Musioł who was the leader of the Movement for Silesian Autonomy and an MP, declared that Upper Silesia together with Opole and Cieszyn Lands produced 35 per cent of the national budget but received only two or three per cent of the central budget. The central government was also accused of not being active enough in protecting against further deterioration of environmental conditions. Similarly, Otte, the chairman of the Upper Silesian Union, stated:

The decline of the state and economic crisis has shown that Warsaw does not provide any marvellous solutions which enable us, here in Silesia, to exist. The decline of the state means that we present our demands in an extremely radical and forceful form. We are convinced that a form of autonomous region is the best.²⁸³

The belief that the central elite did not have an interest in the restructuring of Upper Silesia led the regional elite to redefine itself dramatically in relation to the centre. Otte declared an end to the regional elite's dependence on the national elite:

Larger and larger circles of the regional elite of Upper Silesia began to understand that the opportunities and the will of the present centralist state are in practice limited. No help can be expected from there.²⁸⁴

At the same time, the Upper Silesian Union began to perceive itself as the main (and the only) organisation to articulate the 'true' regional interest, 'the first authentic and democratic organisation in this territory'.²⁸⁵ The Upper Silesian Union's confidence that it was the true representative of the region rose particularly from the public support it enjoyed and which was confirmed by its high membership. Their confidence was further strengthened by a comparison of its membership with those of the other regional organisations, among them political parties, which all had far more limited memberships. This situation was also the result of a condition that Surazka (1993) described as a 'political vacuum' at the regional level. This resulted from the concentration of interest groups at the national level. It was strengthened by the administrative structure as elective institutions only existed at the central and local

²⁸³ Otte quoted in Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 May 1992.

²⁸⁴ Otte quoted in *Rzeczpospolita*, 24-25 April 1993.

²⁸⁵ Otte quoted in *Śląsk*, no. 2, 1996.

levels. Nevertheless, the main source of legitimacy for the Upper Silesian Union was its Silesian origins, which gave its members the 'right' to represent regional interests:

We want to represent the values and aspiration of Upper Silesia at the national level. Analysing in the context of the present industrial and political situation of our country one can clearly observe that the main reason for the frustration of Upper Silesian society is the bad and contradictory organisation of state institutions defined by constitutional arrangements. This is the contradiction between perception of opportunity for regional development on the basis of authentic regional self-government and the adopted model of a centralised state.²⁸⁶

A reconstruction of Czech's vision of Great Upper Silesia (and his attitude towards autonomy) must start with his territorial definition of Upper Silesia. The territorial definition of the region will help to answer the question as to how much power and autonomy regional authorities should have. In the debate about the role of the regional authorities, the fundamental question was related to the extent of the territory over which these regional authorities would exercise their new powers. The concept of Great Upper Silesia will also be useful to see how this vision was related to the autonomy proposals presented above by these two regional organisations.

In the debate about the territorial definition of the region the voivodship office took the initiative and published its own ideas about the future borderlines of the Great Upper Silesia region. This was to be a preparatory analysis for the purpose of further territorial administrative reform at the regional level introduced by the government. However, in drawing the 'historical' lines of the region the territories located now in the Czech Republic were seen as an inseparable part of the region. The Upper Silesia Union declared that these projects abided by constitutional law and preserved the unitary character of the state (in contrast to federalism).

However, according to Szczepański (1995) these new regional borders were based on the most favourable historical lines and did not take into account the historical changes in politics and economy, so that historical divisions going back several centuries were more important than later changes. As a result, this project was highly controversial. For example, the most radical assessment of voivode Czech's policies was presented by the Katowice branch of the far right-wing KPN party, which interpreted this policy as aimed at recovering autonomy. In its view, the logical conclusion of Czech's approach

²⁸⁶ Otte quoted in *Nasza Gazeta*, a special edition from annex 9 of *Memoriał w sprawie odwołania ...1992*: 5.

would be the formation of a Euroregion with the Czech Republic, which would undermine the most basic state interests as it could lead to Upper Silesian secession.²⁸⁷ According to the KPN, the establishment of the Union of the Upper Silesian and Northern Moravian Communes (Moravia is situated in Czech territory) in September 1992 was already pointing to the formation of the Euroregion. Moreover, Cieszewska interprets Czech's actions as being aimed at the achievement of regional autonomy, as at that time this was considered by him to be a necessary condition for restructuring.²⁸⁸ His calls for a 'Europe of Regions', as the quotation below suggests, were interpreted as being closely tied to calls for autonomy (with their potential for separatism), and therefore as weakening the unity of the state:

I believe that the civil service, at the end of the twentieth century in Central Europe, cannot be limited only to state borders. So the next circle must be European societies.²⁸⁹

Although Czech officially tried to distance himself from the policy of the Upper Silesian Union after taking his position,²⁹⁰ a similar emphasis can be detected in the *voivode's* interviews. Autonomy was the central idea around which his concepts of regional administration developed. However, the proposal for autonomy (if that is what it was) was never expressed explicitly, probably to avoid raising fears of separatism among non-Silesians. It could be only inferred when Czech talked about Great Silesia and the opening of Europe. Questions arise as to the reasons for these quite ambiguous declarations: was there a hidden agenda for autonomy, or even independence, or was their ambiguity a reflection of the early stage of thought on regional policy? After all, this was a time when the political and economic landscapes were undergoing fundamental changes, and when the concepts needed to handle the new conditions were not yet fully developed.

Czech's declarations confirm his belief in the effectiveness of inter-war administrative autonomy, but that does not necessarily mean that he was seeking regional autonomy. His statements referring to the inter-war period or to the idea of a Great Upper Silesia, and the opening of Europe, indicate dissatisfaction with the situation at that time and reflect his attempts to find the solution to this situation. However, the proposals were preliminary, and thus they are often confusing, and even contradictory. In consequence,

²⁸⁷ *Memoriał w sprawie odwołania ...1992: 1.*

²⁸⁸ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 May 1992.

²⁸⁹ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnos Śląski*, 13 May 1994.

²⁹⁰ *Gazeta Katowicka*, 10 January 1992.

they cannot be seen as political statements of a well-developed regional agenda. Nevertheless, certain statements that seem to have been purposefully provocative suggest that Czech might have preferred to press for autonomy had the political conditions been favourable.

ii. The vision of administrative structure

Voivode Czech's aims to strengthen regional administration by redrawing regional borders (the concept of Great Silesia) have already been discussed in the previous section. This section will concentrate on the second area of *voivode* Czech's vision of reform – the administrative structure. This was most of all related to changes in the relationship between central and regional administration by means of the transfer of competencies to the regional level and strengthening the *voivode*'s role.²⁹¹ Next, his proposals for regional administration in reaction to the current situation will be investigated.

a. The structure of administration – redefinition of the relationship between central and regional administration

The reconstruction of Czech's vision will start with his diagnosis of the administrative structure's problems at that time.²⁹² *Voivode* Czech criticised the existing administrative structure as extremely ineffective, with the exception of local

²⁹¹ Czech also tried to improve the functioning of the regional administration by introducing changes in the voivodship office itself. First, he streamlined the administration of the voivodship office by merging several small and 'narrow' departments into a few big ones. At the same time this meant ending the legacy of socialism thereby doing away with the sectoral administrative divisions in the voivodship office. Second, he replaced *nomenklatura* cadres in most senior positions in the voivodship office (as directors of departments). However, the main preconditions for improving the regional administration's performance were outside the voivodship office itself and were related to the whole administrative structure. Thus, arguments related to the administrative structure and the *voivode*'s role as of primary importance will be presented first. In the next section, the changes introduced in the voivodship office itself will be described.

²⁹² Czech's opinion of the existing administrative structure seems to be more explicit than his vision of Upper Silesia (regional autonomy or the concept of Great Upper Silesia). However, the solutions to the existing situation, decentralisation of power and further administrative reform have to be related to these two issues (regional autonomy or the concept of Great Upper Silesia). However, as these issues were never presented explicitly, Czech's intentions in relation to further administrative reform are difficult to interpret precisely.

government. In contrast to local government, the regional-level administration was still characterised by extreme centralisation and vertical fragmentation. He emphasised that most decisions were still taken at the centre and that the role of the *voivode* was marginal. At the same time, there were no elective institutions representing regional interests. In consequence, the regional interests were still defined at the centre. This negative evaluation of the existing administrative structure is illustrated by his opinion as expressed below:

The present Republic is characterised by centralism, with some minimal successes of decentralisation, these are powers given to the communes. Decisions are still mainly taken at government level. The *voivode* is a representative of the government and even his decisions, are in reality, government – ‘capital’ [in the sense of being concentrated in Warsaw as administrative power] decisions, and that is why one of the most important features, in my opinion, of rebuilding national polity is recreating a regional entity. This means creating opportunities for the regions to take over a large proportion of the decisions from the centre...²⁹³

Voivode Czech also held that the administrative structure was ineffective not only because of centralisation, but also due to the preservation of the sectoral orientation inherited from the socialist period. At the regional level this was expressed by the existence of more than one hundred territorial units. These were responsible to the centre, rather than to a *voivode* with powers of direct supervision over all administrations existing at the regional level, as Czech would have wished. Czech’s dissatisfaction with this system is clear in the following quotation:

The second feature of the centralist system is the large number of special administrations, which are dependent on ministries without the mediation of a *voivode*[...]. There are more than a hundred such institutions. That also must be changed.²⁹⁴

b. The *voivode*

The *voivode* was at the heart of Czech’s vision of a reformed regional administration: the strengthening of the regional administration’s role was to start with the reformulation of the *voivode*’s role. Unlike the *voivodes* of the socialist period, the holder of the reformed office would not be a passive agent executing minutely-defined actions directed by numerous sectors of central administration. Thus, although this was not explicitly declared in his interviews, it can be deduced that his ideas were modelled

²⁹³ Czech quoted in *Wiadomości Zagłębia*, 7-13 April 1992.

²⁹⁴ Czech quoted in *Wiadomości Zagłębia*, 7-13 April 1992.

on the office of the inter-war *voivode*, with his strong power and responsibilities extending to the regional co-ordination of other central administration territorial units.²⁹⁵ The opportunity for the *voivode* to unite and supervise territorial administrative units at the regional level was especially relevant in view of the large number of units, each conducting its narrow sectoral policy.

His criticism of the ineffective regional administrative structure with the marginal role of the *voivode* was also related to three other areas:

1. the lack of a central government information policy (with complete lack of communication and consultation between the central authorities and the *voivodes*),
2. the absence of regional financial funds
3. the non-existence of legal responsibilities.

The lack of communication between the centre and the regions meant that the *voivode* was not consulted even on the most crucial issues related to the regional economy. A *voivode* was expected to be a 'passive agent' introducing central government policies, as the following extract from Czech's interview indicates:

Most of all it should be said that the centre does not expect thought from a *voivode*, nobody in Warsaw consults him about key decisions concerning the voivodship. For example, about the restructuring of the coalmining and iron industries, he collects information from the mass media.²⁹⁶

The *voivode* had no any say either on the amount remitted to the centre or on the use to which locally-collected funds would be put. The *voivode* also had no financial resources of his own, as all revenues for the region were sent from the centre by each ministry separately, in the form of earmarked funds. For example, funds saved by one department could not be transferred to another. Similarly, the *voivode* did not have any legal responsibilities as *voivode* Czech reminds us in the 'angry' quotation below:

What means to manage a voivodship are, at the moment, in the hands of a *voivode*? Legal means? – only in residual form. Financial means? – none.²⁹⁷

²⁹⁵ *Wiadomości Zagłębia*, 7-13 April 1992.

²⁹⁶ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnośląski*, 13 May 1994.

²⁹⁷ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnośląski*, 13 May 1994.

However, of these three limitations (legal, financial and, as cited in the quotation before last, the lack of central government information policy) the financial one was the most strongly emphasised by Czech. This issue will therefore be presented more comprehensively. The existing financial regulations aroused a sense of deep injustice. A *voivode* could not be mobilised to govern a region economically. The rules were an obstacle to any form of rational management, as a *voivode* could not transfer financial or human resources from one sector into another, or even set priorities. As a result, the financial regulations were at the heart of the call for decentralisation. This extreme dissatisfaction with the system of financial regulation at the time is clear in the quotation below:

I remind you that in 1991 *voivodes* had their voivodship budgets taken away. [...] Strictly speaking, the role of *voivode* is symbolic.²⁹⁸

and in a second of *voivode* Czech's opinions:

I remind you that at present the voivodship does not have its own budget and a *voivode* is only an agent for that part of the budget which is allocated to him. The situation is such that revenues earned in the regions go to the centre, which divides them indiscriminately, or at least without any criteria known to me. The *voivode* receives funding already divided by the ministries and he has no influence on its size. At the moment, a *voivode* does not even now know what the amount of taxes gathered in the region is and what part of the state budget it forms. In other words, what is the share of the voivodship in the national GDP?²⁹⁹

The above statements by *voivode* Czech³⁰⁰ describing the absence of financial resources sound even stronger when compared with the more explicit statement by Otte on the lack of relation between a region's financial performance and volume of funds sent back to the region for further investment:

One could work more but get nothing out of it, as in the end Warsaw would take everything.³⁰¹

The financial helplessness of the *voivode* was highlighted by comparisons with the opportunities available to the communes. In Czech's opinion, the re-establishment of

²⁹⁸ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnosławski*, 13 May 1994.

²⁹⁹ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnosławski*, 13 May 1994.

³⁰⁰ The debate about what share of national GDP is generated by individual regions arose in the context of fair financial treatment of regions by central government. Regions protested that all money went to the central budget. In the regions very little was left. For example, they often believed that they did not receive from the central budget even the money needed for necessary modernisation of profitable productions, despite their high contribution of revenue to the central budget.

³⁰¹ Otte quoted in Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 4 May 1992.

independence from the central government and the introduction of legislation guaranteeing their own financial resources had allowed the communes to blossom.³⁰²

There should be a simple correlation between the effort of a region and its economic condition. At the moment, in 1991, the communes have gained this opportunity.[...] From the beginning it has mobilised them to govern better.³⁰³

Voivode Czech advocated the need for uniform financial regulation in the form of the permanent allocation of taxes to each level of administration: commune, district and region. For example, in one of his press interviews he stated:

If a large share of taxes was left at the local and regional levels, there would be the larger effort of working out how to increase these taxes, and as a result, there would be increased production as a whole. It is a simple correlation. There should, for example be a 30 per cent share of national taxes left for the local level, another 30 per cent for the regional level, and the remaining 40 per cent for the centre. Then it would be a proper division of taxes.³⁰⁴

c. The regional administration's reaction to the current situation

After his dismissal, Czech's criticism of the administrative system became even more explicit. He declared that the role of *voivode* was no more than that of a figurehead, and that the administrative structure was completely ineffective:

I could not realise my vision of regional policy, as the [administrative] structure of the Polish Republic is sick, and the responsibilities of a *voivode* do not really exist.³⁰⁵

His criticism of the ineffective administrative structure at central and regional levels was especially due to two issues mentioned earlier: the centralisation of power and vertical fragmentation, and the figurehead role of the *voivode*, in particular his limited financial resources which had very serious consequences. Czech assumed Warsaw was not competent to rule the region.³⁰⁶ In consequence, he believed that during the time of the transition the *voivode* needed to break with its traditional role as agents of the central government and to take the initiative and 'usurp' power in order to start regional

³⁰² However, Czech's optimistic opinion that there was a correlation between local development in the communes and further local investment in them was not shared by the mayors of Silesian towns. They were much more critical and they found faults with the current financial regulation. However, their situation seemed relatively better than that of the voivodship authorities.

³⁰³ Czech quoted in *Gość Niedzielny*, no. 18, 1992.

³⁰⁴ Czech quoted in *Gazeta Katowicka*, 10 January 1992.

³⁰⁵ Czech quoted in *Trybuna Śląska*, 11 March 1994.

³⁰⁶ Compare also Otte's quotations, in the section on the Concept of Great Upper Silesia.

restructuring. The following two declarations define his vision of the *voivode*'s role at that time:

(1) I am an Upper Silesian and nobody can tear this out of me.³⁰⁷

and,

(2) Then in spring 1990, I presented the terms without which I would not offer my 'service'. In the new conditions [after the end of socialism] I wanted the position of *voivode* not to be treated in the capital only as the representative of central government in the voivodship, but also as the representative of regional interests to the government.³⁰⁸

It was possible that conflicts would arise between the *voivode*'s role as a representative of the central government in Upper Silesia, and that of regional representative at the centre.³⁰⁹ On the day of his appointment, he declared the primacy of being an advocate of regional interests:

And if there was a conflict – I do not conceal the fact that I consider the interest of the region more important. I believe that the development of the state depends on the condition of her regions. The more quickly conditions in Upper Silesia improve, the more conditions in the whole state will improve.³¹⁰

As the quotation above indicates, *voivode* Czech's taking the initiative in his own hands was justified by his role as the representative of the interests of regional society, which at that time were not represented by anybody else. Moreover, as the quotation below suggests, Warsaw did not even recognise the need for the formation of regional policy as the national policy was supposed to encompass all various interests:

In Warsaw, they fear regionalisation. They say that the state will 'disintegrate'. That is nonsense. It is very sad that the centre does not trust the Poles, at regional or at local level, so we do not trust ourselves.³¹¹

This lack of opportunity to present regional interests to the central government, 'not being heard in Warsaw', (as my respondents used to say) was seen as extreme. The popular belief that regional interests were not taken into account by the centre, and that

³⁰⁷ Czech quoted in Jajszczok, *Trybuna Śląska*, 27 April 1994.

³⁰⁸ Czech quoted in *Kurier Zachodni*, 10-11 January 1992.

³⁰⁹ His shift in favour of the interest of the region was not isolated; for example, Surazka (1993: 96) suggested that many *voivodes* supported their own voivodships at the time when state property was transferred to the communes (when the local government was established in 1990).

³¹⁰ Czech quoted in *Gość Niedzielny*, no 23, 1990.

³¹¹ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnośląski*, 13 May 1994.

neither the opportunity nor the means existed for regional views to be put forward, was rooted in the experience of extreme centralisation during the socialist period. It is likely that Silesian dissatisfaction was also strengthened by memories of the Silesian Rising, when the Silesians found themselves in the position of deciding their own future as Poland was 'busy' fighting on its eastern borders.

However, in reality, Czech's attempts to extend his powers were closer to Gierek's 'semi-legal actions' at the time of 'Katanga' than any actions of the inter-war *voivodes*, with the possible exception of some actions taken by the authoritarian Grażyński. These autonomous (semi-legal) actions took the regional authorities beyond the narrowly-defined roles set down for them by the central authorities. This was their form of adaptation to a centralised and inefficient administrative structure: by strengthening regional administration, more effective development of the region could take place. These efforts to strengthen regional authorities were not only aimed at increasing their responsibilities (something that was anyway formally impossible), it seems that most of all they concentrated on promoting the regional elites' views on regional development in opposition to those emanating from the central administration.³¹² At the beginning of the nineties, the regional reformist elite was in opposition to the more conservative elite delaying regional restructuring.

The sense of conflict between the central and regional elites was reflected in the local government elite's language. Thus, Czech's struggle to increase his responsibilities and to promote his vision of regional development was an aspect of the competition between the old and new vision of administration: the ministries' (Warsaw's) efforts to preserve the old, socialist sector-orientated structure against the regional reformers attempts to start afresh. The following quotations illustrate his attitude towards central conservative administration:

In the fight for the new, one can see the forces wanting to preserve the subordination of society and at the same time the centralist state structure.³¹³

and:

³¹² For example, Gierek (first secretary of the voivodship committee, 1957-1970) promoted the preservation of single type heavy industry regional development in opposition to the central elite (Gomułka).

³¹³ Czech quoted in *Kurier Zachodni*, 10-11 January 1992.

This tradition is enormously needed to build the Third Republic, which has to be a Republic of local communities. [...] It cannot be a Republic based on the Asian philosophy of a strongly-centralised state.³¹⁴

These statements also show that the aim of systemic reform was to replace an ineffective and strongly centralised state with a new administrative structure that would enable development of local and regional communities. This meant that, as with the communes, the regions needed their own elective, self-governing institutions.

3.4 The radical restructuring of the voivodship office

In 1990 the restructuring of the voivodship office in Katowice took place. This was a twofold process: first, a substantial reduction in the number of departments took place, and second, the majority of the voivodship office elite was replaced by the post-Solidarity one. These two processes were complementary. First, the radical restructuring of the voivodship office could only possibly be carried out by the new elite with a different vision of administration, not limited by the legacy of the socialist style of governing. This took place even though they were without administrative experience when they introduced these mergers!³¹⁵ At the same time, the merging of departments eased the change of managerial personnel and the arrival of the post-Solidarity elite. These two processes, as well as national revolutionary political and economic reforms, had a significant impact on the change of the voivodship office's performance and vividly distinguished the transitional from the socialist period.

i. The merging of departments

Throughout the socialist period the voivodship office structure was highly bureaucratic and dysfunctional.³¹⁶ When socialism fell in 1989, the structure of the voivodship office in Katowice was so fragmented that there were seven deputy *voivodes* trying to coordinate its activities. The voivodship office structure of twenty-nine departments meant

³¹⁴ Czech quoted in *Gazeta Katowicka*, 10 January 1992.

³¹⁵ The radical national political and economic reforms were also introduced by outsiders without practical experience.

³¹⁶ In the inter-war period the number of departments had been significantly smaller. In 1938 there were fourteen departments in the voivodship office. Similarly, the number of central ministers throughout the inter-war period was around twelve.

that the deputy *voivodes* acted more as directors of various economic sectors, each usually supervising about three to four departments.³¹⁷ In reality, the deputy *voivodes* formed the next level of the voivodship office structure. Consequently, the role of directors of departments was even more limited (of course at that time a *voivode* himself had rather restricted competencies as he was strictly supervised by the voivodship committee secretary).

Rice (1992: 117) indicated that fragmentation of departments and ministries was a typical feature of post-socialist Eastern Europe. It was one of the main difficulties in formulating systemic reforms as administrations had difficulty breaking with the socialist vertical fragmentation and initiating co-ordination among ministries to formulate comprehensive visions of reform.

The freedom to re-design the voivodship structure in 1990 according to the specific requirements of voivodships was used by *voivode* Czech to restructure the voivodship office radically. This restructuring is one of the most positive features of the Solidarity take-over in the Katowice voivodship and can be seen in the context of administrative restructuring, radically breaking from the legacy of the socialist period. The merging of departments meant the rationalisation of the voivodship office structure; it ended the duplication of functions caused by the extreme administrative fragmentation. The number of departments was radically cut to sixteen, which eliminated half of the previously-existing departments (and also led to a substantial cut in costs). The merging of departments also led to the recognition of common interests by departments which had previously fought over limited resources, and improved communication and co-ordination among them. For example, one strong Department of Economy was formed out of four departments: the Department of Industry and Trade, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of Crafts and Services, and the Voivodship Planning Commission. However, after 1991, the tendency was reversed as *voivode* Czech formed a Department of Privatisation and, in 1992, a Department of Disaster and Security Protection.

Another difficulty in the creation of an effective national and regional administration which the socialist period had left was a passive and politically subordinated civil

³¹⁷ This departmental fragmentation of course mirrored the fragmentation of central government.

service.³¹⁸ Thus, unquestionably, the voivodship office restructuring was also conducive to a break with socialist passivity, at least to the extent that the common regional interest began to gain attention. For example, the Department of Economy initiated ambitious plans for regional restructuring because no such plans were prepared by the central administration nor could any be expected in the near future. In 1992, this department prepared the Programme of Regional Economic Policy of Upper Silesia even though the responsibilities and opportunities of the voivodship office administration were at that time limited. It was due to the extreme centralisation of power, which was so dysfunctional that often a *voivode* was not consulted by ministries on crucial regional issues. Despite this, the programme tried to adapt to the existing situation and increase the influence of the *voivode* in the regional economy.³¹⁹

To sum up, the year 1990 was critical in the voivodship office because several radical and external changes occurred at the same time; the shift from a command economy to a free market, and changes in the national political conditions of Poland as a whole. Equally important were such internal changes as the merging of departments and the arrival of a new elite with its radically different vision of administration, as one of departmental director interviewees mentioned:

The substantial changes in the functioning of departments [...] after 1989 were related to radical changes of conditions in which the department was to function, but above all, of change of external conditions in which the voivodship office as a whole was to function. [...] The voivodship office as a whole was going through the restructuring after *voivode* Czech was appointed, and it was fragmented until departments were merged into a few big departments.

In the opinion of this departmental director the two other conditions in which the voivodship office had to perform were also influential; the delegation of certain tasks to communes, and the decrease in the number of voivodship office inner elite. The *voivode* was to be assisted only by one deputy *voivode* and the director general.

However, it must be remembered that the voivodship office restructuring initiated by Czech quickly reached its limits due to the external condition that administrative reform remained unfinished. Socialist centralisation continued, with ministers playing the dominant role and the voivodship office having marginal discretion and limited financial competency. Thus, it seems that a total change from the previous

³¹⁸ Germek, Żakowski, 1990: 288.

³¹⁹ Compare chapter six on the Regional Contract.

administrative style of subordination was not possible as the voivodship office was still closely supervised by central government. Moreover, the effects of re-designing the voivodship office were also limited by the fact that the absence of voivodship reform meant that the Katowice voivodship remained one of 49 voivodships, so the Katowice *voivode* and voivodship elite remained comparatively weak in relation to the central level. However, chapter six (on the Regional Contract) shows that they actively tried to change this situation and speed up the transfer of responsibilities to the *voivode* and the start of regional restructuring, by signing the Contract in 1995 and redefining the division of responsibilities between regional institutions and central government. The pressure of the voivodship office elite also increased because of critical prognoses of further regional economic development.

The 1990 voivodship office restructuring was variously regarded by the voivodship office elite, their opinions varying in relation to who was considered responsible, *voivode* Czech and his vision of a different role for administration, or the change in external political and economic conditions which demanded radical adaptation of the voivodship office structure. Nevertheless, the change in the voivodship office's style of functioning before and after 1990 was noticed by most of the elite – those who had worked there before 1990 and those who came with *voivode* Czech. The resulting increase in the rationality of the voivodship office's structure and functioning was indicated.

Rather surprisingly, one departmental director whom I interviewed in contrast to the rest of my respondents did not emphasise the distinction of the year 1990 in the functioning of the voivodship office, at least in relation to the role of his department. However, when he instead put the emphasis on the virtue of administrative continuity and emphasised the professionalism of his work during socialism, his attitude seems to be explainable by his *nomenklatura* origins. In addition, in the reference to voivodship office restructuring, departmental directors who had worked in the voivodship office before 1989 mentioned the 'purge' of the old elite and the arrival of a new 'unprepared *voivode*'. Instead, *voivode* Czech and his sympathisers related the voivodship office restructuring to his vision of a regional administration which would be highly decentralised and in which regional power would have extensive responsibilities and play a crucial role in further regional development:

Most of all I dream that administration will not be rigid. I dream about rebuilding the administrative structure of the state at the voivodship level from the present orientation by sector to orientation by subject.³²⁰

They also suggested that the restructuring of the voivodship office, a watershed after the socialist period, was achieved due to Czech's vision. This is especially illustrated by the formation of the Department of Economy, replacing the division of the voivodship office departments according to industrial sectors. These changes even preceded the merging of national ministerial departments, to form a single Ministry of Industry, replicating their sectoral divisions.

Two other directors of the voivodship office interviewed by me did not distinguish between Czech's and Ciszak's redesigning of voivodship office departments, believing that each *voivode* needed to adapt the voivodship office structure to his own taste and preferences. Nevertheless, they did note the 1990 voivodship office restructuring although for them it was rather the result of adaptation to external political and economic changes in Poland as a whole, when the command economy suddenly failed and the existence of many departments became unnecessary.

In general, the voivodship office structure after 1990 was seen by almost all my respondents as more rational and thus more efficient than what had been before. Sometimes, a high opinion of Czech's voivodship office restructuring was closely related to opinions of the voivodship office's different political role before the 1989 transition. Czech's sympathisers saw the voivodship office structure of the socialist period as the effect of politicisation. Although it was inefficient in the management of the regional economy, its vertical fragmentation made it easier to maintain subordination and the supervision of administrative officials, as the existence of several departments, each concentrated on one narrow industrial sector, led to substantial limitation of responsibilities and the overlapping of functions. Moreover, as one of the directors mentioned, the break with the past meant not only the end of subordination to the communist party but also of co-operation with the police:

Of course, you can look for ideological explanations of the previous structure, related to the totalitarian structure of the state which lost its reason for existence after 1989. Now, it is unimaginable that any department would co-operate with the police to watch any person, but such situations have happened before.

³²⁰ Czech quoted in *Gość Niedzielny*, no. 23, 1990.

Others respondents emphasised that during the socialist period the voivodship office had performed a completely different role in allocating limited goods and machines to local companies and private firms and strictly supervising everything by ruling on each case separately. For some, the most important element of change in the voivodship office's functioning was the fact that until 1990 the communes had been subordinate to the voivodship office. After that they became independent units with which the voivodship office had to co-operate and negotiate instead of giving orders as before. Often, their negative opinion of the functioning of the voivodship office at that time went together with their negative opinion of the former socialist period.

For some members of the regional administrative elite there had been no radical change in the voivodship office's functioning at the turn of 1989/1990, the changes being evolutionary instead. This was related to their high estimation of Czech's predecessor, *voivode* Wnuk, and the effectiveness of voivodship office functioning during his tenure. Furthermore, the voivodship office elite who had worked in the voivodship office before 1989, instead of emphasising the reduction in the number of departments, concentrated on the scale of personnel changes, seeing as unnecessary the 'purges' of *nomenklatura* employees. They saw these as political, and emphasised that they led to the dismissal of sometimes highly qualified personnel (despite the employment of professionals in administration being especially difficult due to their low social prestige and low salaries).

I believe that this reorganisation in 1990 was needed to adapt to a market economy. This meant that some departments formed under socialism lost their reason for existence. On the other hand, I heard later that *voivode* Czech suggested that, under the pretext of reorganisation which was absolutely necessary he had got rid of a large number of well-qualified cadres.

Another person emphasised the drawback of these changes: that is, the absence of administrative qualifications especially among the inner elite and the *voivode* himself. He saw the merging of departments as an adaptation to the personality of *voivode* Czech, to his qualifications and interests, whereas economic issues were the province of deputy *voivode* Wnuk.

Merging of departments is normal behaviour when a new *voivode* comes, and Czech admitted that the organisational structure did not fit him, so he changed it. It is not worth making a sensation out of it. If I remember, changes of organisational structure appeared not only in the nineties but also before. *Voivode* Czech did not know about and did not like industrial matters, and so he pushed them away from himself. The burden of these issues was moved to deputy-*voivode* Wróbel.

The organisational structure of the voivodship office in 1992 also indicated *voivode* Czech's limited interest in the economy, as he supervised only four departments: Architecture and Landscape; Finance; Culture; and later Disaster and Security Protection. However, deputy *voivode* Wróbel supervised eight departments, among them the departments of Economy, Privatisation, and Public Enterprises, and director general Klatka six other departments. (At that time there were 18 departments.) Sympathisers of *voivode* Czech also declared that deputy *voivode* Wróbel had a free hand and that Czech never interfered in the work of the departments he was in charge of:

Voivode Czech himself selected the candidates and especially the deputy *voivode*, in whom he had full trust. In effect, he did not want to deal at all with issues which were in the deputy's competency, he did not want to hear about them at all.

ii. The rotation of the elite

The second feature, in addition to the voivodship office restructuring, was the radical shift of personnel, which will be examined in relation to two issues: the revolutionary character of the changes; and the sociological description of new voivodship office elite in relation to their regional origins, education, administrative qualifications and age.

a. The revolutionary characteristic of the voivodship office personnel policy

The personnel shift in the voivodship office in the Katowice voivodship (after the appointment of *voivode* Czech in May 1990, nearly a year since the formation of Mazowiecki's government) varied from the shift of personnel at the national level at that time. Mazowiecki's policy was far more moderate, and civil servants who had been *nomenklatura* appointees from the socialist period still dominated the national administration. The much more radical change of the voivodship office elite can, at least to some extent, be explained by the different personalities of Mazowiecki and Czech. However, the main reason seems to be the greater political stability after May 1990, when *voivode* Czech was appointed. When Mazowiecki's government was formed, it recognised the limitations of the political situation and it was natural that Ministries of

the Interior and Defence were led by representatives of the *ancien régime*, and above all that the presidency was reserved for Jaruzelski, as established by the Round Table Agreement. By July, 1990, the Minister of the Interior and the Minister of Defence had stepped down and President Jaruzelski had agreed to shorten his term in office. On the other hand, during Ciszak's rule the reverse tendency was seen; when wide-ranging purges took place in central government,³²¹ the voivodship office was left virtually untouched and the only political scapegoat was deputy *voivode* Wróbel. However, on the whole, the personnel changes were moderate.

The issue of the revolutionary character of the elite appointed by *voivode* Czech³²² was related to:

1. the total shift of the inner elite – the top three positions of the voivodship office: *voivode*, deputy *voivode* and director general;
2. the scale (but not the pace) of the personnel changes, as most directors of departments were replaced;
3. the rapid promotion of outsiders without administrative experience in both the inner elite and positions as directors of departments;
4. the absence of institutional barriers to promotion, since personal contacts with a leader were the main source of promotion (in addition to a second, much smaller source of cadres; selection according to managerial effectiveness in local government; and thirdly, marginal retention of *nomenklatura* cadres);
5. the reasons why they had started to work in administration – a deep sense of revolutionary mission.

First, in relation to the change in the inner elite, the appointment of *voivode* Czech, an outsider, was claimed by his opponents to have had a crucial impact on the performance

³²¹ Most of the purges at the national level at that time were conducted by one of the post-communist governments, that of Pawlak. It was, above all, related to his personal desire to control the administration by replacing post-Solidarity leaders with his peasant party appointees in managerial positions (to the cost of his coalition partner SLD). Thus, these purges in contrast to Solidarity time-personnel changes, were not so much related to the redefinition of administrative functions.

³²² These revolutionary features of Czech's personnel policy differentiate it from Ciszak's which was in a more stable period. Thus, Ciszak's policy differed from his predecessor's in the scale of personnel changes, which was much more limited. Moreover, the rapid careers of outsiders were replaced by paths to promotion based on seniority within the voivodship office, from the position of deputy to that of director. During Ciszak's tenure, the appearance of political barriers to promotion was visible regarding certain positions, as appointment was dependent on the fulfilment of political criteria. Finally, in contrast to the revolutionary period, the role of *voivode* Ciszak in shaping his elite was much more limited.

of the voivodship office. His lack of administrative qualifications and experience were responsible for his limited interest in regional policy, especially economic and industrial issues. Instead, his professional interests as an architect dominated, as expressed by his efforts to preserve architectural and landscape monuments like churches, chapels, and alleys of trees – as illustrated, for example, by the opinion of one of my interviewees from the regional administrative elite, and as mentioned in numerous regional press articles:

When *voivode* Czech came, all administration was a blank page to him as he had never had anything to do with administration. He was an architect. He had never directed any groups of people before. So you can see that he fell into the VO suddenly.

Criticism of Czech's voivodship office was stronger among those who remembered his predecessor, *voivode* Wnuk, who was an economist. One person who had previously worked in the voivodship office also suggested that Czech's lack of experience and qualification, in addition to the similar background of the two other members of the inner elite, nearly caused a state of chaos in the voivodship office. However, another emphasised the radical changes also occurring in the external economic and political conditions in which the administration had to operate and which affected the performance of the voivodship office:

Firstly, *voivode* Wnuk was an economist; in his policy, economic issues dominated.[...] Later, in place of *voivode* Wnuk, arrived a *voivode* [Czech] who preferred a totally different type of work and had totally different interests.

Deputy *voivode* Wróbel was in the same situation. Only the director general, at some (time, about twenty years earlier I think), had contact with administration. Of the three, he was a lawyer and most quickly began to find his way around. So it was a learning period for them.

The second member of the inner elite, deputy *voivode* Eugeniusz Wróbel, who arrived in the middle of June 1990, was a university lecturer in computer and information science. He was a highly-qualified outsider (PhD in Information Science) but his background did not seem to be the best qualification for the position. Director General Zenon Klatka, appointed a few days after the *voivode* at the beginning of June 1990, was also an outsider promoted directly to this position. In contrast to the *voivode* and deputy *voivode*, he had had brief contact with administration in the sixties, when he had worked in the voivodship office. Moreover, it seems that his law degree eased his adaptation to the new position. The changing, within a period of less than a month, of all three positions also indicates the revolutionary character of personnel changes.

Second, these changes were also revolutionary due to their scale. They were accompanied by a complete shift of personnel in the positions of directors of departments in the period 1990-1992 (the last department was formed in 1992). Only one quarter of the directors who already worked in the voivodship office before 1990 stayed, although their deputies were, in general, left untouched by the 1990 reshuffling. One of directors already working at that time in the voivodship office, recollected it like this:

It was a learning-period for the inner elite and later for people who came here as directors of departments. For many of them, it was their first contact with the work in administration. The year 1990 was a year of total adaptation also for the civil servants who stayed because they had to perform in a totally different system of governing and that involved adaptation.

The third issue, that of the rapid promotion of outsiders and the shift of personnel in the voivodship office, can be interpreted in two ways. It could be considered to resemble the situation in the United States or France (and in contrast to Great Britain) where, after elections, substantial changes in crucial administrative positions take place in ministries and local governments. In these countries, the term 'civil servant' is much more limited and political appointees take a substantial proportion of positions. According to this model, a victory for the Solidarity opposition would naturally lead to a change of political appointees in administration at national, regional and local levels.

However, the radical shift of the regional administrative elite in the voivodship office can be seen instead in the context of revolutionary changes after the fall of the communist regime. Although the regime had very early on lost its legitimisation (in the seventies), it nevertheless preserved, until the end, the strongly-integrated *nomenklatura*, expressing totalitarian control over personnel policy in the state. One of the main Solidarity leaders during the Round Table negotiations, Geremek, recollects that the decision to give up some power to the opposition was not related to any ideological attachment to socialist values but was causing fear of diminishing the position of the *nomenklatura*. In this context, the replacement of the *nomenklatura* in Poland at that time cannot be compared to the existence of interest groups in democratic states (as for example, mentioned above, in the case of the United States or France) and political turnover in top administrative positions of the national, regional and local levels after elections. Thus, as Geremek, recollects, limitation of the *nomenklatura*'s position was a prerequisite for the efficiency of the post-Solidarity elite and for the

preservation of the democratic state built after the 1989 parliamentary election.³²³

The main issue during [the Round Table negotiations] was not doctrine or ideology but the very real interests of the *nomenklatura*, for which the government created by us would become a deadly threat. From the beginning of this process we were convinced that if we did not break out of the *nomenklatura* system, we could not accept participation in power as it would be a fictitious power.³²⁴

This exclusiveness of *nomenklatura* personnel meant that the take-over of power by the post-Solidarity elite would mean the arrival in administration of people who had not previously worked there. Thus, there were no Solidarity administrative cadres at the national or regional levels.

Since opposition was illegal in Poland during the socialist period, personal contacts and activity in informal underground organisations substituted for the institutional selection mechanism existing in countries where it was legal.³²⁵ The only legal institution of opposition was formed in 1989 – the Citizen’s Committees, which played a crucial role in the selection of the parliamentary elite in 1989 and of local government leaders in 1990 (also in the Katowice voivodship).

The arrival of the new post-Solidarity elite in the voivodship office in the Katowice voivodship resembled the formation of the national elite at that time. In both cases, haphazard appointments took place, even at the level of ministers in Mazowiecki’s first non-communist government, as the opposition did not have prepared cadres. The only difference was the scale of the changes in the voivodship office as they were much more radical. However, in both cases the sudden arrival of the opposition in power led to the appointment of candidates without preliminary selection, and without experience in administration (or politics at the national level). Moreover, a similar process took place in local government country-wide.³²⁶ Kuroń,³²⁷ the Minister of Labour and Social Security in Mazowiecki’s government, suggested that the main place where Mazowiecki looked for possible ministerial candidates was his ‘private address-book’. According to him, the political base of his government, the Solidarity Parliamentary Club, did not have any influence on the formation of his government. Thus,

³²³ Although at the central level, the uncertainty of the political situation caused only a moderate shift of personnel.

³²⁴ Geremek and Żakowski, 1990: 228.

³²⁵ Wasilewski and Włodzimierz, (ed.) 1992, and Wasilewski (ed.) 1994.

³²⁶ This is described, using the example of the Katowice voivodship, in chapter five.

³²⁷ Kuroń, Żakowski, 1997: 73-78.

Mazowiecki's government was in some sense isolated from the post-Solidarity representation in parliament which was giving full support to the government's legislative proposals. However, this support was forced by circumstances rather than the result of their spontaneous approval. On the other hand, Mazowiecki had complete personal confidence in his fellow ministers and therefore provided them with wide responsibilities and a free hand in their decisions.

A similar selection mechanism was seen in the voivodship office during Czech's rule. The primary criterion for selection was personal acquaintance with the *voivode*. The lack of qualified opposition cadres also brought about chance appointments and the 'use of the *voivode* private address-book', where he looked for possible candidates among his former colleagues, who were selected because of their specific professional qualifications which could be useful in their new positions. As one of the directors of department recollected:

I was selected, as one might say, 'from the address-book'. This means that somebody looks for an address, he finds an address and says, 'Well let's phone him; he is a good chap'. I worked in the Scouts movement with *voivode* Czech. [...] We worked there from about 1977, we worked for a while but later came the time when the *voivode* [to be] was interned, so our co-operation weakened so to speak. Besides, the *voivode* stopped working in the Scouts movement and so did I, so we separated a bit. However, in year 1990 he made me an offer to take this post. I won't say that I was not surprised and I thought about it for quite some time; however, he persuaded me to take this job.

It seems that acquaintance (or even friendship) with *voivode* Czech (and deputy *voivode* Wróbel, who also participated in the activity of suggesting candidates for directors of departments) dominated. The two other sources of candidates were selection on the basis of achievement in local government work, and the use of the internal resource of cadres of the voivodship office as some directors of departments retained their positions.

Fourth, the absence of institutional barriers to promotion, since personal contacts with a leader were the main source of promotion, was also typical of a period of radical and rapid change. In the voivodship office at that time the political criterion seemed to be secondary, and administrative appointments did not have to be confirmed by the political regional elite (as at national level by the Parliamentary Solidarity Club); for example, as in the case of the appointment of deputy *voivode* Wróbel. There seemed to be the absence of formal typical of barriers a revolutionary period. In other words, at both levels the main criteria for selection were personal contacts. Only the main

decision to replace *voivode* Wnuk with Czech was taken on the initiative of the regional post-Solidarity elite.

When *voivode* Czech was in office he pulled the deputy *voivode* out of a hat. Deputy *voivode* Wróbel was not from any party, or appointed or recommended by anybody. It was just that he had a good, trusted friend. I would define it like this; at least, this is what I saw, that they had this type of relationship. Thus, Czech could trust him totally and did not check what he was doing: he didn't need to.

Among the important channels of selection was the Katowice Scouts movement, in which, for example, *voivode* Czech, the deputy *voivode* and the directors of the Departments of Public Services and Disaster and Security Protection had participated for several years from the middle of the seventies. These 'chance' appointments were preceded by several years' acquaintance (and friendship) and meant that *voivode* Czech had great trust in his colleagues. This undoubtedly strengthened the unity of the voivodship office elite.

This last feature, suggesting the revolutionary character of the elite appointed by *voivode* Czech, was also their explanation for why they had started to work in administration, namely, that they felt a deep sense of revolutionary mission. During my interviews, when directors explained how they had begun to work in administration, they often mentioned the request of the *voivode*, who was looking for somebody with certain professional qualifications, or they referred to activity in the scout movement. However, Cieszewska,³²⁸ and Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański, (1994) believed that the either membership of the Upper Silesian Union or sympathy for it was the main criterion for their selection of directors of departments and the deputy *voivode*.

My interviews do not confirm this and my respondents suggested that Czech himself gradually drifted away from the Upper Silesian Union after his appointment. How important the role of the Upper Silesian Union was is illustrated by the example of one of the founders of the Upper Silesian Union who became a director of department. However, he was also a highly-qualified specialist (PhD and adviser to the Word Bank) in an area which had been extremely neglected during the socialist period with its near total absence of regional cadres.³²⁹ In other words, was he selected on the basis of ideological or professional criteria? It seems that sometimes these criteria overlapped.

³²⁸ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 December 1993.

³²⁹ From the beginning of the nineties the department supported the organisation of courses conducted by foreign specialists to prepare regional specialists.

However, this limited representation of regional society and dominance of native Silesians is not likely to have been caused by restrictions against certain groups, with two exceptions. There were some reservations about the inhabitants of Dąbrowa, and directors of departments, appointed before Czech's arrival and who were identified with the *nomenklatura*, had some difficulty retaining their positions. On the other hand, it seems that membership of the Upper Silesian Union, (and to some extent of the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia) was not a necessary criterion.

In this case, I would not have had any chance of working in the voivodship office if it had been completely like this; I never belonged to the Upper Silesian Union.

To the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia ?

I had some ties with the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia when it was formed, for a very short time. However, I simply did not have the time to attend the meetings regularly. I was never one of its activists, just a member. I suspect that *voivode* Czech did not remember me from that time; probably we did not meet then. I also had nothing in common with the Scouts movements – neither with the Upper Silesian Union, nor the Scouts movement; nor could it be said that I have any shared Rybnik Land origins. So, somebody could say I should not be here.

The main reason for the limited social representation among the voivodship office elite was not so much discrimination against certain groups, as the selection mechanism itself. As Czech put so much emphasis on personal trust, only certain groups and organisations in which he had taken part could be represented in the voivodship office elite. In addition, strongly negative attitudes towards the administration caused the self-selection of possible candidates, eliminating a wide spectrum of regional society, while those who decided to enter the voivodship office administration did so, to a large extent, at the *voivode*'s request:

I don't have any Solidarity origins, I was not in Solidarity, I was never a member of the Club of the Catholic Intelligentsia . Sometimes I went to their lectures, but there were no close ties. It was a matter of trust in a person [selected by Czech]. We had worked in the Scouts movement together a good few years, so the *voivode* knew me well.

The directors appointed by the *voivode* suggested that they had come because *voivode* Czech or his deputy, Wróbel, had asked them and/or that they had been chosen for their specialist qualifications. Nearly all of them mentioned their doubts and hesitation about working in the administration, declaring that the arguments and persistence of the *voivode* had persuaded them to take their positions. It is also likely that their consciousness of having a rare professional qualification was decisive as they believed that finding people with such abilities would be difficult. However, there was also a young departmental director whom the *voivode* had known for several years whom he

trusted and who, after graduation in his first month, had to develop a plan for how to organise this department from scratch. He had to adapt his specialist engineering qualification to the conditions of work in administration.

The conditions on which the new elite in the voivodship office had agreed to work in the voivodship office also reflected their reluctance to work in the administration. For example, one of them had made an agreement that he would take the position of a director of a department for a certain period of time, until he had finished his task,³³⁰ as he had a negative opinion of administrative work, and felt 'ashamed' of being a civil servant. Another agreed to take the position of departmental director provisionally until a successor could be found. Most of them mentioned the bad reputation of administration and the difficulty of seeing any results of their work. Thus, it was Czech's achievement to attract first-rate specialists to work in the administration despite the low salaries offered to them and, especially, the low prestige of the work. Therefore, that negative social attitudes towards administration and low salaries were the main reason why the voivodship office did not represent a wide range of social groups.

These long-standing acquaintances among the voivodship office elite had a significant impact on relations between the *voivode* and his deputy as well as with the directors of departments. In general, *voivode* Czech trusted his colleagues a great deal and gave them a lot of discretion, as was especially evident in his co-operation with *voivode* Wróbel. During his tenure, there was a clear division of responsibilities in the voivodship office with the same wide discretion for directors of departments, and the *voivode* did not like to intervene as he respected their decisions. The *voivode* would certainly not force them to do anything, leaving them a free hand. Czech's tenure contrasts with the Ciszak period, when there was a certain conflict between Ciszak and his deputies (Wróbel and Machnik). Ciszak also intervened in the decisions of directors of departments, often after somebody from outside the office had asked him to do so, so that in the middle of a project he would change the decisions of departmental directors.

The attitudes of the voivodship office elite towards *voivodes* Czech and Ciszak were also different. For example, they generally respected Ciszak for his qualifications and economic experience, and for such rare accomplishments as perfect knowledge of

³³⁰ He kept his promise.

etiquette and of some foreign languages. Nearly everybody had a positive attitude towards Cizak. The attitudes of the voivodship office elite towards Czech were much more emotional, as his frank opinions left nobody indifferent. Among some members of the voivodship office he aroused fears of separatism and regional animosity. However, among his supporters he was admired for his vision, which was often unpopular and irritating but they emphasised that after a time it tuned into appreciation. The strong emotional ties among his sympathisers, often of friendship (with him and also his deputy), meant that loyalty was directed primarily towards a person, not an institution, and this may explain the strength of the loyalty. For example, director Beblo resigned after the dismissal of deputy *voivode* Wróbel. Cizak certainly did not have such devoted followers and his dismissal did not cause strong protests in the voivodship office.

These deep emotional ties between the *voivode* and the elite he appointed can be assumed to be typical of charismatic leaders of revolutionary periods in general. Later, when *voivode* Cizak arrived, the period was much more stable, and the relationship was based on legal order, the personality of the *voivode* played a much more limited role. The attitudes of the elite were also different in each period, and devotion began to be replaced by casual daily routine. This admiration of *voivode* Czech was reciprocated by the *voivode*, who, after his dismissal, praised the exceptional qualifications and achievements of his elite:

The personnel of the voivodship office is one of the best not only in the country, but in the world. Perfect professionals on 'starvation salaries' accompanied me in my work.³³¹

The second source of appointment to the new voivodship elite, although much smaller, was selection according to effectiveness in managerial positions in the first year of local government. The Director of the Department of the Economy, Czarnik, had previously been deputy mayor of Tarnowskie Góry, and the deputy mayor of Bytom Łabno became Director of the Department of Culture. The arrival of the directors of departments selected by Czech reveals a feature typical of revolutionary periods: rapid careers starting immediately with positions as directors (as in the inner elite). This could also be applied to the directors, Czarnik and Łabno, who had relatively short tenure in local government, although in managerial positions.

³³¹ Czech quoted in *Goniec Górnślaski*, 4-11 March 1994.

The third rather marginal source of cadres was the retention of directors who had worked in the office before 1989. There were only four such directors; those of finance, law, organisation and maintenance, and three of them were already directors at the time. In contrast to those who came with Czech, their career paths had followed the mechanism of seniority, with a long period of apprenticeship before promotion. Three of them had worked in the voivodship office since the middle of the seventies and one since the middle of the fifties, and their apprenticeship before promotion to the positions of directors extended from at least nine years to 37. The careers which followed the slow path of seniority were in two cases preceded by work in the positions of deputy (from three to ten years) while in two cases promotion to the position of departmental director was direct.

As in the case of the first two groups of directors, and of the deputy *voivode*, acquaintance with the *voivode* and specific qualifications were the most important and the political criterion was less important (the majority were sympathisers of Solidarity but not main-stream activists). However, in the case of the third group – the directors who had worked in the voivodship office before 1989 – negative political selection took place. Thus, in their opinion, the ability to be apolitical and loyal, as well as their specialist qualifications, enabled them to keep their positions:

I started work in the seventies. I observed all that was going on. I then adopted the principle that I would not belong anywhere, and I never belonged to anywhere. That is probably also the reason why I have been in charge of this department for so long. From the beginning of my work, I decided to take the option of professionalism, which I always tried to maintain very constantly, and as it turned out, it was good for me.

The domination of the new appointees in the revolutionary period who, before promotion, had not worked in administration, had a decisive influence on the functioning of the regional office and led to temporary disruption at the time of their arrival. However, for Czech, the appointment of people whom he could trust and also people who had professional qualifications which were in short supply was more important than the preservation of administrative continuity:

For me it was all completely new. When I came here, I began to gather information about what the work of administration was. It took a while before I could start. For the first three months, I thought out how to organise this department.

An even more influential effect than the fact that the majority of the elite had not worked in administration, was that they represented the arrival of 'the opposition'. This

group had different values, for example, in their attitudes towards citizens, the state and other administrative institutions. This was reflected in their behaviour: at that time, the voivodship administration stopped issuing orders to local governments and began instead to negotiate. In correspondence with citizens, the words 'sir' and 'madam' appeared, showing them respect instead of giving categorical orders to be obeyed by them. The arrival of the opposition also showed the change of attitude of some parts of society, which until then had been 'against the state', which but now entered state institutions; the public sphere was until then reserved for the communists.³³² After that time, being patriotic did not mean being in opposition and avoiding engagement in public activity, but instead, being active in public life. In other words, it seems that not only the barriers erected by the communists like the *nomenklatura* system, but also negative social attitudes, had been the main factors causing a large proportion of society to avoid participation in public life.

At the beginning of the nineties, the opposition entered the administration for the first time and directly assumed high managerial positions. As some of them mentioned, they had earlier, during the socialist period, been offered managerial positions due to their qualifications but they had naturally turned them down as acceptance of a managerial position was, for them, related to entering the *nomenklatura* system.

This regional administrative elite in the voivodship office, who entered administration only at the beginning of the nineties, still preserved quite ambivalent attitudes towards administration. This was reflected in their negative opinion about administration as a whole despite the fact that they themselves worked in the regional administration. These negative attitudes towards the administration had been strengthened by the socialist experience of the alienation of public institutions from society. However, they might also be traced back to the tradition of the partition period, when work in administration was understood as a betrayal of national interests. This attitude distinguished the voivodship office elite from the local government elite, who, nevertheless, was also aware that administration was, on the whole, not socially respected. However, to some extent the local government elite felt indifferent to such attitudes because, although they saw these deeply-rooted social attitudes changing, they felt that society was beginning to see the first effects of their work, in the form, for example, of new pavements and the

³³² Dahrendorf, 1993.

rebuilding of schools and hospitals, and the local government elite believed that in the long run social opinions would change.

These two groups of the administrative elite had different opinions about the effects of their activity. It seems that after the 1990 local election and the beginning of the rule of the new local government elite, they felt that their actions were effective and that local development was taking place, as a result. By contrast, the voivodship office elite saw their actions as having only a limited effect, and sometimes even felt powerless. This may be seen, for example, in their attitudes to the issue of regional restructuring, about which they had to learn from newspapers. Thus, it seemed that their sacrifice – of money, time and prestige – was not recognised or socially appreciated and their sense of dissatisfaction prolonged their negative opinion of the administration.

However, the number of individuals engaged in the public sphere in 1989 and 1990 was still very limited and they became the national and regional self-selected elite. The rest of society was relatively unaffected by this social mobilisation. As a result, the new elite was often seen as a continuation of the communist elite since society, both national and regional, saw them in terms of ‘them’ – alien elites caring only about themselves – versus ‘us’ – society. This situation was deeply felt by the voivodship office elite. However, according to Baylis (1994: 319) the same attitude was spread throughout the whole of Eastern Europe, and new governments and elites after 1989 had weak authority with origins in the socialist legacy. The voivodship office elite’s negative attitudes towards the administration were also strengthened by their sense of isolation. They often commented on the poor understanding of administrative functioning as people did not know to which institutions they should turn to deal with their problem. However, the voivodship office elite emphasised that they had given a lot of attention to trying to inform people and modifying their habits.

The attitudes of the voivodship office elite also suggest that they did not yet fully identify with their new professional roles. A similar feature was observable at the beginning of the nineties in the new MPs, who did not want to see themselves as politicians as that area of public life was reserved for the *nomenklatura*.³³³ The second reason why they decided to enter the administration, which was as important as the

³³³ Pańków, 1994.

continuous persuasion of *voivode* Czech, was their belief in the particular historic moment. This revolutionary-period motivation to enter the regional administration resembled the motivation of the national elite. Geremek wrote, for example that ‘they’ – Solidarity – felt ‘the exceptional historic moment’ sometimes as going far beyond Poland, and saw themselves as leaders of those changes.

I never forget especially the conversation with Sacharov and this very special moment, when in his press-conference he said that: ‘There would not be Gorbachov, there would not be Sacharov in Paris if there would not be Polish ‘Solidarity’. I would like to remind then nothing was known! We did not know what would happen in Poland and even less how politics would go in Eastern Europe.

It was a moment of breakthrough for me, as for the first time I began to be so explicitly conscious and for the first time I began to believe in our particular position, which was to start and steer the road from communism to the Europeanisation of Eastern Europe.³³⁴

Similarly, research on the parliamentary post-Solidarity elite in 1989³³⁵ and memoirs of Balcerowicz, the Minister of Finance in Mazowiecki’s government, showed that they believed in an exceptional historic moment. Thus, they changed their attitudes radically and decided to enter public institutions until then reserved for the communists:

For me it was evident that in 1989 there stood before us a historic chance, which in the history of a nation appears only once in several hundred years, and that it would be a big sin not to use the chance.³³⁶

The regional administrative elite entered the administration in a period of ‘extraordinary politics’,³³⁷ when society and the elite were capable of exceptionally radical sacrifice although for a relatively short time because they expected quick results. For the regional administrative elite, it was a conscious decision to work in the administration at jobs which were low in prestige and financially unattractive, demanding long hours at work ‘which they could otherwise spend with the family’. One of the departmental directors spoke about his financial losses being several times greater than in the previous period when he had been an entrepreneur:

I did not treat these four years as ‘having a post’. I believe that I am in public service, which is not about being in power in any circumstance.³³⁸

³³⁴ Geremek, Żakowski 1990: 29.

³³⁵ Wasilewski and Włodzimierz, (ed.) 1992.

³³⁶ Balcerowicz quoted in Torańska 1994: 18.

³³⁷ Balcerowicz, 1995: 262- 265.

³³⁸ Czech quoted in Jajszczok, *Trybuna Śląska*, 27 April 1994.

Another influential director of department appointed by Czech mentioned socially negative attitudes towards work in administration and suggested similar attitudes towards the voivodship office, where he worked:

I think that work in administration is not good. Administration has never had a good reputation... The functioning of the administration is improving but I have no illusions that it will at any time have any high prestige.

Similarly, another of *voivode* Czech's appointees said:

Later [after the political changes of the Round Table] I went crazy and agreed... to be a representative of the Citizens' Committees. I definitely went crazy because I stopped earning money, and the difference was several times less. From that time I have never ever earned good money, I thought that there was a new Poland and that this was needed. *Voivode* Czech ... tried to persuade me to come here for nine months I knew then it was not a good decision from a personal point of view, but in the end I accepted the position of ... and for the second time I did badly and earned even less.³³⁹

Voivode Czech also talked about the work of a *voivode* as a service to society, not as leading to promotion or a professional career:

It is a very poorly paid job. This was the most expensive hobby [working in the voivodship office] which I had in my life.

The regional administrative elite (voivodship office and local government) which as a whole had rather strong post-Solidarity origins, was affected by this sense of mission, inspired by the national elite in 1989, and when they came to power in 1990 they were strongly influenced by this idea. However, the sense of mission of the regional administrative elite was related to modernisation of Upper Silesia, not to Poland as a whole. For example, this is apparent in the Regional Contract and its sense of the need for immediate and efficient regional restructuring, as well as its opinion that there had been a lack of action by the national elite, which caused it to focus strongly on regional issues instead.

The motivation of the people who had worked in the voivodship office before 1989 to enter administration was different from the 'sense of revolutionary mission' of Czech's elite.³⁴⁰ Often it was their first or second job. One of these *nomenklatura* directors had received a state scholarship and as a result was 'forced' (his word) to work in the

³³⁹ Some details have been omitted to preserve the anonymity of the holder of this opinion.

³⁴⁰ In this group there were two women but I do not distinguish gender, to prevent their identification.

voivodship office,³⁴¹ although the job was not as attractive as the job in which he had worked for a year after graduation. Another person mentioned that there had been a vacancy in the voivodship office, so he had decided to enter the administration, although before, during his studies, he had had very different interests (and a seemingly negative attitude towards the administration).

b. The composition of the elite

This investigation of the regional administrative elite will concentrate on five main issues: their regional origins, education, administrative qualifications, age and gender. These features played a crucial role in the definition of their administrative role, and were typical of the revolutionary phase during which they took their places in the regional office and local government.

- Silesian elite

This is the most significant feature, as Czech's revolutionary elite was heavily dominated by natives. Among those appointed by *voivode* Czech's elite, only one fifth were newcomers (people born outside Upper Silesia); the rest were people born there.³⁴² This sense of Silesian domination is additionally enhanced by the total elimination among the elite of those of Dąbrowa origin. In other words, a member of *nomenklatura* still stood a small chance of staying in the voivodship office, but someone of Dąbrowa origin stood no chance whatsoever.

Particularly important was the fact that the new voivodship office (and the local government) elite were the first regional elites since the incorporation of Silesia in 1922, when the native Silesians entered the regional elite in large numbers. Earlier, native Silesians were sometimes members of the elite, but as a whole, the regional elite was dominated by newcomers and that means that it took nearly 50 years of Upper Silesia's belonging to Poland for it to have fairer representation than that afforded by isolated

³⁴¹ As a form of repayment for the scholarship.

³⁴² The data gathered indicated place of birth within or outside Upper Silesia. Although this is not synonymous with being of Silesian origin, since fact not all people born in the region were native Silesians, it nevertheless shows the very heavy domination of Silesians.

native leaders. This overrepresentation of Silesians cannot be explained wholly by its exclusiveness towards other social groups, except for the inhabitants of the neighbouring region of Dąbrowa, from which it was believed most regional leaders during socialism came. It was more the absence of other active and coherent groups in regional society. It could be said that the primary legacy of socialism was not the complete elimination of certain social groups from the public office, for example – Silesians – but the evidently narrow social representation as these positions were preserved exclusively for the *nomenklatura*. In other words, it was not only Silesians who were (at least according to some interpretations) politically discriminated against, but society as a whole that was not engaged in work in administration, or other public offices.

Putnam (1976) writing about the revolutionary elite, suggested that a sense of deprivation was the primary cause of strong overrepresentation of certain groups among revolutionaries. He illustrated this with the example of the high percentage of Jews fighting in revolutionary movements in eastern Europe. It is likely that the native Silesians had a sense of deprivation due to such critical events as their exclusion from the elite after the *Volksliste* issue in 1945, and the mass emigration in the seventies, as a result of their discrimination by regional authorities. Thus, the high proportion of Silesians in the regional elite in the voivodship office and also in local government, where they were elected and not appointed, suggests the greater social activity of Silesians in the public life of the region. This deprivation probably also caused a quicker and stronger crystallisation of their interests. However, it is likely that, to some extent, this engagement in public life also had its origins in the much stronger tradition of democracy and civil society in the region going back to the time of Prussian rule (in contrast to the situation in two other partitioned territories: Russian Poland and Austria).

The Silesian origins of the elite and the fact that being a member of the administrative elite was not a prerequisite for recruitment to the national elite, is important in understanding their independence and criticism of the central elite. This also caused strong identification with the region – they had a strong sense that ‘we are the people’.

- Education

It is clear that the new elite of the revolutionary period (in both types of regional institutions) did not have administrative qualifications at the time of their arrival, as among them were only four lawyers and three economists.³⁴³ This revolutionary period elite mainly had a scientific type of education (with the exception of two other social science graduates and one doctor). What is striking, however, especially in the voivodship office, is that, despite this heavy domination of science graduates, not one of them graduated from the coalmining department of the university. This is crucial, especially when compared with the later 'restoration' period policies conducted by *voivode* Ciszak, who was a coalminer himself, and whose position was strengthened by the appointment of another coalminer, deputy *voivode* Machnik. From the point of view of promoting administrative reform, the main virtue of this revolutionary elite was not their administrative qualifications, but the fact that they were in opposition to the coalmining lobby. The lobby wished to preserve the coalmining industry's predominant position, even if it meant maintaining the backwardness of the regional economy.

The next distinctive feature of the regional administrative elite in relation to their education is their previous academic careers. Nearly one third of the voivodship office elite and, to a lesser extent, the local government elite members, were academics at local universities. The academic careers of the regional elite seem to be typical: revolutionary elites in Eastern Europe at that time had similar backgrounds. This was probably due to the relative political autonomy of universities and the fact that political opposition was quite strongly rooted there. Also, among these academics were the loudest voices demanding preservation of regional Silesian culture. Moreover, the Upper Silesian Union had an elitist character: for example, all of its three subsequent leaders were professors. Thus, it seems that an academic career was an important channel of recruitment. Social mobilisation in 1989 at the national level, and in 1990 at the regional level, was limited, and it seems that one of the groups which most actively reacted to political changes was academics who decided to enter the public sphere. Schöpflin³⁴⁴ observed that Mazowiecki's government, was 'the nearest to a government of philosophy kings witnessed in Europe since the war'. Another factor, which could

³⁴³ However, many of them after their appointment took diploma courses in management and administration.

³⁴⁴ Schöpflin, 1993: 271–272

have caused this relatively strong arrival of academics was the personality of *voivode* Czech, who had himself for some time been a lecturer and was looking for people with a similar background.

- Gender

The specific feature of the voivodship office elite was the relatively high number of women who were appointed as directors of departments. There were six women among 22 departments, one fifth of all directors,³⁴⁵ although there were none in the inner elite of the voivodship office. This indicates a conscious policy of openness by *voivode* Czech, although it was still only partial openness as the highest positions were still reserved for men. Nevertheless, this feature is significant when compared with the simultaneous situation of the complete exclusion of women from the highest positions of the national elite and the Upper Silesian local government elite. Among the local government elite the only woman among 14 mayors of Big Towns was Rawska, the mayor of Świętochłowice. Similarly, at the national level, among the seven governments since 1989, only one was headed by a woman – Suchocka. This almost total elimination of women, with the exception of Czech's personnel policy, was a continuation of the personnel policies of the inter-war and socialist periods when positions in national and regional elites were completely unavailable to women.

In summary, the voivodship office elite formed by *voivode* Czech was a cohesive group, having several common features: shared regional origins, a high level of education, and the same career paths outside administration before promotion. They also participated in or were sympathisers of Solidarity, but were, not however, mainstream activists. Because of those Solidarity origins however, they shared the same sense of revolutionary mission emphasising that they took the administrative positions, even though they were accorded extremely low social respect. They often spoke of a sense of duty, emphasising that they had sometimes resigned from far more financially attractive jobs. They openly expressed frustration at the central administration's failure to appreciate Silesian problems and at attacks by the regional press, which they saw as unprofessional.

³⁴⁵ Wawrzynak *Trybuna Śląska*, 28 May 1994.

Above all, it needs to be emphasised once more that the most striking feature of the regional administrative elite in the transitional period was its Silesian origins. These origins had a profound impact on proposed regional policies and especially on administrative solutions which demanded radical decentralisation and delegation of substantial powers to the regional authorities. Also, the fact that members of the voivodship office elite were often well-known acquaintances, or even sometimes friends, of *voivode* Czech substantially strengthened an extreme cohesiveness which is only possible among a revolutionary elite who share similar values and have a deep sense of mission to serve regional society. One striking illustration of this cohesiveness of the regional elite and its close emotional ties, is the resignation of director Beblo from his position after the dismissal of deputy *voivode* Wróbel by *voivode* Ciszak.³⁴⁶

Conclusion

This chapter first analysed the local government reform: its importance in relation to administrative effectiveness and development of democracy, and at the same time the difficulties involved in its implementation were shown as it was only introduced in moderate form. This is followed by sections on the expectations of the regional and district reform as the next steps of the whole administrative reform and the political reasons lying behind its delay. In the second part of this chapter investigating Czech's regional policy, constant reference is made to the issue of the functioning of regional administration in the conditions of 'unfinished administrative reform'.

The analysis of *voivode* Czech's tenure focused on his revolutionary character. This was reflected in radical changes he demanded in relation to the role of the regional administration or which he was able to introduce in certain cases: the mergers of departments of the voivodship office and the appointment of the new elite. However, the analysis of the administrative reform showed that his proposals were not only radical, (as for example, financial decentralisation), but there were some issues which were also highly controversial. The controversy was especially seen in relation to the concept of Great Upper Silesia and the second issue, who does he represent – the centre or regional society? Can he himself define his own role? Thus, in explaining his policy, we should note its second feature, which was his Silesian identity. In addition, the fact

³⁴⁶ Compare chapter four, for details of dismissal of deputy *voivode* Wróbel.

that the elite appointed by him was in the majority Silesian, and was the first native elite since its incorporation into Poland, is significant. Finally, the analysis of the revolutionary, romantic post-Solidarity *voivode* Czech and his elite will be contrasted in the next chapter with the contradictory policy of the restoration period.

CHAPTER 4

THE 'BOURBON', *VOIVODE* CISZAK, 1994-1997

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the 'Bourbon', *voivode* Ciszak's rule (1994-1997). First, Zaremba's comparison of restoration rule in France and post-communist rule in Poland as a whole will be presented, with especial attention to the particular features of personnel policy in this period. Zaremba's concept of restoration is applied to the political changes at the national level which influenced the subsequent changes at the regional level. Moreover, Putnam's description of revolutionary and post-revolutionary elites will be discussed to illustrate the difference between the national and regional post-Solidarity versus post-communist elites. The description of Ciszak starts with an analysis of his biographical profile and his attitude towards the regional restructuring and administrative reform. In both these dimensions his policy is compared with that of his predecessor, *voivode* Czech. Moreover, the particular features of the restoration phase, such as the politicisation of the administration, are investigated.

4.1 The arrival of the post-communist national elite

In 1994, the arrival of a new *voivode* and a change of regional elite in the voivodship office took place as a consequence of the post-communist parliamentary victory in autumn 1993. This resembled the change of the regional elite in 1990 after the ascension to power of the post-Solidarity national elite in 1989. A similar shift to the left took place around 1993 in the nearly whole of eastern Europe after the first hardships of the economic transition to the free market were felt.

According to Zaremba,³⁴⁷ the post-communist period in Poland after 1993, and even more so after Kwaśniewski's election as president in 1995, had some features in common with the 'restoration' of the *ancien régime* of the Bourbons after the French

³⁴⁷ Zaremba, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 24 December 1995.

revolution (although a complete application of that pattern to Poland is not justified). For this thesis, concentrating on voivodship administration, the comparison with France offers an interesting example of differences in 'revolutionary' and 'restoration' periods which is relevant to the distinction between the Czech and Ciszak tenures. These are comparable with the post-Solidarity (revolutionary) and post-communist ('restoration') periods at the national level. The only difference of 'restoration' at the regional level is about half a year's delay in the regional leaders' appointments and dismissals in relation to the changes at the national level.

'Restoration', according to Zaremba, is not to be defined as a total return to the situation before the revolution. In the case of France, the Bourbons accepted many of the reforms introduced by Napoleon; the legal procedures and administrative reforms, as well as the appointment of a certain number of prefects and sub-prefects, for example. This acceptance of changes introduced during the Napoleonic era was caused primarily by the remoteness and dysfunctional of the old pre-revolutionary patterns – that is, an inability to return to the former administrative divisions of France.

The French restoration style of rule has, according to Zaremba, four general features, which he applies to his analysis of post-communist rule in Poland.

- i. The first is the lack of a comprehensive vision of transition as those in power were fixated by past experience and unable to look to the future: their actions were consequently aimed at preserving the *status quo*;
- ii. The restoration meant not only stopping reforms due to a lack of vision but holding up other reforms in order to prolong the *status quo*;
- iii. Moreover, some of the changes which occurred during the revolutionary phase did not end during restoration, but in certain areas a deliberate retreat to conditions before 1989 took place;
- iv. The last issue is personnel policy during the restoration.

i. *Avoiding reform and preserving the status quo*

The post-communists' actions to preserve the *status quo* were also evident in Prime Minister Pawlak's policies; for example, he withdrew all proposals for bills for administrative reforms prepared by former governments.³⁴⁸ Moreover, all the administrative reforms introduced by him were limited to certain areas of administration, without any comprehensive vision of the whole administration.³⁴⁹ This is illustrated by the introduction of the Pilot Programme, or later, the bill on Big Towns. However, these were the result more of political pressure than of the government's own initiative. The fragmented and conservative reform of central administration was introduced by the next post-communist government, that of Oleksy in January 1997. In relation to Upper Silesia, the concentration of effort upon preserving the heavy-industry character of regional development on the part of the national post-communist elite and *voivode* Ciszak vividly illustrates this feature.

ii. *The suspension of reform*

The suspension of reform can be illustrated with the example of a reform of retirement schemes, which, although perceived as necessary, was delayed as it would have been unpopular due to the demographical structure of Polish society.³⁵⁰ Privatisation was also slowed down, although it was the main driving force of the Polish economy.³⁵¹ Similarly, systemic reforms were not introduced in the health sector, education and administration, to mention only the most important areas.

At the beginning of 1997, it was openly declared that regional administrative reform would be postponed until the parliamentary election in autumn 1997. This issue divided the PSL and SLD coalition since the introduction of reforms, which the SLD was in favour of, would have meant breaking the coalition and an forcing ill-timed election. Instead, the restoration was a time of gestures and demonstrations. Mock actions were carried out to show the importance of these issues and central government's efforts, for example, Minister Strąk's discussion with local government representatives on the

³⁴⁸ Izdebski, 1996: 312.

³⁴⁹ Izdebski, 1996: 313.

³⁵⁰ Dudek, 1997: 307.

³⁵¹ Dudek, 1997: 326.

formation of districts in 1994, and the subsequent withdrawal from the project.³⁵² There were other discussions too about the formation of regions at the end of 1996, and again the government withdrew from the project of regional reform. One of my respondents, a mayor of the Katowice voivodship, emphasised the deliberate replacing of real reform with discussions about preparation for reform, which was then displaced by discussion about the next proposed reform.

If one looks for a while, one will see that the [post-communist] governments are always playing with something. They just say that they will reform education; they talk and talk and then they get bored, and give it all up. Then they talk about the health service reform and also talk a lot ...

Central government's talk about the introduction of reforms was interpreted by Zaremba as arrogance and a desire to prolong a convenient situation. This central government desire to preserve convenience for itself at the expense of 'others' can be illustrated, for example, by the unequal financial treatment of central as compared to local government. This unequal treatment was maintained without the slightest pretence of action, which resembled the behaviour of the socialist regime.³⁵³ Here is just one example, given by the same mayor as quoted above:

Suddenly, out of the blue, we [the local government] were assigned the local forests. Well, what about grants allocated for this delegated task? We received 200 złoty in all for it, when even a notice saying 'no admittance' is more expensive.

According to Zaremba, the Bourbons returned with a sense of injustice and demonstrated an aggravation and arrogance reminiscent of their former rule. Moreover, Zaremba found similar behaviour in Poland in, for example, the use of political positions to conduct private business in the Polisa case, where the wives of Prime Minister Oleksy and President Kwaśniewski owned shares in this company. Zaremba claimed that the behaviour of the central elite during this period resembled the arrogance of Gierek's and Jaruzelski's times.

The fall of Pawlak's government was caused, to a large extent, by accusations of corruption against the Prime Minister and some of his ministers. As a result, in March 1995, power shifted to the SLD, and the former *apparatchik*, the first secretary of the

³⁵² See chapter five on local government for more detail on his subsequent total withdrawal from the project of district reform.

³⁵³ See chapter five, on local government, for more details.

voivodship committee in Bielsko Biała, Józef Oleksy, became Prime Minister. During my interviews, the regional administrative elite referred to the arrogance of the Minister of Administration, who joked about local government arguments and did not respond to the regional administrative elite's accusation of prolonging comfort for central government through the unfair financial treatment of local government. In the same way, another member of the local government elite recalled a meeting of local government representatives from the whole country with ministers where a deputy minister publicly declared that whether or not the mayor of a certain town would receive grants would depend only on his whim.

iii. A deliberate retreat

An example which illustrates the tendency to retreat deliberately to conditions before 1989 is the centralisation of central government revenue which increased while local government revenue fell from 17.2 per cent in 1992 to 15.6 per cent in 1995.³⁵⁴ General subsidies were also replaced by earmarked grants. Moreover, central government's detailed supervision procedures increased by means of the introduction of a number of legal restrictions on the regional administrative elite's actions.³⁵⁵ To sum up, tendencies toward centralisation led to a substantial increase in government power at the cost of limiting local government's discretion; this also led to comprehensive control over the private sector. Centralisation was additionally assisted by an increase in the size of central government; for example, in 1994, there were 12,900 employees and in 1996 the number rose to 13,300.³⁵⁶

³⁵⁴ Dudek, 1997: 307.

³⁵⁵ See chapter five for more details.

³⁵⁶ Dudek, 1997: 307.

iv. *Personnel Policy*

According to Zaremba, the fourth issue is personnel policy which, during the restoration, had two main features:

- a. the return of people from the old system and the formation of entry barriers for outsiders, in contrast to the inclusiveness of the first revolutionary period;
- b. it demanded people whose personalities and qualifications were different from those of the first revolutionary period.

a. The return of people from the old system and entry barriers

First, after the 1993 election, in politics, and therefore in administration, positions were assigned according to a pool of spoils, and the post-communist elite often promoted a return of people from the old system – the *nomenklatura* cadres. This return of the political post-communist elite was eased by the strong position of post-communists in business where there had been no change of elite and the post-communists had kept their crucial dominance.³⁵⁷ This can be illustrated by the case of the Katowice voivodship *voivode* Wnuk, who took a managerial position in the banking sector.

Strąk,³⁵⁸ the minister directly responsible for the appointment of *voivodes*, openly announced the return of people from the former system, even unpopular hardcore *nomenklatura* people, like former secretaries of voivodship committees.

In reality, the former officials are returning. That is normal. During the past four years, the young angry men introduced reform, which could not be done with the former officials. Now these are returning to new structures and adjusting everything.³⁵⁹

Some of these new administrative officials were appointed despite accusations of wrongdoing and nepotism.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁷ Wnuk-Lipiński, 1996: 15.

³⁵⁸ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23 October 1994.

³⁵⁹ Strąk quoted in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 23 October 1994.

³⁶⁰ *The Wall Street Journal*, 4 January 1996 and *Życie Częstochowy*, 20 April 1994.

In contrast to the revolutionary period, during the restoration period barriers were erected. For example, the Minister of the Interior, Miller, approved a proposal (the Bill on Civil Servants, 5 July 1997) to appoint civil servants only after seven years of office apprenticeship. However, the main aim of this bill was not to improve administrative excellence by emphasising qualification and experience; rather it was aimed at excluding Solidarity candidates because they had not worked in administration before 1989. In other words, this was to be the legal justification for the promotion of people from the previous system.³⁶¹

b. Personalities and qualifications

In the case of Poland, the return of the socialist-period elite was assisted by the politicisation of appointments. In other words, people who had not necessarily been in senior positions in the former socialist system (the core *nomenklatura*) were appointed, despite their lack of experience and because of their devotion to the post-communist elite. Thus, political subordination and devotion can be seen as the main criteria for appointment. This politicisation, as Zaremba emphasised, was so extreme that it caused a fierce fight over the spoils, even within the ruling coalition. In addition, according to Zaremba, in France, the restoration led to the arrival of colourless, uninteresting and subordinated personalities. Similarly, in Poland, Zaremba argued the restoration was a period of boredom, suspension and weak, colourless personalities.

Writing about the post-revolutionary elite, Putnam also emphasised the difference in the aims of the post-revolutionary and the revolutionary elite. While the revolutionary elite concentrated on ideology, the post-revolutionary (bureaucratic) elite focused on control and management:

Some scholars have hypothesised that in the postrevolutionary period, ideologues are progressively displaced by bureaucrats, agitators by *apparatchiki*, revolutionary modernisers by managerial modernisers, specialists in ideas by specialists in control and cohesion. The thesis is plausible, for once power is achieved, propagandising becomes less crucial, managing more crucial.³⁶²

³⁶¹ Mac, Stachura, *Wprost*, 31 May 1998.

³⁶² Putnam, 1976: 201.

In Poland, the replacement of revolutionaries and ideologues with bureaucrats and *aparatchiki* was observable at both the national and regional levels. The most strikingly radical feature was the replacement of an elite which had been driven by ideological values, without concentrating on the preservation of power, by the post-communist elite concentrating on preservation of power and managerial skills, avoiding any ideological reference. For example, writing about President Kwaśniewski, Szczypiorski declares that his abandonment of ideology went to such an extreme that the president and his generation tried to avoid presenting a definite opinion on any issue at all.³⁶³ This lack of definite opinions in Kwaśniewski's generation distinguished them not only from the Solidarity opposition formed in the eighties but also from the older generation of *aparatchiki*. In the same way, Prime Minister Pawlak tried to avoid presenting any definite opinion – he was variously silent or spoke vaguely.³⁶⁴ His lack of decisiveness was evident even in his personnel policy. For example, the dismissal of the Chief Commandant of the Police was discussed for a few months and in the end he remained in his post.³⁶⁵

The second feature of the Polish restoration was the overwhelming desire of the post-communist elite to preserve social popularity. As a result, the implementation of unpopular decisions regarding the economic and political reforms was only undertaken by the first group, the ideologists of the beginning of the nineties, despite their limited experience and qualifications, and their awareness that the reforms could lead to their losing power.

4.2 The restoration tenure of *voivode* Ciszak

i. The dismissal of voivode Czech in March 1994

The dismissal of *voivode* Czech and appointment of *voivode* Ciszak, both occurring at the beginning of 1994, can be seen in the context of the radical politicisation of the administration, which contrasted with the policy conducted until then by the post-Solidarity governments. According to Dudek (1997: 305), among the personnel changes

³⁶³ Szczypiorski *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 13-14 April 1996.

³⁶⁴ Dudek, 1997: 309.

³⁶⁵ Dudek, 1997: 310.

in the administration as a whole, the changes at voivodship level were the most dramatic, as 27 *voivodes* and 28 deputy *voivodes* were dismissed. These changes of *voivodes* after the change in the ruling coalition at national level in 1993 can be interpreted as a rather negative phenomenon, destabilising regional policies, although not as destructive as at the national level. At the national level, changes of government took place nearly every year and the lack of continuity was very evident, for example, in relation to administrative reform.

After the appointment of Pawlak, a comprehensive and rapid change of personnel of a clearly political character took place; during the first hundred days of his rule, 19 *voivodes* were dismissed.³⁶⁶ Minister Strąk openly announced the politicisation of positions, declaring that in France, after a change of political coalition, about 60 per cent of the prefects are changed. At that time, extensive changes also took place in central administration, as one third of the ministers, their deputies, and directors of departments were replaced.³⁶⁷ Thus, radical, revolutionary-type (in both pace and scale) personnel-changes took place not during the first government of Mazowiecki, but in 1993. Between August 1989 and June 1990, only 23 out of 49 *voivodes* were changed,³⁶⁸ and Mazowiecki was even attacked for not automatically dismantling the whole *nomenklatura* staff, as some people remained in the Prime Minister's Cabinet (URM) who had worked there before; *voivodes* were also not automatically replaced.³⁶⁹ In other words, despite their internal fights, the post-Solidarity elite paid much less attention to the systematic allocation of positions as the spoils of victory. Thus, during the post-Solidarity governments' rule, the appointment of people from various political groups was possible, especially as they wished to break with the *nomenklatura* style of exclusiveness of members of the communist party. Instead, they tried to pay more attention to professional abilities and did not wish to exclude the opposition completely.

On 1 March 1994, *voivode* Czech became the twenty-fifth *voivode* dismissed by Pawlak.³⁷⁰ His dismissal had first been called for by the regional coalition MPs, who accused him primarily of lack of co-operation with the post-communist MPs. He was also criticised for promoting Upper Silesian Union sympathisers to crucial positions in the administration (the deputy *voivode* and directors of departments in the voivodship

³⁶⁶ Koral, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 14 February 1994.

³⁶⁷ Mistewicz, *Wprost*, 9 January 1994.

³⁶⁸ Dudek, 1997: 84.

³⁶⁹ Subotić, *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 February 1994.

³⁷⁰ *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 2 March 1994.

office).³⁷¹ His dismissal by Prime Minister Pawlak, as with the other *voivodes*, was not supported by professional reasons.³⁷²

Voivode Czech's vehement attacks on the socialist period and the post-communists, especially after the 1993 election, only speeded up his dismissal, but in any event, Czech would probably have been dismissed for being a post-Solidarity sympathiser, although his successor had not yet been agreed upon by the PSL and SLD coalition in the voivodship. His negative attitude toward the new post-communist government was illustrated by his open declaration of unwillingness to co-operate with the new government even though it had been formed through democratic elections.³⁷³ This black-and-white view of post-communists held by the post-Solidarity groups is a legacy of the socialist period, when uncompromising battle was a highly-estimated virtue of the severely-persecuted opposition. However, in the new democratic polity, this black-and-white approach, although it was natural that it would continue for some time, was not conducive to stability and continuity in administrative personnel.

ii. The appointment of voivode Eugeniusz Ciszak in June 1994

The appointment of new *voivodes* by Pawlak's government in line with the proposals presented by regional MPs also dangerously changed the political balance of power at the voivodship level, according to the dismissed *voivode* of Kielce, Płosonka (who had 'survived' five governments). The new centre of power now began to be not the central government but the coalition parties (MPs) in the voivodships, which enabled them to put strong political pressure on *voivodes* or even to control them totally. For Płosonka, this was a return to the socialist method of ruling.³⁷⁴ Furthermore, the arrival of new *voivodes* set off a snowball effect in the changing of administrative personnel, for example, of deputy *voivodes* and directors of departments, especially in two of these departments: Agriculture and Privatisation.³⁷⁵

The politicisation of *voivode* positions meant that the division of positions within the ruling coalition (the PSL and the SLD) was also important. Prime Minister Pawlak,

³⁷¹ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4 January 1994.

³⁷² *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 February 1994.

³⁷³ *Goniec Górnos Śląski*, 13 May 1994.

³⁷⁴ *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 4 January 1994.

³⁷⁵ Subotić *Rzeczpospolita*, 7 February 1994, and Pardowska, Wilczak, Dziadul, Gotkowski, Henzler, Janicki, Kuziak, Urbanek, *Polityka*, 21 May 1994.

although a leader of the PSL, the junior partner in the post-communist coalition, nevertheless ensured that the PSL gained 19 *voivode* posts while only two went to supporters of the SLD.³⁷⁶ This was against the earlier agreement, which was to divide *voivode* positions within the coalition according to whether the PSL or the SLD dominated in the parliamentary election in a particular voivodship. The most evident break in the agreement was in the two voivodships of Wrocław and Katowice, where the SLD had twice the votes of the PSL.

Like Czech's appointment in 1990 and dismissal in 1994, the appointment of *voivode* Ciszak was decided on the basis of political criteria after the shift of power from post-Solidarity governments to a post-communist one. Not only did the political element play a primary role but there was not even a description of the professional qualifications and abilities expected of a *voivode* by the regional and national elite.³⁷⁷

After a few months' delay following the dismissal of Czech, candidate Ciszak was unexpectedly proposed by Prime Minister Pawlak. At the time, the ruling regional political elite (the SLD and PSL members of parliament) were united after nearly half a year's debate over the candidacy of Graczyński. Graczyński's candidacy was proposed by the SLD members of parliament and supported by the regional PSL, apart from its leader, Gašiorczyk, a member of the Upper Silesian Union.³⁷⁸ The candidacy of Ciszak, a person unknown in the region, showed the division between the central and regional elite and aroused the surprise of the PSL members of parliament themselves.³⁷⁹ His candidature also brought strong protests from the SLD party at the national level. They threatened to end the coalition. The SLD argued that they had won the national election in 1993 in the Katowice voivodship, and thus had the right to propose Graczyński as their own candidate. However, no arguments were raised against Ciszak's candidacy, except by Zaborowski, an SLD member of parliament, who charged that the appointment would be the promotion of a figurehead without any political base as Ciszak was unknown even among the regional PSL elite.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁶ In the 1993 election the PSL gained 15 per cent of votes compared with the SLD's 20 per cent, according to Dudek (1997: 291).

³⁷⁷ Cieszewka, *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 December 1993.

³⁷⁸ Klimczyk, Starzyński, *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 31 May 1994, and *Trybuna Śląska*, 23 May 1994

³⁷⁹ *Dziennik Śląski*, 6 May 1994.

³⁸⁰ *Trybuna Śląska*, 16 May 1994.

Ciszak's appointment indicated a fight over the spoils within the national coalition since it resulted from Pawlak's efforts to put in place his own candidate. There were even difficulties in finding a proper candidate, as in the Katowice voivodship the role of the peasant party was marginal because of urbanisation and the domination of its heavy industry. Thus, the candidate chosen was 64 years old. At the time he was on sick-leave following an operation (appendectomy), and the proposal came as a surprise even to him.

iii. Biographical description of voivode Eugeniusz Ciszak

In the inter-war period, Korfanty and Grażyński can be regarded as representative of the two sides of regional society – the natives and the newcomers – and of the different regional attitudes of each group. In the same way, the two *voivodes* after 1990 represent two distinct political options – post-Solidarity and post-communist. Their correspondingly different regional policies have their roots in their different professional careers during the socialist period and the different political attitudes that formed then.

During the socialist period, Czech did not work in administration, staying instead outside the voivodship *nomenklatura*. He participated instead in the Solidarity movement and was a member of the Christian Intelligentsia Club, a religious organisation focused around national and regional tradition. As a result, during his tenure, Czech chose the anti-communist side and declared his inability to co-operate with the post-communist group. He also announced that he would resign if they won the election, although in the end he did not fulfil his promise and was instead dismissed.

By contrast, Ciszak represented the post-communist group, although he presented himself as apolitical and as cut off from any political ties, including the Upper Silesian Union. During the socialist period he had been a member of the *nomenklatura* for several years, belonging to the communist party. He also worked in a managerial position at the heart of regional industry, in coalmining. In addition, before his appointment as a member of the *nomenklatura*, he had experience of work in administration as a deputy minister of coalmining. Thus, at least formally, he seemed to be better prepared than Czech for the position of *voivode*.

Czech and Ciszak also had different regional origins, which was very evident at least in Czech's regional policy which concentrated on the redefinition of the role of the Silesian region, and exerted pressure for decentralisation and more power for the voivodship administration (ie, regional and local governments at district and commune levels). The differences in the policies of *voivodes* Czech and Ciszak cannot be explained as a moderate change of policy in a 'stable period'; instead, a division into revolutionaries and bureaucrats in the post-revolutionary (restoration) period is appropriate. *Voivode* Czech was an ideologue and a Silesian. A reliable interpretation of his regional policy has to refer to the history of Upper Silesia with its distinctiveness being due to its early separation from Poland and its privileged position after its incorporation into Poland in 1922. His identification with Silesia was so strong that it dominated over other post-Solidarity features, and differentiated his rule from those of most *voivodes* at that time, for example, because of the hints at autonomy. In other words, understanding the policy of *voivode* Czech and his elite – the first Silesian elite in the region since the Middle Ages – is not possible without a knowledge of regional history.

On the other hand, in the description of Ciszak, the bureaucrat, reference to history is of marginal importance as he concentrated on preserving power. The replacement of Czech with Ciszak illustrates Putnam's shift from 'the specialist in ideas to the specialist in control and cohesion'. If Ciszak referred to history, he referred only to one period, that of socialism (the pre-revolutionary period) – the time of the dominant role of coalmining in the national economy and the prominent position of the regional elite. Thus, he shared with the national post-communist elite most of the features of restoration, and the investigation of the specific history of Upper Silesia is secondary in understanding his rule. The appointment of Ciszak, a newcomer and a former *nomenklatura* member, therefore meant a shift to concentration on preserving the *status quo* of coalmining and the rest of the regional heavy industry.

According to Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański (1994: 52-53), the regional elite was organised into two groups.³⁸¹ The first category consisted of the hastily-formed and inadequately-prepared Solidarity elite. They came to power on the crest of the wave of

³⁸¹ This is the last scientific paper on the regional administrative elite, published a few months before the appointment of Ciszak. There have not been any direct references to the regional elite in any scientific papers since then.

triumph which followed the political change-over at the turn of 1989/1990. Their position was based on so-called 'combatant achievements' and not on actual political skills and competencies. The second group was made up of the elite of *nomenklatura* originating from the socialist period, mainly in the mining and metallurgical sectors and performing according to socialist values. As they had gained their position during the socialist period, this elite had a strong interest in extending and reinforcing the existing economic position based on raw materials and heavy industry, which meant, however, strengthening the peripheral character of the regional economy. They believed that the main difficulty in creating an alternative elite in the Katowice voivodship had been the paucity of potential recruitment groups because a large number of people with the necessary professional qualifications had already been absorbed during the socialist period.

4.3 The regional policy of Ciszak

i. The policy of modernisation of heavy industry

At the heart of Ciszak's regional policy was his declaration of reform of the coalmining sector, with frequent references to the social costs of the rise in mass unemployment caused by radical restructuring. He argued, therefore, for modernisation and the search for new markets for coal rather than liquidation:

I understand restructuring above all as modernisation, not liquidation, which means both modernisation and economic development beyond the traditionally-dominant coalmining sector ...

The question whether this industrial sector [coalmining] is unprofitable is very disputable. Let's not forget that liquidation of these unprofitable sectors also costs money. So I believe that liquidation should not be introduced but instead we should create the conditions leading to profitability... The easiest would be to close several coalmines and steelworks but several thousand people would be made redundant from one day to the next ... We have to look for compromises.³⁸²

The desire to preserve the heavy industry character of the region resulted from his view of the socialist past, when Upper Silesia had been seen as the most important region and its fate decided the development of the whole state:

³⁸² Ciszak quoted in *Gazeta Przemysłowo-Handlowa*, 20 August 1994.

In the past, one quarter of the national product came from here. Although I would now be cautious about unequivocally defining the Katowice voivodship's share in the national revenue, as this is changing. I can repeat with complete conviction that Silesia was and will remain the region deciding the economic potential of the country.³⁸³

The fact that his whole career had been spent in this sector also influenced his belief in the socialist myth of the significant role of the heavy industry sector, and especially coalmining. Thus, he still believed in its exceptional position at the time, although he legitimised this by referring to the importance of this sector in western Europe and the USA:

The voivodship is not only inhabited by coalminers. My duty would be to represent the whole of society. But we all know that this is the most important occupational group. Coalmining covers the whole sector of supply, trade and transport. The Americans estimate that one post in coalmining creates four to seven jobs outside a coalmine.³⁸⁴

The move towards restructuring by the liquidation of heavy industry could also be understood as a threat to the regional power of the traditional heavy-industry elite, whose interests had been carefully protected by the national elite until the transition in 1989. As a result, preservation of the coalmining sector seemed to be not only a defence against the danger of mass unemployment in the region but at the same time maintenance of the huge interests of the coalmining elite.³⁸⁵ And Ciszak, whose whole professional career had been within this sector, declared:

The office which I hold I understand as a link which brings coalmining issues to the representatives of central government. Through the medium of the '*Trybuna Górnicza*' [The Coalmining Tribune], I confirm that I shall not forget the group from which I came.³⁸⁶

In other words, reform of coalmining was for him not only a problem of social dissatisfaction and unemployment but also a matter of the preservation of the regional status of its traditional elite. This can be compared with Gierek's efforts as a representative of the regional elite (1957-1970) to maintain the heavy-industry character of the region.³⁸⁷ This view of prosperity during the socialist period set Ciszak apart from the attitudes of the Upper Silesian Union and *voivode* Czech, with their much more revolutionary vision of regional restructuring. By contrast, Ciszak proposed the conservative option of reforms which preserved heavy industry, making regional

³⁸³ Ciszak quoted in *Dodatek do Rzeczpospolitej*, 9 December 1994.

³⁸⁴ Ciszak quoted in *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 19 April 1994.

³⁸⁵ Compare Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański, 1994.

³⁸⁶ Ciszak quoted in *Trybuna Górnicza*, 4 August 1994.

³⁸⁷ Walczak, 1996.

development during the socialist period the main point of reference. Thus, it is not surprising that victory to the post-communist group in autumn 1993 gave emphasis to the preservation of coalmining and the heavy-industry character of the region.³⁸⁸ The policy of Ciszak and especially the national post-communists' policy was aimed at preserving the heavy-industry character of the region despite the fact that the industry had become more and more obsolete, and that the ecological conditions in the region were critical. Also, external conditions changed significantly with a substantial drop in the need for the coal. But, despite all this, the prominent position of the heavy-industry lobby meant that the coalmining reform was delayed as long as possible.

The political importance of the coalmining lobby and its efforts to preserve coal production amounted to economic irrationality. Dudek (1997: 326) points out that at that time Polish coal was subsidised and sold for 40 dollars a tonne and at the same time, Polish coke plants were importing coal for 55 dollars a tonne. This was because it was much cheaper to import than to buy Polish coal, sold at much higher prices inside the country. However, the situation of the coalmining industry was also a result of lack of reform, as it had not gone through any comprehensive reform since 1989. The situation was worsened by the last post-Solidarity government of Suchocka, which was blackmailed by strikes organised by the Solidarity Trade Union as the existence of the government depended on its support. An example of this was the strike which spread to all 70 of Upper Silesia's coalmines, causing the withdrawal of the project to close down unprofitable coalmines and instead bringing about the backward step of uniting profitable and unprofitable coalmines in a few holdings. This destroyed the will of the coalminers to make any effort to be efficient, as state subsidies were provided independent of their economic performance.

According to Ciszak, his concept of the development of the region was not very revolutionary. It was to be based on heavy industry.³⁸⁹ He also justified the continuation of coalmining development by the regional elite by waiting for the proposals for regional development from the central elite.³⁹⁰ This led to further delays in regional restructuring, in which the regional economy began to be seen as a whole, and to the

³⁸⁸ Compare Djilas (1957) on the primacy of heavy industry in socialist countries, and the view of Schöpflin (1993) that the heavy industry lobbies were the groups most interested in preserving the socialist *status quo*.

³⁸⁹ *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 27 May 1994.

³⁹⁰ *Polityka*, 17 December 1996.

breaking of the isolated, sector-orientated, socialist type of reforms conducted by the national elite.

Ciszak's passive wait for the central elite's proposals for reforms in Upper Silesia was also prompted by his acceptance of the popular myth of Upper Silesia's crucial role in the country's development during the socialist period and, as a result of the country's debt to Upper Silesia. To some extent, this declaration of the country's debt also contained an echo of the inter-war belief in the special status of Silesia, enhanced by regional autonomy:

So, in fact, the country owes a debt to our region. It is enough to say that years ago one fifth of Polish exports came from here, while the Katowice voivodship contains ten per cent of the Polish population.³⁹¹

ii. The vision of regional administration

The different professional careers of *voivodes* Czech and Ciszak during the socialist period had profound effects on their views of administration. First, it influenced their views on the *voivode's* role. Second, it affected their assessment of the relationship between the voivodship administration and central government. The third issue concerns Ciszak's opinion on the need for territorial reform (for regional and district levels). Did Ciszak see the regional administration as effective and thus as defending the *status quo* or did he see it as rather ineffective and, as a result, demanding administrative reform? The difference of opinion on administration between *voivodes* Czech and Ciszak will be investigated to support Putnam's division into the revolutionary ideologue (Czech) and the bureaucratic *apparatchik* (Ciszak). Furthermore, the particular feature of *voivode* Ciszak's rule of populism will be investigated.

³⁹¹ Ciszak quoted in *Trybuna Śląska*, 3 June 1996.

a. The Voivode's role

The wish to preserve the regional *status quo* is evident in Ciszak's definition of the *voivode*'s role, which contrasts with that of his predecessor, Czech. Ciszak described his role as that of an agent of central government.³⁹² Other members of the regional administrative elite also saw him mainly in this role, an opinion quite often presented during my interviews. Also, Jan Rzemelka, the deputy chairman of the voivodship assembly, criticised him for being a passive, subordinate agent of central government:

I believe that each day the *voivode* confirms that he is an efficient manager. It is only a pity that in negotiations with Warsaw he does not feel behind him the four million people who live in the region.³⁹³

Ciszak's opinion on the *voivode*'s role contrasted with that of his predecessor, Czech. For Czech, the role entitled acting as an agent of central government in the voivodship as the rule of law defined the *voivode*'s role and meant forgetting about the presentation of regional interests, which to him was unacceptable. For Czech, it also meant continuing the former socialist system of dysfunctional administrative structure, especially at the voivodship level.

Czech saw his role as that of a representative and defender of regional interests, which even led him to declare opposition to the central government. The administrative roles created in the former socialist polity were extremely inadequate in the new administrative situation (in the democratic system, for example, presentation of interests other than at the national level is demanded). Thus, Czech's definitions of new responsibilities were often strongly personalised. Czech can be described as a man of the revolutionary period, when roles often went beyond their traditional borders as during stable periods, and this fits the period of transition after the fall of communism in 1989.

For Czech, 'passive' actions in complete accordance with to the wishes of central government were not acceptable. He saw the centre as hindering the urgent reforms of the voivodship level of administration. Thus, quick action by reformist forces at

³⁹² *Dziennik Zachodni*, 27 March 1995

³⁹³ Rzemelka quoted in Pustulka, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 21 November 1994.

voivodship level would weaken the deeply-rooted opposition at the centre, which wanted to preserve vertical fragmentation and centralisation, which was the same as maintaining the weak role of the voivodship-level administration. In other words, Czech's interviews indicate that he believed that impulses for decentralisation of the regional level and unification of the numerous special administration territorial units should not only be prompted by central government decisions but should also be driven by pressure from reformist forces at the voivodship level of administration.

Czech wanted to be the regional leader of a big, strong region despite his actual achievements as a *voivode* and sometimes the poor estimation of his administrative abilities by other members of the regional elite. Ciszak, in contrast, saw himself as a representative of central government, which was more in line with the official definition of the *voivode's* position, although it was not actually effective due to the very limited responsibilities of the position. Unlike Czech, Ciszak is a man of the restoration – a low-profile diplomat and a more devoted representative of central government interests than the ministers themselves, according to one my respondents:

When the one who speaks most loudly and most badly for us [the Katowice voivodship] during negotiations with the government in Warsaw is the *voivode*, our Katowice *voivode*, that reflects a conflict of interest.

Other members of the regional elite saw his representation of central interests as being at the cost of the region. They perceived the regional interest to be different from what the national elite proposed irrespective of whether the national elite was post-Solidarity or post-communist.

Thus, it does not seem accidental that the different views of the *voivode's* role (as a regional representative or central government representative) were held by men of opposite political origins, that is post-Solidarity and post-communist *voivodes*, Czech and Ciszak. This difference in the *voivodes'* opinions also illustrates Putnam's division between the ideologist and the bureaucrat (*apparatchik*):

After the turning-point of 1989, we obtained as a *voivode* a visionary who had an *idée fixe* and, within this, a specific vision of Upper Silesia. I do not know if they [ideas] were a stroke of genius or a disaster or they were only so-so. But they were ideas. For this the *voivode* was fiercely, bitterly, attacked by journalists, political opponents, and even by the groups which raised him to his post. His successor was the world champion in being bland. He represented, he added splendour to meetings, he opened events, visited, and inspected. For nearly four years he did not present any idea, did not take any decision. And it was for

that that he was boundlessly loved by the press, by his own group, and even by his enemies.³⁹⁴

b. The relationship between the voivodship administration and central government

Ciszak's definition of the *voivode's* role as that of a representative of central government also sprang from his positive view of central government (in contrast to *voivode* Czech) and his belief in a good relationship with the voivodship authorities. In contrast to Czech's vision of central government as an enemy, it was now seen as an understanding and co-operative body. A prime example of its goodwill were the frequent visits mentioned below:

So far, none of the ministers invited to the Katowice voivodship has refused to participate in meetings at which we have presented regional problems.³⁹⁵

At those meetings, the economic and social difficulties of the region were presented.³⁹⁶ Ciszak does not consider the effect of these visits and proposed regional reforms, but rather emphasises the attention and recognition bestowed by central government on these regional difficulties.³⁹⁷ This has echoes of the ceremonial visits of the socialist period, although it is also a fact that the flow of grants to the voivodship increased substantially during Ciszak's rule (under post-communist central governments). The voivodship's revenue rose from about fortieth-odd position to tenth among the 49 voivodships.³⁹⁸ However, this revenue was spent on preserving the *status quo* on, for example, subsidies to prevent the closures of coalmines and on substantial salary-rises for managers in this sector.

Voivode Ciszak also avoided any comments referring directly to the present functioning of the voivodship administration, despite the fact that it had been profoundly affected by the legacy of socialist centralisation and was thus extremely dysfunctional.³⁹⁹ His lack of criticism of the heavy centralisation was surprising. It was an extremely unusual stand among the regional elite (the voivodship office and local government), as is

³⁹⁴ Smolorz, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 12 December 1997.

³⁹⁵ Ciszak quoted in *Dziennik Zachodni*, 27 March 1996.

³⁹⁶ *Słowo - Dziennik katolicki*, 5-7 August 1994.

³⁹⁷ *Polityka*, 17 December 1997.

³⁹⁸ *Trybuna Śląska*, 3 June 1996.

³⁹⁹ For example, 80 per cent of the voivodship budget was spent on activity related to one of the 20-odd departments – the Health Department. Thus the roles of the others could be considered purely symbolic.

confirmed by the opinions expressed in the interviews conducted, as well as in official interviews in the press and, especially, by the opinions of his predecessor, Czech. He only occasionally referred to the Regional Contract as a means of decentralisation, which seemed to have been rather a catch-phrase as he did not precisely say what he meant by it.

c. The need for territorial reform (at regional and district levels)

The opinions of *voivodes* Czech and Ciszak about the present functioning of the voivodship administration were closely related to their attitudes on further territorial reform. Czech vehemently advocated the need to form strong regions with powerful 'heads' (*voivodes*), sometimes to extremes; for example, the concept of Great Upper Silesia. By contrast, in Ciszak's interviews, the issue of merging voivodships to form a few big and strong regions was not mentioned explicitly; he also said nothing about the need to strengthen the *voivode's* role as he was satisfied with its existing responsibilities.⁴⁰⁰

In one of his interviews during a meeting with local government representatives, *voivode* Ciszak declared support for the formation of districts. However, his declaration in favour of the formation of districts made no mention of the voivodship-level mergers which would be necessary as these reforms were directly interlinked. As a result, his support for only district-level territorial reform sounded confused and unconvincing, as the partial reform, limited to this level of administration, was not possible.⁴⁰¹

Some of his interviews indicated that he recognised the need for administrative reform, in relation to one issue – the granting of a larger amount of revenues to the regional level of administration – although according to Ciszak's proposal it was to be done in the form of centrally-controlled grants (not sharing in taxes). Even in relation to this issue, his opinion was imprecise; for example, he did not explain whether he was in favour of public administration or self-government administration being adopted at regional level. In addition, he avoided any definition of the size of these grants, thus making his ideas sound very cautious and fragmented. Comparison with the French

⁴⁰⁰ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 27 March 1996.

⁴⁰¹ *Nowiny Gliwickie*, 22 December 1994.

restoration again seems attractive because of the similar replacement of actions by demonstration, as was also the case at the national level.

In addition, his interviews suggest that Ciszak viewed administrative financial discretion at local and regional level conservatively, as in the former socialist system, decisions were to be taken centrally and earmarked funds distributed from there. Although Ciszak's vision of reform was conservative, even he recognised the need for larger revenues to be sent to the lower levels of administration since local government had proved itself to be more financially efficient than the central administration. His view differed from that of Czech, who strongly emphasised at the same time the need for decisions to be taken at local and regional levels.

Ciszak's proposal was a compromise between the interests of central and local level administrations. He wanted to achieve this compromise by slight financial corrections, assigning some additional grants to the local (and regional) level, but without comprehensive reform of the territorial administration and system of finances. Thus, his declaration of maximal financial decentralisation, separated from territorial administrative reform, seemed to make decentralisation appeal as a populist phrase.⁴⁰² In other words, his proposal for reform would preserve the socialist privileged position of central government, which, with the exception of the 1990 local government reform, had been able to maintain a centralist style of rule. His imprecise arguments in relation to the Pilot Programme⁴⁰³ also suggested a conservative view of reform, aimed at prolonging a *status quo*, as the following quotation from the interview with *voivode* Ciszak shows:

The specific size [of grants] should be discussed but increasing the scale of discretion in the region is what is wanted. With wise compromise, this does not have to become a conflict of interests with the centre, as those increased grants could be spent on aims decided for the whole state. On the other hand, they could be divided more efficiently at the local level, even for the better carrying out of the Pilot Programme.⁴⁰⁴

Ciszak often advocated gradual reforms, preceded by carefully-prepared policies, which seemed to be an excuse for delaying the introduction of the administrative reform, a

⁴⁰² *Dziennik Zachodni*, 3 January 1995.

⁴⁰³ For example, it is not explained for how much longer the Pilot Programme is supposed to last having been prepared only for a year; nor whether and how it will lead to further reform. The other important issue is the method by which the territorial administration is financed by central government.

⁴⁰⁴ Ciszak quoted in *Polityka*, 17 December 1996.

subject which was dividing the central political elite. This behaviour is typical of the restoration period.

In addition to Ciszak's lack of explicit commitment to regional reform, he differed from his predecessor in his attitude to voivodship autonomy. He tried to neutralise the region's traditionally strong desire for autonomy (sometimes mixed with separatist inclinations) by blurring its earlier meaning and limiting his proposals to promoting the socially-supported demands for greater financial decentralisation. This financial decentralisation was generally demanded not only in relation to Upper Silesia but also to all other regions and was to be the natural consequence of the territorial reform. Autonomy however, had one more feature, the competency of the regional diet to enact law. This difficult issue was not mentioned at all by the man who wanted to maintain his popularity, as this quotation from the press-interview with him shows:

The discretion of this region means, at least in my opinion, that money produced here should stay in the voivodship to a greater extent than it now does. This does not mean autonomy, the separation of Silesia... It is just related to financial issues, because the scale of the problems to be solved here is beyond compare.⁴⁰⁵

d. The man of 'compromise'

The second similarity to the restoration period concerns Ciszak's definition of the *voivode's* role. This was closely tied to his predominant declaration of the need for compromise, which enabled him to maintain popularity by avoiding decisions which would be painful and unpopular. He took especially into consideration two groups: first, regional society as a whole, and second, the regional elite. Below is Ciszak's first declaration indicating on himself as an advocate of regional society interests:

The *voivode* has to feel the pain of that which is painful to inhabitants of the region. Most of all, this is the issue of economic stability. The most important thing is to maintain workplaces for people. This also includes what happens with coalmining, metallurgy, and the infrastructure, which serves those industries. After all, a citizen does not care what will happen after a century; he is not concerned with far-reaching policies extending beyond the life-span of this generation.⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁵ Ciszak quoted in *Słowo – Dziennik katolicki*, 5-7 August 1994.

⁴⁰⁶ Ciszak quoted in *Gazeta Krakowska*, 2 February 1995.

Although the main role of the *voivode* was to be a representative of the central administration, he also declared that he wanted the *voivode* to become a tribune presenting the most important social issues of regional society, above all, the elimination of unemployment and the guaranteeing of social stability. He wanted to achieve these even at the cost of difficulties which might occur in the future, as illustrated by the quotation above. This identification of the *voivode* with regional society and with support for actions aimed to satisfy it sounds like a populist escape into easy solutions, leaving difficulties for future generations. His populism is also confirmed in his provision of solutions which did not contradict central government policies. For example, in the end despite earlier declarations of sympathy in the division of grants, regional society interest had to be subordinate to the aims of the centre.⁴⁰⁷

Voivode Ciszak's populist stand was also seen when he declared that he wished to satisfy the second main group, the whole regional elite.⁴⁰⁸ On the one hand, he wanted to establish close co-operation with the post-communists, that is the regional SLD members of parliament. On the other hand, he wanted to continue the opposite policy of the group linked to the Upper Silesian Union and *voivode* Czech, where the anti-communist emphasis was strong. Just prior to his appointment he made the following explicit political declaration:

I do not offer any programme, as I believe one man cannot change much in the region... In my opinion to heal the situation in the region, action is needed by whole groups of people, not just a *voivode*.⁴⁰⁹

His wish to remain popular led to his definition of the *voivode*'s role as a low-profile man of 'compromise'. The declaration of the need for compromise justified his frequent changes of policies to keep the support of the strongest political factions, whatever their political agenda may have been. His careful diplomatic statements allowed frequent changes of political actions and also enabled him to evade personal responsibility for the changes of regional policy. For instance, he declared his support for the introduction of the Pilot Programme and local government activities, trying to increase their discretion.⁴¹⁰ He also advocated the need to increase the size of their subsidies.⁴¹¹

⁴⁰⁷ *Polityka*, 17 December 1996.

⁴⁰⁸ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 9 June 1994.

⁴⁰⁹ Ciszak quoted in *Dziennik Zachodni*, 30 May 1994.

⁴¹⁰ *Nowiny Gliwickie*, 22 December 1994.

⁴¹¹ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 27 March 1996.

However, later, at the Arbitration Tribunal, despite his declaration, he did not recognise the financial claims of local governments, arguing that they received sufficient funds.

His populism was also evident in the contradictory and confused views expressed in his interviews as he said whatever people most wanted to hear, despite the fact that the opinions contradicted each other and thus were impossible to put into practice. This wish to gain and preserve popularity led him to make incomplete, bland statements which could be shifted smoothly to accord with the changing tastes of the dominant groups. For example, on the one hand, he expressed satisfaction with the *voivode*'s 'adequate' power and on the other he demanded greater decentralisation. He was equally contradictory in his defence of the slow pace of reform as maintaining social stability and minimal unemployment while, at the same time, he advocated quick reform, suggesting that rapid changes would quickly bring improvements to living conditions, as expected by society. He stated:

I believe that the more quickly the solving of problems begins, the more decisively unpopular decisions are taken, then and more quickly, despite difficulties at the beginning of the reform, the expected positive effects will appear.⁴¹²

4.4 The voivodship office during Ciszak's tenure

Ciszak's policy in the voivodship office, in addition to his conservative vision of industrial reform and his gradualist, cautious attitude to regional administrative reform, confirms his restoration-style approach. His policy will be examined in two areas:

- i. the rise of bureaucracy: in this respect, the sectoral re-designing of the voivodship office structure, and the weakening of the position of directors of departments and formation of the Social Council of the Economy are the most important;
- ii. changes in voivodship office personnel, which will be investigated through the example of the appointments of a new deputy *voivode* and directors of departments and the politicisation of administration.

⁴¹² Ciszak quoted in *Dziennik Zachodni*, 27 March 1996.

i. The re-designing of the voivodship office

The restructuring of the voivodship office departments took only one form: the rise of bureaucracy. This took place via a moderate increase in the number of departments. However, the sectoral approach is nevertheless evident in the formation of several new positions of co-ordinator and the establishment of an advisory body for the *voivode*, the Social Council of the Economy.

The formation of the Social Council of the Economic of the *voivode* in October 1994 was Ciszak's beloved brainchild, and his first serious decision. The Council was chaired by Zygmunt Nowak, a professor from the Central Coal Institute in Katowice. The formation of the Council confirms Ciszak's preservation of close ties with coalmining lobbies and the former *nomenklatura*. Nowak declared that the council would be the most democratic advisory body as members selected themselves. To begin with, 126 people volunteered to work in the Council, but by June 1995 the number had already increased to 272. According to Nowak, the most evident positive aspect of the council was the presence of highly-qualified professionals, among them⁴¹³ the former Deputy Minister of Coalmining, the leaders of the former Polish-Russian Association, SLD candidates for senators, and former *voivode* Wnuk.

The Council worked on the principle that nearly all departments in the voivodship office had commissions relevant to their work. The *voivode* compared this to the division of the councils in parliament. In 1996, the Council was divided into 12 commissions, each chaired by a leader. The leaders of commissions made up the Presidium of the Council and met with the *voivode* once a month.

Professor Nowak himself confirmed the strong political pressure of the Council when he declared that some of its members treated their work so seriously that they were in the voivodship office daily and demanded that the voivodship office civil servants give explanations of their work. The Director of the Ecology Department, Beblo, who later resigned in protest at the politicisation of the voivodship office, also confirmed the Council's wish to give orders. He compared its actions to the political pressure exerted by the 'voivodship committee' during the socialist period.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹³ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 30 June 1995.

⁴¹⁴ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 30 June 1995.

It was also on the Council's initiative that new departments of Agriculture, Foreign Co-operation, and Sport and Tourism were formed. Although Nowak declared that the Council did not put any proposals to the voivodship office for the dismissal of civil servants, Klimczak⁴¹⁵ believes that it did put strong political pressure on the *voivode* by criticising the qualifications of the employees of certain departments.

The administrative structure of the socialist period also guided Ciszak's redesign of the voivodship office itself, maintaining the socialist tendency to divide the economy into separate industrial sectors. This was reflected in the formation of a few new departments. During Ciszak's rule, the departments of Foreign Co-operation and Agriculture were formed out of the Department of Economy. As a result, the Department of Economy, headed by Czarnik, which was actively engaged in the preparation of regional restructuring, was substantially weakened.⁴¹⁶ After this, the regional policy of the voivodship office had to be co-ordinated through several departments.

The most vivid example is the formation of the department of Agriculture for which the only reason was the desire to satisfy the Peasant Party Prime Minister, Pawlak. The formation of a government headed by the leader of the Peasant Party, Pawlak, after the 1993 parliamentary election meant that new *voivode* candidates in various voivodships declared it necessary to create those departments.⁴¹⁷ In the case of the Katowice voivodship, the establishment of this department in such an industry-dominated region seemed to be highly dysfunctional as agriculture plays a marginal role in the voivodship economy. Thus the establishment of that department was a purely political decision aimed at satisfying the expectations of central government and the regional political elite of the ruling coalition, and not, as Ciszak argued, to accommodate local government wishes:

The creation of the Department of Agriculture was warmly welcomed by local government groups. The role of the newly-established Department of Foreign Co-operation is to initiate contact with trade representatives and the services of foreign delegations and guests. That also brings good results. The Social Council of the Economy was also formed as an advisory body to the *voivode*.⁴¹⁸

⁴¹⁵ Klimczak, *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 20 June 1995.

⁴¹⁶ This is also noticeable in the decrease of the Department of Economy employees from 150 to 50 after restructuring and redundancies.

⁴¹⁷ Lipszyc *Rzeczpospolita*, 28 December 1993; *Gazeta Krakowska*, 25 March 1994.

⁴¹⁸ Ciszak quoted in *Trybuna Śląska*, 3 June 1996.

Ciszak's policy of forming new departments differed from that of the local government elite; as one of the mayors explained, the number of departments in local government bodies was being reduced. This mayor also considered Ciszak's formation of new departments, especially of agriculture, as highly dysfunctional and costly. The formation of new departments was clearly a return to the socialist-tradition when the new administrative units reflected the political strength of certain sectoral lobbies rather than following an economic rationale. This same approach is seen in Ciszak's arguments for the formation of additional departments, especially that of agriculture. The formation of the Department of Agriculture was also seen as an opportunity to employ PSL sympathisers in the new positions surfacing in administration, especially as administrative personnel had substantially increased in number during Pawlak's tenure.⁴¹⁹

The establishment of these new departments was variously assessed by the directors of the voivodship office. Many believed that each *voivode* had the right to adapt the structure to his taste, and that the rise in the number of departments was not significant. Some also emphasised the importance of certain sectors and, in particular, the distinctiveness of agriculture from other sectors of the economy. They believed that the formation of a separate Department of Agriculture was necessary to recognise the specificity and difficulties of that sector as, for example, the opinion of one of my respondents working in the voivodship office, quoted below indicates:

In other voivodships a Department of Agriculture does not need to exist because if the voivodship is agricultural, the *voivode* and his deputy will both be engaged in agriculture. However, in a voivodship where industry is very strong, there has to exist this element of organisation of the voivodship office's structure according to the sectors of economy and strong agricultural units in the form of departments seem necessary

I think that in the not-very-distant past a mistake was made and the department was eliminated. This department had existed, I believe, since the beginning of the voivodship office. However, just after 1989 it was wrongly thought that the market would take care of the agricultural agenda. The elimination of the agricultural agenda was evidently a mistake.

During Ciszak's tenure the Departments of Sport and Tourism was also formed, the Katowice voivodship office being the only one to follow the Warsaw voivodship office in this respect.⁴²⁰ The formation of this department, especially in the Katowice voivodship, was clearly superfluous given the region's unattractiveness to tourists due to its ecological crises.

⁴¹⁹ Lipszyc *Rzeczpospolita*, 28 December 1993.

⁴²⁰ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 27 March 1995.

Some members of the regional administrative elite referred to the ineffectiveness of forming new departments which could lead to a snowball effect and the further separation of other distinctive sectors, resembling the socialist division of administration into several ministries. One regional administrative elite member also emphasised that the formation of separate departments increased the fragmentation of the voivodship office structure and raised difficulties in the co-ordination of policy as communication between the various departments was slower:

There is a need for more co-ordination at the level of directors of departments which was not necessary before. That is how it is now and this slightly hinders work. Moreover, the amount of information circulating is less, slower and selective, and as a result of some personnel changes, some data contains mistakes. There is no reason to exclude the idea that this is deliberate and connected to personal relations, but this is secondary.

Earlier it was much easier: first, direct contacts were easier between various sectors. There were no reasons for agriculture, or for example, power engineering, to be treated differently. They have their own place in the structure of the regional economy and therefore should be closely tied to each other. This separation strengthens the pattern of 'sectoral Poland', which was characteristic of the totalitarian system with its case-by-case method of governing industry, and I do not think that it is a good move [the formation of new departments].

The same director of department also emphasised the substantial increase in costs; for example, the rise in the cost of directors' salaries due to an increase in their number, the employment of secretaries for them, and new equipment (faxes, telephones etc). However, this view was quite rare, and most of my interviewees believed that the formation of additional departments (three) by *voivode* Ciszak was not significant and saw it as an adaptation to the personal preferences of the *voivode*.

To sum up, the formation of the agricultural department during Ciszak's tenure showed the political significance of agriculture and preserved its privileged status. Generally, the establishment of new departments and co-ordinator positions also resembled the tendency to bureaucratisation and fragmentation that marked the socialist period.

ii. The personnel policy of the voivodship office

Personnel policy will be investigated in relation to five areas:

- a. the scale of personnel changes;
- b. the typical feature of this period; that is, the politicisation of the administration,

- expressed in such phenomena as perceiving the inner elite (*voivode*, deputy *voivode*, and director general) as a pool of spoils;
- c. the question of who selected the voivodship office elite;
 - d. political pressure on the voivodship office authority;
 - e. the shift from external channels of appointments during Czech's rule into internal ones during Ciszak's tenure;
 - f. delaying the appointment of directors of departments.

a. The scale of personnel changes

During Czech's tenure, the changes in personnel in the voivodship office were initiated by the take-over in the national elite in 1989. Similarly, the 1994 politicisation of the voivodship level reflects the phenomenon which occurred at national level but in the voivodship office was much more limited in relation to the scale of personnel changes.

In the Katowice voivodship the change of *voivode* took place after the change from a post-Solidarity to a post-communist national elite in 1994. However, after the initial total purge in 1990 by *voivode* Czech, the voivodship office administration as a whole was much more stable. At the time of transition there was extreme fluidity at the central level; during the post-Solidarity period (1989-1993) prime ministers changed four times and during the post-communist period three times (1993-1997). In general, there was much lower turnover at voivodship level than at the central level where changes of government were accompanied by ministerial changes.

b. The politicisation of the administration – the inner elite

The changes in the voivodship administration were much more limited, especially compared to the purges of Pawlak's tenure (which included the removal of *voivodes* and the ministerial elite: ministers, deputy ministers, and directors of departments) in the same period. It was due to Ciszak's personnel policy that only a small number of directors of departments changed (13 out of 17 directors appointed by his predecessor stayed during his tenure). However, the politicisation of administration in the voivodship office was still visible in the mainly political criteria applied in the

appointment of the deputy *voivode* and the director general with those positions being divided according to the spoils.

The appointment of a new Prime Minister, Olesky, at the beginning of March 1995, when power within the coalition shifted from the PSL to the SLD, meant that Ciszak's position itself was at risk. The pressure was increased by the efforts of the regional SLD elite to reallocate the spoils. The SLD leader, Zaborowski, vigorously attacked Ciszak:

Eugeniusz Ciszak has been a *voivode* for eight months and that seems to be enough time for him to state publicly what his programme is. Up to now it has not been presented. Moreover, decisions about personnel have been delayed. For example, in all this time, no director of the Department of Privatisation has been appointed. We are watching Ciszak's actions carefully all the time.⁴²¹

The new chairman of the PSL in the voivodship, Soska,⁴²² united with Zaborowski in his criticism⁴²³ and issued a warning to the *voivode*. Moreover, Zaborowski openly demanded personnel changes in the voivodship office elite:

The appointment of subordinates is the independent decision of the regional head [*voivode*] although it of course demands political consultations.... The truth is, however, that we have some doubts about the directors of certain economic departments, and we have the full right to raise them.⁴²⁴

Although, *voivode* Ciszak publicly declared the apolitical character of the voivodship office civil servants,⁴²⁵ the deputy *voivode* was nevertheless dismissed. However, changes in directors of departments were rather limited during his tenure.

c. Who selected the voivodship office elite?

According to Grossner,⁴²⁶ the appointment of the new deputy *voivode*, Machnik, was a decision on which Ciszak was not consulted; Machnik: was chosen by the regional coalition MPs, and was then presented to Ciszak. Such weakness in the *voivode*'s position, in relation even to the appointment of his deputy, suggests the extreme

⁴²¹ Ciszak quoted in *Dziennik Zachodni*, 9 February 1995.

⁴²² Korytko, *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 31 January 1995.

⁴²³ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 13 March 1995.

⁴²⁴ Zaborowski quoted in Grochowska, *Trybuna Śląska*, 27 April 1995.

⁴²⁵ Jaworska, Starzyński, *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 16 March 1995.

⁴²⁶ Grossner *Dziennik Śląski*, 6-8 June 1995.

dysfunction at that time of the role of *voivode*. Moreover, it shows the lack of democratic representation at the regional level due to the lack of an elective institution and instead reveals the strong, although informal, political pressure of regional MPs. At that time, the voivodship assembly, formed by members of local government, was a weak institution with extremely limited responsibilities. Thus, the regional MPs had a free hand in putting political pressure on the *voivode*.

Ciszak's explanation of the dismissal of deputy *voivode* Wróbel referred to additional duties which were to be performed by the new deputy, namely, closer co-operation with local government, and work on the preparation of the Regional Contract.⁴²⁷ The dismissal of deputy *voivode* Wróbel caused a strong reaction in the voivodship office: the director general of the voivodship office, Klatka, was strongly against Wróbel's dismissal, pointing out that only very general explanations had been provided, which made this decision totally unconvincing. He also believed that the position of deputy *voivode* should not be political.⁴²⁸ According to Beblo, deputy *voivode* Wróbel was the only man ensuring the apolitical functioning of the voivodship office after the appointment of *voivode* Ciszak. Beblo declared that he had not tendered his resignation in December 1994 as he had been asked by Wróbel to stay, but he did so in May 1995 in protest against the political character of Wróbel's dismissal.⁴²⁹ This shows the strong loyalty and even friendship among Czech's revolutionary-period cadres:

The *voivode* did not explain his motivation. He only stated that certain posts were to change with the change of the political parties in power. There was no assessment of the deputy *voivode*'s work. Arguments of merit were not presented. In this situation, I cannot perform my duties. Yesterday's events were no surprise to me.⁴³⁰

This strong protest against Wróbel's dismissal suggests post-Solidarity's exclusiveness in appointments. The strict division of the pool of spoils was described by them as a return to the *nomenklatura* system. They believed that politicians should not change administrative staff too often, and that the evaluation of civil servants, should concentrate on qualifications and achievements rather than on their political affiliations. However, after post-Solidarity lost the parliamentary election in 1993, a change of philosophy took place and in 1997 they considered it natural to dismiss Ciszak as a

⁴²⁷ Filipowicz *Trybuna Śląska*, 1 June 1995.

⁴²⁸ Filipowicz *Trybuna Śląska*, 1 June 1995.

⁴²⁹ *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 31 May 1995.

⁴³⁰ Beblo, quoted in Filipowicz, *Trybuna Śląska*, 1 June 1995.

result of their victory in the national election.

A different opinion on deputy *voivode*'s position as a political one was presented by the appointee Machnik, who believed that *voivode* and deputy *voivode* appointments should reflect election results:

These [*voivode* and deputy *voivode*] posts should be held by those who take responsibility for ruling the country and the region. My colleagues [ruling coalition MPs from the voivodship] felt that we should have certain responsibilities in our voivodship. On the other hand, we [SLD] did not persist. When the *voivode* became a PSL candidate, we accepted this decision.⁴³¹

The new deputy *voivode*, Zygmunt Machnik, was an SLD member, and like *voivode* Cizak, a coalminer. His appointment not only confirmed the SLD's rising position after the change of prime minister but also the crucial position of the coalmining lobby. For nearly a decade after his graduation, Machnik had worked at a scientific institute of management (this resembled Cizak's academic experience; like Cizak he had graduated from the local Technical University of Silesia⁴³²). When he was promoted to deputy *voivode*, he had several years' experience in management, having been a director of a state company in the period 1985-1992. Then, in 1992 he was chosen as a councillor. As a result, at the time of his appointment he had had three years' experience of work in local administration and a year as town mayor of Czeladź in the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship. Thus, although he had never worked in public administration, he already had some administrative experience due to his work in local government.

In December 1996, a new director general, Wiltos, was appointed in the wake of the purges by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Miller.⁴³³ He had extensive previous contacts with administration as he had 26 years' experience of work in the voivodship office, and previous experience of managerial work, having been a director of the legal department since 1983. His education as a lawyer also seemed relevant to his work in the administration. To sum up, all three careers differed from the revolutionary period's appointment of outsiders to the inner administrative elite of the voivodship office, as practised during Czech's tenure.

⁴³¹ Machnik quoted in *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 5 June 1995.

⁴³² The analysis of the voivodship office and local government elite suggests that this regional university was essential in the preparation of the regional elite, as it seems that at least 80 per cent graduated from this university.

⁴³³ *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 22 January 1997.

Moreover, the fact that *voivode* Ciszak did not participate in the selection of either of his deputy *voivodes* (Wróbel had been appointed by Czech, and Machnik was appointed by the regional political elite) had a strong impact on the restrained relations between the *voivode* and his deputies. The same can be said of the directors of departments, the majority of whom were not selected by Ciszak but by Czech. The elements of distrust were present especially between the *voivode* and his deputy and this affected the work of the voivodship office. A member of the regional administrative elite recollected:

Co-operation between the *voivode* and the deputy *voivode* was the basis of good functioning in the voivodship office. It is a pity that when *voivode* Ciszak arrived it was already not working well. Wróbel tried to carry out his ideas as he had done during Czech's tenure. He carried them out without consulting with *voivode* Ciszak, but *voivode* Ciszak had different ideas and ways of dealing with them. I do not know how it was exactly. In any case, there was conflict and later it was the same. Perhaps it wasn't so bad with Machnik, but he was not a person whom the *voivode* trusted... It is the case that the *voivode* takes personal responsibility for handling business. When the *voivode* is politically appointed from one party and the deputy is from a different political party or anyway is politically appointed, it is very bad. The deputy should be the *voivode*'s right-hand man.

d. Political pressure on the voivodship office authorities

The politicisation of administration was present both in the application of the pool of spoils to the appointments of the inner elite, and in political pressure executed by the regional MPs on the voivodship office. There were even open public declarations that the regional political elite of the ruling coalition had ambitions to influence the functioning of the voivodship office. My interviewees also pointed out the regional political elite's efforts to influence its functioning directly.

This politicisation of administration was mentioned by the voivodship office elite, irrespective of their political views (post-Solidarity and post-communist). However, members of the regional elite from Solidarity origins saw politicisation as linked to the post-communist period. One of the regional administrative elite's member indicated the politicisation of administration as a whole during Pawlak's rule. The same person also indicated the changes in ministries at the central level and the politicisation of the voivodship office itself: politicisation of their actions and politicisation of appointments.⁴³⁴ This director of the voivodship office elite also emphasised the

⁴³⁴ Compare also the regional administrative elite opinions that the appointments of *voivode* Ciszak and Machnik were politically driven.

different styles of the personnel changes in the administrations of the post-Solidarity governments in contrast to Pawlak's. In his opinion, the post-Solidarity governments had a more amateurish character. Their priority was not retaining power; rather, they concentrated on solving problems (and appointing experts), with strict appointment of their own cadres considered secondary:

It was noticeable until September 1993 that these governments were – I would say – amateurish, in the positive meaning of that word. It was not their main aim to strengthen their power. They were enthusiastic and they behaved emotionally. They tried to solve problems. They did not come from the harsh school of fighting to regain power and thus they directed little effort to this issue. There were of course frequent changes of *voivodes* but these were not according to the spoils system, not as it is now. I do not know if it is a good thing that political membership now counts for much more.

The Minister of Finance in Mazowiecki's government, Balcerowicz, the architect of the economic reform, drew a distinction between traditional politicians and people who entered the elite in a period of radical political changes. The last were more concerned with transforming the system than with staying in power:⁴³⁵

There are, in my opinion, fundamentally two types of politician. The first type is a person professionally trained to take up a political position, who shapes his actions in a certain way to keep his post. The second arrives in particular conditions, such as in Poland and other post-socialist countries in 1989. He is a politician directed to solving particular issues, especially in situations where problems normally do not appear with such intensity ... I was then interested in the task, which I declared that I would carry out.⁴³⁶

The above opinion resembles that of a member of the regional administrative elite and seems typical of the post-Solidarity groups. This suggests that the change from post-Solidarity to post-communist governments also meant a change of priorities, with personnel policy playing a crucial role, and being in power dominating over the introduction of reforms.

During my interviews, the political pressure on the regional administrative elite was often mentioned. It was often suggested in relation to the position of *voivode*, through whom influence on the voivodship office was to be extended. Moreover, the director of one department mentioned attempts to put pressure on him directly, and he referred to phone-calls from regional MPs trying to influence the appointment of civil servants sympathetic to their policies:

⁴³⁵ After the 1993 victory of the post-communists, Balcerowicz substantially modified his opinion and appreciated the need to retain power.

⁴³⁶ Balcerowicz quoted in Torańska 1994: 15.

Till September [1993, the time of the parliamentary election] I had no phonecalls from Senators and MPs presenting personnel propositions. Since September I have had phonecalls from Senators and MPs with various propositions. This shows the 'personalisation' of positions. It is a fight for posts. In administration, the emphasis shifted to personnel matters; it is not what he thinks but who he is [to what party he belongs].

This seems to mirror the politicisation of the administration which was initiated by Pawlak at the central level. The appearance of those phonecalls since 1993 also suggests a shift of the previous voivodship office's loyalty from central government towards the voivodship coalition parties (which were making the phonecalls). This tradition of intervention also resembles Grudzień's tenure (1970-1980) when intervention was crucial to maintaining political supervision over the voivodship administrations.

In the opinion of this director, the scale of politicisation was so noticeable after the 1993 election because, from the beginning, Pawlak began the systematic appointment of sympathisers of the victorious coalition down to the lowest level of the pyramid, the 'borough'. During the post-Solidarity government, there had previously been politicisation but it was not systematic and ended at *voivode* level:

Of course there were changes of *voivodes*, many changes [during the post-Solidarity period], but these were not according to the pool of spoils due to a coalition agreement that down to positions in X 'borough' everybody had to be appointed according to the pool of spoils. I did not see strong pressure on the *voivode* before ... Now personnel issues have become much more important than they were. I do not know whether this is good or bad, but there is much more talk about personnel issues than there was before.

Olejniczak, Czech's spokesman and devoted sympathiser after his dismissal, commented on the strong shift toward politicisation during Ciszak's tenure:

There is no end to the differences between Ciszak and Czech. The latter finally decisively resisted political pressure, believing that he was under the direct supervision of the Prime Minister and that he himself represented the state interest, that is, he was a representative of the Third Republic. Ciszak understands his role differently. He often meets with regional political parties, talks, listens and asks for their advice. Relying on any political force means dependence and dependence means vulnerability to their political pressure.⁴³⁷

The politicisation of Ciszak's tenure is also demonstrated by his strong political dependence on the regional political parties of the ruling coalition and his clientism. For example, his presence during the pre-election meeting in Sosnowiec with SLD candidates for councillor (before the election in June 1994) was interpreted as his wish

⁴³⁷ Pustułka, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 13 March 1995.

to gain the support of the other coalition party, the regional SLD elite.⁴³⁸ During my interviews it was also stated that *voivode* Ciszak intervened to change decisions by directors of departments, especially according to the wishes of outside clients:

On the other hand, during Czech's tenure, the director of a department decided for himself and the *voivode* did not force him to do anything else. Later, the new *voivode* came. He did not really know the people. As a result, it was difficult for him to trust them, so he looked into details. And this looking into details most often occurred when somebody came to the *voivode* with a problem, claiming that a director had not solved his problem as he wanted. Sometimes, the director of the department did not even hear that somebody had intervened, as he came directly to the *voivode*. The *voivode* started to solve these problems, and this complicated the issue – although not that much.

It seems that being influenced by different regional groups was causing *voivode* Ciszak to blur the division of responsibilities between the *voivode* and deputy *voivode* (as well as to intervene in how issues were dealt with by directors of departments). During Czech's tenure there had been a clear division of responsibilities between him and his deputy, and this was strictly adhered to. When *voivode* Ciszak arrived, he accepted the voivodship office structure prepared by his predecessor, and there were no changes even after Machnik's arrival. However, the structure was not adhered to. This was due to clientism, in addition to political division, the suggestion being made that there was no trust between the *voivode* and the deputy *voivode* as they represented different parties even though they were from the same ruling coalition.

The elite of *nomenklatura* origins considered politicisation as no different in the post-communist and the post-Solidarity periods, and that it was normal behaviour. Politicisation did not apply only in public administration – ministers or *voivodes* – but also took place in local government, when mayors were changed according to local election results. One of my interviewees believed that after 1989 political affiliation was not enough to outweigh the professional qualifications and abilities of appointees. However, he added that apolitical professionals could not be appointed as political affiliations were crucial, and that the *voivode*'s personnel policy was also under pressure.

Competence determines recruitment. However, someone who is extremely competent but does not belong to a certain party does not have any chance [to be recruited]. Only the person who is competent and who is from that political group has a chance, and this is how it works. In this sense, we can talk of the politicisation of public administration. That means that the *voivode*, after all, is under various kinds of pressure.

⁴³⁸ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 15 June 1994.

The main difference between the post-Solidarity period and post-communist politicisation, the same respondent believed, was the return of people who had been in power during the socialist period. During the socialist period, the current post-Solidarity elite was not, as in democratic countries, in opposition (not due to election results which reflected the wish of society), but it was persecuted before 1989 and their members were often in prison. Thus, the political division between persecutors and persecuted endured for a long time. The return to power of the post-communists was deeply-felt and sometimes raised moral doubts about whether they had the right to be in power. It is interesting that this sense of social stigma and isolation was emphasised by the elite of *nomenklatura* origins. As a member of the voivodship office elite stated:

Because of this [the situation in the eighties] 'we' were the opposition and 'they' were in power, 'we' were in prison while 'they' were in office and so on. I think this is a bad situation but understandable. It will end when this, or maybe the next generation matures and starts to rule the country.

This interviewee also pointed out that in democratic states it was accepted that any party, even the post-communists could win elections. Moreover, he explained that victory for left-wing parties was natural at times of rapid transition, causing the rise of poverty in society. The socialist ideology was, therefore, enjoying strong support. However, he also mentioned that the election victory of the left brought a return to power of those who had ruled during the socialist period, the *nomenklatura*, as the post-communists did not have sufficient new cadres.

These words also indicate that the political divisions were not caused only by differences of opinion about current economic and political issues, but that the historical experience of the socialist period was a significant factor. The ascendance to power of the post-communists was seen as being different from a victory of any other party because of their social associations with the *nomenklatura* cadres, and the socialist style of ruling, which meant that society was much more critical of them. In his opinion, only when a new cadre appears, after a decade or more, will those historic divisions no longer be important:⁴³⁹

⁴³⁹ This view described behaviour similar to that which was observable in the inter-war period, when differences between the Korfanty and Grażyński elite could be traced to the conflict during the Third Silesian Rising and the then-existing political divisions.

As a result of the situation in which a lot of people had become poor because of the transition, the left won. It is a fact that some positions were then taken by people who had previously been secretaries of the voivodship committee, which is rather shocking. This is a temporary situation as at the moment this is the only cadre the left has. In ten years' time this cadre will not exist. If the left after some time wins an election, then it will have totally different people. I believe the present situation has been exaggerated and that this generalisation is based on worry, but this is just a normal [provisional] situation.

e. Internal channel for appointments

Ciszak's rule was, in general, a continuation of Czech's personnel policy, as a majority of the directors of departments (13 out of 17) had been appointed by his predecessor and remained in office during his tenure.⁴⁴⁰ However, in the inner elite – the deputy *voivode* and director general – changes did take place, but they did not occur directly after Ciszak's appointment. Deputy *voivode* Wróbel remained for more than a year after Czech's dismissal, till 31 May 1995, and his dismissal occurred under pressure from the regional SLD. The situation was similar to a later event when the director general was changed at the time of Miller's purges of these positions in most voivodship offices. The dismissal of deputy *voivode* Wróbel at the end of May 1995 was preceded by changes in three high positions of the voivodship office: first, the director of privatisation (a crucial position in the voivodship office) was dismissed, albeit as a result of external administrative control by the Highest Supervision Chamber. The two others who were dismissed his spokesman and the director of cabinet positions, which seem to be natural changes after the appointment of a new *voivode*.

These rather limited changes of voivodship office elite seem to be related mostly to the lack of *voivode* Ciszak's own cadre. It also seems that Ciszak believed in the stability of administrative cadres – directors of departments and the deputy *voivode*. Thus, the changes of the voivodship office elite were mostly conducted as a result of the external pressure exerted by the regional political elite. The other reason explaining these limited changes of directors of departments was that there was an extremely limited number of available managerial personnel. At that time, work in the administration continued to be perceived as unattractive because of particularly poor salaries and very low prestige, according to the respondents. This could be the main reason for the limited number of dismissals and the domination of internal promotion within the voivodship office. One

⁴⁴⁰ Letter of *voivode* Ciszak to Editor, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 22 January 1997.

interviewee, when defining the main criteria for the appointment of directors, replied: 'negative, negative'. Thus, this last mentioned reason seems to be the main cause of the limited changes of administration, rather than *voivode* Ciszak's declared need for continuity of administrative personnel and the establishment of civil servant cadres.

The limited changes of the voivodship office elite were also caused by the fact that Ciszak knew that his position among the regional elite was extremely weak. Ciszak was not, for example, even consulted by the regional political elite about the appointment of his deputy. Moreover, he did not have the personality of *voivode* Czech and did not have the chance to attract professionals from outside the voivodship office, with one or two exceptions. The main exceptions were the politically highly influential positions of directors in the departments of the economy, and of privatisation where highly qualified newcomers entered the administration. In many other cases, the desire to remain professionals often meant the appointment of deputy directors to the position of directors.

The limited administrative changes to the voivodship office personnel and the appointment of former deputies to positions of directors, some of whom had worked in administration for several years (*nomenklatura* cadres), suggest a change of personnel policy. They represent a shift from the radical changes of the revolutionary period, when three quarters of directors were outsiders, to internal channels of appointments and personnel stabilisation. This has an important impact on the re-definition of administrative roles, with some return to the socialist period view of administration. However, it seems that policies shaped during Czech's tenure maintained quite a significant role because of the preservation of cadres appointed by him. It is also worth noting that in many countries – in Italy, for example – seniority is the main mechanism of recruitment for managerial posts in administration.⁴⁴¹

f. Delaying the appointment of directors of departments

The last feature of Ciszak's personnel policy to be examined is the delaying of the appointment of directors of departments. This was similar to Prime Minister Pawlak's

⁴⁴¹ Putnam, 1976.

policy, although it was less prominent in the voivodship office than in central administration due to Ciszak's efforts. However, the delay of appointments is a specific feature of the restoration period as the main cause was the political bargains within the coalition over the political spoils. The most striking example of these delays in appointments was evident in the formation of a few departments without the appointment of directors. As a result, in most of these new departments the directors were appointed to work in proxy and were only approved as directors after eight or nine months.⁴⁴² This indicates one more feature of restoration: a lack of vision of the future and thus the wish to preserve the state of being provisional, where nobody is responsible for his actions.

4.5 The dismissal of *voivode* Ciszak in November 1997

On 22 November 1997, as a result of the post-Solidarity victory (AWS and UW) in the October 1997 parliamentary election, *voivode* Ciszak was dismissed due to constitutional arrangements accepted in summer 1997 by the then-ruling PSL-SLD coalition with the support of the post-Solidarity Freedom Union. The Constitution recognised the position of *voivode* as political. This constitutional arrangement ended a prolonged period of uncertainty about the distinction between administrative and political positions, which was now finally defined. As a result, a change of power after parliamentary elections was to be accompanied by the compulsory tendering of resignations by *voivodes* and deputy *voivodes*.⁴⁴³

To sum up his tenure, *voivode* Ciszak expressed great self-satisfaction:

I would not like anybody to think that I am uncritical of myself but I do not feel any lack of self-fulfilment. It is only painful to me that economic processes are so slow.⁴⁴⁴

On the other hand, Ciszak's view of the change in the position of *voivode* differed from that of *voivode* Czech. For him, a shift in position after an election defined as political was a natural feature of democratic rule and he calmly accepted the handing over of

⁴⁴² Despite the fact that they had managerial and administrative experience, as they often worked as deputy directors.

⁴⁴³ Janicki, Władyka, *Polityka*, 11 October 1997.

⁴⁴⁴ Ciszak quoted in *Dziennik Zachodni*, 10 October 1997.

power to the former post-Solidarity opposition:

In my life I have served in many posts. I know well that there is a time for promotion and a time for dismissal. That should always be taken into account. That is the natural order.⁴⁴⁵

Conclusion

Ciszak's rule displays many features common to restoration. This is evident in his view of the role of the regional administration and the *voivode*. In contrast to Czech, he was satisfied with the preservation of heavy centralisation and with the *voivode*'s being a passive agent of central government. Moreover, Ciszak's tenure also meant the attempt of the coalmining elite to regain its prominence by delaying the heavy industry reforms. Finally, Ciszak adapted the socialist style of administrative rule, looking for political patronage in the region.

⁴⁴⁵ Ciszak quoted in *Dziennik Zachodni*, 10 October 1997.

CHAPTER 5

CAN 'WE THE PEOPLE' RULE IN UPPER SILESIA? THE TRANSFORMED LOCAL ADMINISTRATION, 1990-1997

Introduction

This chapter concentrates on the re-establishment of local government institutions and the arrival of the new local government elite of the Katowice voivodship. The description of local government focuses on four events: the 1990 and the 1994 local elections, the Pilot Programme and the establishment of the Big Towns. The local elections were crucial to the setting up of a new local elite and its stabilisation. The Pilot Programme and the establishment of the Big Towns represented a gradualist approach to further local government reform. Indeed, there were some evident retreats from the reform which were clearly reflected in the lower administrative performance of communes. All these events had a fundamental influence on the self-perception of the local elite their attitudes towards central administration, and their opinions on the necessity of further administrative reform.

5.1 'An administrative initiation' – the first democratic election

The local government elite in the Katowice voivodship presents itself as a strong and confident regional force. This confidence was drawn from its first success of highly effective administrative performance even though most of the councillors only started in this line of work following the 1990 election. The administrative initiation will be considered in relation to three significant features of this election; first, the decision of members of the regional Solidarity opposition to engage in public life and stand in the local government election in 1990 despite their lack of administrative experience; second, the plebiscite nature of this election, which was primarily a choice between the ruling *nomenklatura* and the Solidarity opposition; third, the clean-cut change of elite may be described as power being taken over by the new post-Solidarity elite. In

addition, a specific feature of the regional local government, its close ties with the Upper Silesian Union, will be underlined. Finally, economic data indicating its positive economic performance, especially when compared with public administration, will be presented. This is investigated because the local government elite's conviction of its effective administrative performance was one of the crucial factors influencing its self-perception, attitudes toward administration in general and attitudes towards further administrative reform.

i. Engagement in public life – political choice

Most of the local government elite in office at the end of the second term in 1998 started work in local government in 1990 after the May election. This was the pivotal event in the emergence of the new local government elite, with eight of the 13 mayors of the Katowice voivodship Big Towns being elected at that time: (Chorzów, Bytom, Dąbrowa Górniczna, Gliwice, Ruda Śląska, Rybnik, Świętochłowice and Zabrze).

This election was the first free election after 40 years of socialism, and from that moment local government broke free of its subordination to higher levels of public administration as communes gained financial and legal discretion. This essential freedom from subordination to a higher level of public administration was described by Urbańczyk, mayor of Zabrze since 1990, as a factor fundamentally transforming its functioning. Communes gained the freedom to choose on the spot what they thought was good for them. Consequently, local government has been crucial to the development of democracy as have been the inhabitants who selected councillors and participated in the decision-making process instead of fulfilling the wishes of the centre (*voivode*), as had until then been the case. In Urbańczyk's words:

This is a great power: one depends only on his conscience and on legal regulations. It is an unheard of thing that we can say 'no' to a *voivode*.

While we do not depend on the *voivode*, we do depend on the people who elected us... That means that we listen to the people.⁴⁴⁶

⁴⁴⁶ Urbańczyk, *Nasza Gazeta*, no. 2, 1996.

The local government elite, like their national counterparts, decided to engage in public life by standing for election. They recognised the political transition initiated by the Round Table Agreement and the national election in 1989 as historic events:

For me it was evident that in 1989 we faced a historic opportunity, the kind which appears in the history of nations only once in several hundred years, and that it would be a big sin not to use this opportunity.⁴⁴⁷

They decided to stand for election, despite the Polish tradition condemning this type of activity as being associated with collaboration with communists or, before that, with the authorities of the partitioning powers.⁴⁴⁸

Thus, the new local government elite, like the voivodship office elite and the national one, did not have any previous administrative experience. This situation reveals another interesting phenomenon in general society and among the Solidarity opposition and its leaders, that is, the poor knowledge they had about the administration, its institutions and how it functions. Until 1988-1989 Solidarity had limited its actions to being in opposition, not imagining the situation of taking power. The proposals for local government reform were prepared only by tiny groups of academics while the opposition definitely did not have any cadres prepared. Only in December 1988 was the first Citizens' Committee formed as the shadow cabinet and in April, two months before the June 1989 national election, regional Citizens' Committees were formed in preparation for the election.

Despite the fact that there was relatively more time to prepare for the local election in May 1990 as compared to the national one, my interviews confirmed that the decision to stand for this election was still rather a political choice. On the whole, the future town mayors regarded their decision to participate in the 1990 elections as their national duty and as the natural consequence of their political activity in the opposition movement against the communist authorities. They did not mention any other motive, although one can also suspect the desire to follow a professional administrative career as being at least part of the attraction. However, this was not the case as they did not have even a basic knowledge of how the administration functioned.

⁴⁴⁷ Balcerowicz quoted in Torńska 1994: 18.

⁴⁴⁸ Davies, 1984.

Thus, the arrival of the new regional (as well as central) elite was related to a sense of historic mission, as the events happening in Poland at that time were seen by the elite as extraordinary. Moreover, after forty years without any independent administrative institutions, the town mayor did not have a clear understanding of administrative functioning in general, or of local government in particular. The following three quotations from my interviews are highly typical:

I have not been connected with this type of activity before, as I would say that local government was, in general, not known here. I was slightly involved in politics through opposition activity, but not in local government.

The opinion below of another mayor shows a similar poor knowledge of administration and a striking similarity of career:

The political changes in the eighties, especially in 1989 and 1990, interested me then more as an engineer than as a politician. I read the Act on Local Government just after it was published. Although at that time it did not give too much knowledge, I entered the Citizens' Committees movement and became a member.

This lack of knowledge about administration was exacerbated by the traditional attitude of distrust towards state and its administration. For example, one of the mayors declared that during the socialist period he tried to distance himself even from contacts with the administrative institutions and did not know how the administration functioned, or why it existed at all:

I had never been in any administrative office. I do not even remember that I ever had any dealing with one, or that I ever knew how an [administrative] office functioned and here I was, a chief of Solidarity... And after the victory in the Contract Diet [in 1989], I heard about local government. Everybody was talking about local government...

Accordingly, as their main qualifications were the virtues of anti-socialism and national opposition, these had to substitute for the lack of specific administrative qualifications and experience.

ii. The plebiscite nature of this election

In general, mayors' decisions to stand in these elections were, according to my interviews, based on political participation in actions aimed at decreasing communist

power, which had started at central level with the national elections in 1989. This desire to remove *nomenklatura* was so strong that the issue of local politics was completely absent from the 1990 local elections:

The first election was a bit strange... As a group, we stood 'against' the left, against the authority which had ruled until then. We won in local government (and I, of course, was in this group among the local government candidates). In the case of town ... this was 95 per cent against the authorities then in power.

The quotation below is also a vivid illustration of the wish to vote against the long-resident ruling of communist authorities:

This was a plebiscite, not a local government election. Thus, the names were not important; only the political 'logos' [such as Solidarity or communist] counted.

This view of the 1990 elections as action against the ruling *nomenklatura* was shared by the post-communist mayor:

I was not here, as I mentioned. I was working out of the country in the diplomatic service. Nevertheless, it is not difficult to guess what this election was. It is difficult to call it an election, as in the whole of Poland this was, in principle, a plebiscite as there was a rejection of what had happened before 1990. It was, above all, tied to the hopes that things would be different, that they would be better.

To sum up, local government elections accordingly took the form of a plebiscite against the local *nomenklatura*, that ruled prior to the parliamentary election in 1989. In the Katowice voivodship, as in Poland as a whole, the Citizens' Committees won.

iii. The new post-Solidarity elite

The 1990 election totally broke the hold of the local *nomenklatura* elite, which was replaced by the Solidarity movement elite of inexperienced outsiders. For example, in Gliwice, 43 out of 50 seats were taken by the Citizens' Committees; in Ruda Śląska, the results were even more in favour of Solidarity as they took 43 out of the 45 seats.⁴⁴⁹

⁴⁴⁹ According to data presented in interviews.

In this respect, the election differed from those in more advanced democracies, where civil society is more developed and in local elections various political options and interests are presented. Indeed, by the time the next local elections were held in 1994, some elements of social diversification were seen in the appearance of various political parties and electoral committees.

The quotation below of one of my respondents emphasises another typical feature of the 1990 election – the difficulty of selecting able candidates due to the sudden political changes that started only in the aftermath of the Round Table negotiations. Thus, the lack of able candidates in the Citizens' Committees in the Katowice voivodship was typical of Poland as a whole.

In 1990, the Citizens' Committees, to which I belonged, were looking for candidates for councillors. At that time, this search was not easy and there were difficulties in finding people. When the lists were due to close they were still short of able people qualified for this type of work. Just as the lists were nearly closed my colleagues from the old Solidarity came to me and exerted such pressure that I agreed to stand in the local government election. I agreed only under pressure as they were short of people.

Szczepański and Nawrocki (1995) quote one of the councillors of Tychy to the effect that even in Big Towns there was enormous difficulty in forming independent teams of candidates for councillors:

It was total tragedy! Literally everybody was afraid. There was no other solution than to catch people in the streets and urge them to stand for the [towns] council if they more or less fulfilled the conditions... We tried to adopt the widest formula, to go as 'an umbrella party' and win.⁴⁵⁰

iv. The Upper Silesian Union mobilisation

Consequently, one political option, the Upper Silesian Union, which entered the Citizens' Committees movement with an appreciation of the importance of the local elections, proposed its own candidates and easily gained dominance in the voivodship.⁴⁵¹ Such strong domination by the regional association over the Citizens' Committees in a voivodship seems to be the exception. However, it is understandable, in the light of strong religious

⁴⁵⁰ Szczepański, Nawrocki 1995: 96.

⁴⁵¹ Błasiak, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 14-16 January 1994.

emphasis and the prominent role of the Catholic church in the Upper Silesian Union. Close links between the opposition and the Catholic church were also present in other voivodships, where members of the Clubs of Catholic Intelligentsia were on voivodship councils of the Citizens' Committees. In fact, in Przemyśl, a member of the Bishop's Curia was on the voivodship council.⁴⁵²

Mayors connected to the Upper Silesian Union shared with other Solidarity leaders an opposition past (compare the two quotations below). However, they also emphasised the need to engage in the public life of the region as their motivation for standing in local elections. This second argument seems to confirm a difference between the Polish partitions' territories. In the case of Prussian Poland, the introduction of democratic institutions came much earlier than in the other two partitions. The existence of this democratic tradition, as indicated in my interviews, led to the need to engage in the public life of the region and their towns. This was emphasised more often and more strongly by members of the Upper Silesian Union (or native Silesians). In other words, as regards motivation to stand for election, in the majority of interviews with Upper Silesian Union members, the fact that they belonged to the Solidarity opposition and regional concerns were underlined as equally important.

When in 1990 Solidarity won in Poland we thought about this with our close acquaintances [Silesians] and I decided to run for local government in the election. I was chosen to be on the council...

The other Silesian I interviewed also strongly emphasised the need to participate in the public life of the region and his town:

Officially, I started to participate in local government in 1990. I became a councillor and from the beginning I participated in organising self-government administration. Before [during socialist period], the only way for me to express activity, to participate in the public life of the region, which could be in neither political nor economic organisations, was in tourist organisations, some cultural associations or in the Upper Silesian Union. In any case, it was not political activity, since politics, as an activity [in which I would to be involved] was against the official policy of the state and could not be carried on.

Activity, in accordance with state policy, was, for me and many other people, alien. So those who did not want to be persuaded by an ideology alien to us [society] could stay at home and do nothing or act in areas where the state did not exert such strong pressure. Thus, I was active in the Polish Association of Tourism and Hiking, in professional organisations like the Associations of Engineers and Technicians of the Chemical Industry and so on. In areas such as these, people found a place under the former system for public activity.

⁴⁵² Rykowki 1993: 15.

Mayors connected with the Upper Silesian Union also emphasised that their decisions to stand in the elections were in reaction to the social passivity forced on them during the socialist period by the monopolisation of public life by the *nomenklatura*. Under socialism, they mentioned that they had very sharply experienced the fact that they were forbidden to engage in the public life of the region. This was also strengthened by their view of Upper Silesia as being ruled by an alien during the socialist period.

In the former system there was a stereotype of what was required of a citizen of the Polish State, which was that he would grant infinite trust to the Polish United Working Party. He would work scrupulously in his place of work and not worry about anything. All issues would be solved by a town council and a party committee established in each town....

In 1990 we came to power with the belief that local government is a representative of local community in the area where the members of the community live and that this community was to decide about itself.

The pace of change in the aftermath of the first parliamentary election in 1989 and then in 1990 led to the election on the national and regional level of the Solidarity movement elite, who had hardly any administrative qualification or training. This illustrates the quotation below from the Pańków article representing a quite typical opinion of a member of parliament (a member of the national elite) about the lack of professional experience which was to be a common feature of the elite of the transitional period:

As politicians we are still very unprofessional, as this is a typical quasi-revolutionary period when careers are quickly formed.⁴⁵³

According to Pokładecki (1995: 74), the first local election concentrated on the removal of the old system, which led to the accidental membership of various political groups in the communes. Many of the councillors elected in 1990 recollected that when they came to office they had neither any experience nor comprehensive knowledge of local government or of work in the administration. As a result, one third of them declared themselves to be incompetent while 61.9 per cent declared that they had a lot to learn.⁴⁵⁴ The local government elite of the Katowice voivodship also declared during my interviews their lack of professional qualifications and need to learn 'on the job'. As one mayor stated:

⁴⁵³ Pańków 1994: 164.

⁴⁵⁴ Pokładecki, 1995.

In relation to our knowledge about the functioning of communes, when we were elected we started to learn in the same way as one can say doctors learn how to operate only on the living bodies of their patients. None of the councillors elected in 1989 had any experience in this area. Moreover, I reckon that our experience was the ideas which we had earlier espoused [when we were in opposition].

As a result, the mayors learned only after the local elections. Only one person was an exception, as he had been on an apprenticeship abroad, organised before this election; this was a result of his own initiative. The remaining councillors elected at that time learned after the election, 'on the job', and on state-organised courses, such as, for example, 'Wings for Democracy', with the co-operation of foreign specialists.

The specific town in question was Zabrze, where administrative stability was preserved after the 1990 election. The last communist mayor retained his position for a year after the election, to facilitate the handing over of power to the Solidarity mayor who was also a member of the Upper Silesian Union, despite the fact that either of these organisations could have proposed their own candidate from the beginning.

The last council [in the period 1990-1994] was able to achieve such a decided majority that this made possible one of the most efficient and stable rules in Zabrze. For the first year, the former mayor was again chosen by the town council; later he was dismissed and another mayor was chosen. The plan was not to destroy everything in the beginning, not to introduce everything from the beginning, so the former mayor, who was an appointed mayor [the mayor before the 1990 election – a *nomenklatura* mayor], was retained. But it should be acknowledged that he worked very well for the benefit of Zabrze. He was a real local government activist, but he could not have acted differently before [during the socialist period]. Although he was dismissed after a year, he looked back on his last year as the time of his best work because there were no [intervention] phone-calls from the party, from the town or the voivodship committees.

In other towns, the first term was more turbulent, with one mayor recollecting that the board changed twice. Changes were not caused, according to him, due to rational arguments but were tied to the strong distrust which developed during the time in opposition, and they turned against their own former Solidarity leaders:

Those first years of local government were very turbulent. Twice during the first term the board was changed and what happened in the 'X' local government was heard about in all Silesia. That was a pity; it was very uncomfortable in general. All the participants in these events have bad memories of this term. The board was certainly pure Solidarity; the mayor and the only deputy were symbols of underground Solidarity. He [the mayor] was dismissed in unacceptable circumstances.

Many mayors who were in office during my interviews were appointed after about nearly a year of work in local government (after they had shown their skill) and they remained in these positions for a long time, through the second local election. Nearly half the existing mayors were appointed during the first term (1990-1994); those in Chorzów, Gliwice, Rybnik, Świętochłowice and Zabrze. Moreover, in Bytom, Dąbrowa Górnicza and Katowice, the existing mayors had been deputy mayors during the first term. In 1994, in recognition of their success during the first term, they were chosen for the second term (1994-1998). This indicates that although standing for the position of councillors was often casual, during the first term a crystallisation of the local government elite was already taking place and the majority of the first term's leaders remained in power in the second term.

v. Economic performance

Despite the lack of administrative experience on the part of the local government elite in Poland as a whole, it has demonstrated high efficiency since the beginning of the nineties. This economic efficiency of local government was achieved despite the very limited financial resources which were available during that period.

Since 1990 – the beginning of the transition – local governments were suddenly burdened with the new task of renewing the local infrastructure. At the same time, the economic conditions of society worsened while the expectation of social assistance rose. The worsening of the financial conditions of society was primarily related to the first bankruptcies in the industrial sector and the appearance of unemployment for the first time since the Second World War. Moreover, this transition liquidated the best sources of budgetary income which had previously come from state-owned industries. As a result, new sources of revenue had to be found by both central and local administrations. According to Surazaka (1993), local government seemed to adapt better to new conditions and the financial performance of local government was significantly better than the economic improvements achieved by the central government.

The balance of the central budget by Mazowiecki's government in 1990 was, to a large extent, achieved by transferring the deficit from the central government to the

communes by means of transferring additional responsibilities to the local level (some health and educational services). In 1991, the first year of independent local budgets, despite an 11 per cent drop in subsidies, the communes preserved an economic balance and often achieved a financial surplus.

Table 7. Dynamics of local and central budgets in Poland, 1991⁴⁵⁵

	Revenues Minus Expenditures	
	Central Budget	Local Budget
First quarter	- 6.127	3.555
Second quarter	-13.150	5.811
Third quarter	-22.377	6.426
Fourth quarter	-30.973	5.244

A large proportion of local expenditure was also spent on investment – 25 per cent more than planned by the central budget. Moreover, the proportion of subsidies which went from local budgets to the areas of education and culture exceeded central subsidies. Most local investment concentrated on improving the infrastructure and the construction of housing.

5.2 Stabilisation of the second term, 1994-1998

On 19 June 1994 the second local election took place. This election and the second term of local government will be investigated in three main areas: First, the shift from the bifurcated political division of 1990 to a gradual consolidation of political parties in town councils will be considered. Second, the role of local associations, among them the Upper Silesian Union, in contrast to national parties, will be analysed. The issue of why the national political parties were quite isolated and at the same time such associations as the Upper Silesian Union were able to gather much stronger followings are particularly interesting. Third, the reappearance of electoral divisions in the voivodship, with the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship dominated by the post-communist party, will

⁴⁵⁵ Surażka 1993: 94.

be examined. This will be contrasted with the Upper Silesian part, where the post-Solidarity elite with its strong emphasis on Christian values (closely tied to the Upper Silesian Union) remained in power after the 1994 election.

i. Gradual consolidation of political parties

The 1994 local election was marked by the relative continuity of the elite as five mayors retained office while three deputy mayors from the first term became mayors. Despite this certain continuity, the second election of 1994 and the second term (1994-1998) already varied in political terms as intensive changes had taken place since the administrative initiation in the first 1990 election and 1990-1994 term.

After the first 1990 election, the mayors widely declared themselves to be tied to Solidarity ideas (Citizens' Committees), but the 1994 election had a much stronger political character. The mayors either had clear political sympathies or they were already members of certain parties or associations, with the exception to some extent of the three 'contract mayors' who wanted to be seen principally as managers rather than politicians.

Comparing the first and the second term of local government, the mayors emphasised that during the first term there were divisions within town councils but these were not subordinate to party agendas. Although councillors had various political options (liberal or more socialist), they were united by their common Solidarity origins, and the town council resembled one umbrella party:

This [political situation in relation to party divisions] changed fundamentally, as until 1994 people who it is difficult to call right-or left-wing ruled. They were a Solidarity team, Citizens' Committees committed to the ideas of Solidarity...

Needless to say, there were also socialists [among the members of Solidarity] but even they [the political divisions] were definitely not expressed then as political party slogans but was, rather, the discussion was a meritocratic about how to help the have-nots [so the division went according to their beliefs and not party membership]. The whole group which won the election had Solidarity origins, so there were no internal divisions, only divisions according to someone's merits, or personal good or bad will towards 'Mr Smith' with someone else. There were terrible quarrels but no political divisions.

Another mayor also noted the difference between the 1990 'extraordinary politics election' and 1994, when political crystallisation was apparent.

On the other hand, in 1994, the situation was different. Certain political groups consolidated and the social mood changed as there had been a few quite normal years. As a result, a normal political campaign started, as there was not just one electoral driving force such as the Citizens' Committees had been before.

This political consolidation went at different speeds in the Katowice voivodship towns. In the first group during the second election relatively advanced political consolidation had already appeared. This was despite the process having only started at the turn of 1989-1990, when the post-Solidarity movement began to be formed. Moreover, at the time of the research, the national post-Solidarity movement was going through the initial stage of political fragmentation as it was divided into numerous, relatively small political parties whose programmes sometimes resembled catch-all platforms.⁴⁵⁶ Most were created by the national leaders from the top down and usually had poor political support in the region. At the same time, the communist party was transformed into the SdRP and consolidation of the post-communist side went relatively quickly. In 1991, the SdRP and leftist organisations formed the SLD bloc.

In towns where political consolidation was nearly complete, councillors were members of national parties and often planned to stand for the next parliamentary election, although this occurred in only a few towns. In these towns, as one of the mayors, (quoted below) judged, national politics took precedence over the economy, and national issues over local ones:

One third of our councillors... have political ambitions. They want to stand for the next election to parliament. It [the council]. is very politicised. Is this good or bad? We are at the beginning of the road, and sometimes it is ridiculous when political arguments dominate over economic ones. It is sometimes like this.

In 1994 we came to absolute political divisions... On the one hand, this is good, as the political scene is more visible, and on the other hand, it is bad, as, in my opinion, what should dominate in communes is local thinking. It should concentrate on issues to be solved here and, let's us say, not the presenting of a political agenda as happens in the *Sejm*, where political opinions are perhaps more important or where they decide what the next economic solution will be. Here, this is rather secondary; economic issues are central here.

⁴⁵⁶ Polish sociologists argued that political fragmentation was a natural reflection of fragmentation of social structure as a result of radical social changes after the end of socialism, when new social groups were not yet developed.

ii. Local associations, among them the Upper Silesian Union, versus national parties

In the second, much larger group of towns, the process of consolidation began and divisions on the right and left were clearly distinguishable though party membership was limited. In these towns there were SLD party candidates. However, the right option was concentrated around regional associations like the Upper Silesian Union or local organisations representing town boroughs like Halemba, or Kłodnica, rather than belonging formally to right-wing political parties.

It is likely that this process of the slower consolidation of national parties was more characteristic of the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship, where two additional factors influenced their slow appearance. First, there was the strong impact of the Upper Silesian Union, emphasising local and regional interests over national ones, especially in those towns where traditional native districts had been preserved. At the same time, the national parties concentrated on national politics and did not have local or regional agendas.

Moreover, according to the mayors of these towns, it was also related to the taste of the voters, especially the blue-collar workers, who dominated there. They did not accept party membership due to its association with the communist party.⁴⁵⁷ One of the mayors of the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship mentioned that this was the case in his town where both features appeared: the strong role of the Upper Silesian Union, and the marginal role of political parties.

On the other hand, in 1994 it was a bit different as the people again united in various associations. There are no political parties with the exception of the SdRP and a single member of the KPN; other parties do not exist here. Ordinary people do not want to join parties and they do not even like them. They prefer to judge people individually, but voters do usually recognise which associations they [the candidates] represent, as here people more often act in associations. For example, recently, the X Land [unit] of the Upper Silesian Union was formed.

Despite the fact that in some Upper Silesian towns, mayors emphasised that the 1994 election was still an election on individual rather than on party lines, other mayors suggested voting for individuals was impossible in the Big Towns as people did not

⁴⁵⁷ This attitude also illustrates the actions of leaders of the national post-Solidarity parties who consciously avoided the word 'party' in their names (the Freedom Union, the Labour Union, the Centre Coalition, and so on).

know each other. The exception in voting for individuals was when the person was known for his work during the first term; for example, the former mayor.

However, party membership also played a role as people voted against members of political parties; in other words, they made negative selection. This was evident in the case of the SLD members in the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship. They voted for associations, among them the Upper Silesia Union. Thus, the USU played the same role as parties did in other countries, as its membership was defining the political and regional attitudes of candidates for councillors. Thus, the opinion that people voted for individuals is not correct even though there were few party members in the council. The quotation above also emphasises that for many Silesians during the second election the regional origins of candidates were the main factor deciding for whom they voted. Otter, the USU leader, was proud of the fact that in the 1994 elections, 150 positions out of 2,384 were taken by members of the Union, compared to 147 in the first term.⁴⁵⁸

In the other town, the mayor similarly recollected that party membership was disliked (by both town inhabitants and councillors). However, he mentioned that the distinction of right, left and centre was evident in his town:

In relation to the second election, politics had some influence as political groupings took place and councillors defined themselves as left, right or centre. At the moment, the council is clearly divided between those more to the right, and those to the left and the third group more neutral, who are at the centre. The first group to the right has the majority. This together with the centre clearly hold two thirds of the council, so it is obvious that I have my roots and sympathies with the right group. I sympathise with the right but I am not a party member and in the council there are no party members. In general, party members did not enter the council, with one or two exceptions.

The election in this town also suggested that despite the fact that there was a lack of membership of national parties, pre-electoral associations seemed to a large extent to define councillors' sympathies to the right or left wing.

These election results, which showed the relatively weak role of national political parties, especially in the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship, were also due to the weak regional policies of the strongly centralised national parties. This lack of regional policies on the part of the national parties, in addition to their formation from the top

⁴⁵⁸ *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 29 September 1994.

down, was also, according to Surazka (1993), a result of their organisational administrative structure. It was due to the fact that a voivodship assembly was weak. It had only a consultative role in relation to a *voivode*. A *voivode* could, but did not have to, consider its opinions. Moreover, it was indirectly elected from among the representatives of communes from a voivodship territory. Thus, there was no direct political representation at the regional level. The assembly's merely consultative role also did not promote co-operation between the political parties to create a coherent regional policy. As a result, political parties concentrated on national policy and, to a smaller extent, on problems of local communes, but there was no regional policy at all.

This lack of regional policies on the part of the national parties seems to be related to the fact that in many towns there was no connection between a career in the regional elite and promotion to the central elite. This had a major impact on the local government elite open criticism and actions against the central elite. This was especially so as they thought that the regional and district administrative reform, which they saw as urgent, was slowed down for political reasons.⁴⁵⁹ This opposition relationship between the regional and the central elite contrasted with the situation in other countries: for example, the Scandinavian countries. There, administrative apprenticeship in local government was a traditional stage on the way to the central elite.⁴⁶⁰

According to Bennett (1994), regional tensions are strongly related to the territorial policies of the state, which are strengthened by factors such as the following:

1. The representation of local interests in the central state is weak.
2. The participation of local individuals and elites in central administrative decision-making is weak.
3. The extent of the local decentralised administration is weak.
4. Regional issues are more specially differentiated from the objectives of central government.
5. The economic and political activities of the central state are more dominant.

This description concurs with the critical view of the local government elite in the Katowice voivodship in relation to the central elite, especially in course of the Pilot Programme and during the 'Big Towns' period.⁴⁶¹

⁴⁵⁹ Compare with the section on the Pilot Programme.

⁴⁶⁰ Osiński 1995.

⁴⁶¹ Presented in the next sections of this chapter.

iii. Dąbrowa part of the voivodship, dominated by the post-communist party

The third tendency observable during the 1994 election was the radical shift towards the left which took place in the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship (where support for the post-communist national SLD party was visible). At the same time, in the Upper Silesia part of the voivodship, the SLD had only 13 seats in the 50-member council of Katowice. In other towns, such as Ruda Śląska and Rybnik, membership of the councils was only marginal, as in Ruda they took three seats out of 45 and in Rybnik four out of 45. This thesis concentrates on the Big Towns, since thorough investigation of the Upper Silesian and Dąbrowa political division would go beyond the scope of this work. However, this political division in the voivodship was also suggested by the result of the presidential election. Kwaśniewski won in Dąbrowa where around 70 per cent of the electorate voted for him. On the other Upper Silesian side of the voivodship Wałęsa won.⁴⁶²

In the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship, a tendency to isolate the SLD appeared. Grossner states that in Katowice it had been decided not to give any position on the board to the SLD's councillors.⁴⁶³ Similarly, in Zabrze, although the SLD came second in the election, the associations of Christians, the so-called 'Association of Catholic Families', the Freedom Union and the Upper Silesian Union formed a coalition, which preserved relatively stable rule.

This tendency to support left-wing (post-communist) parties in the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship was explained by the blue-collar character of the towns, with their big heavy-industry plants and domination by blue-collar workers. However, in the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship there were some similar towns, so this factor alone did not explain this left-wing sympathy. Among other factors, the lower living conditions in the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship compared to those in Upper Silesia were also important. The economic and social divisions became even more evident during the transition, as seen in the difference in the level of unemployment in the two parts of the voivodship. In the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship, in Katowice, unemployment in 1996 was 3.4 per cent while in Dąbrowa Górnicza it was 10.2 per cent⁴⁶⁴ (despite the fact that these towns were located less than thirty minutes apart by bus!) The mayor of

⁴⁶² Dziadul, *Śląsk* no.4 1996.

⁴⁶³ Grossner, *Dziennik Śląski*, 5 July 1994.

⁴⁶⁴ *Województwo katowickie 1996. Raport o rozwoju społecznym.*

Sosnowiec, Czarski, emphasised, with regard to this left-wing tendency in the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship, the improvement of economic and social conditions during the socialist period:

In the perception of many people, this region received economic and cultural advancement under the PRL [Polish People's Republic 1945-1989].⁴⁶⁵

5.3 The Pilot Programme 1994-1996

i. The aim of the Pilot Programme

In 1993, Suchocka's government initiated the next stage of 'bottom up' administrative reform. They assumed that after four years of existence, the communes were substantially strengthened by their administrative experience and it was possible to introduce radical reform of district and regions. After the formation of communes in 1990, the districts were to be the second level of local government with the formation a few big regions to follow later. Finally, as the third stage after the completion of territorial reform (districts and regions), the central level of administration reform was to be carried out, ending the vertical fragmentation of central administration.

Suchocka's district reform was to be initiated in the Big Towns⁴⁶⁶ with the so-called Pilot Programme. The Big Towns were the first to receive new responsibilities which in the future would be prescribed to town-districts. It was assumed that their institutional structure would adapt most easily to taking over these new responsibilities. Thus, the 46 of Poland's Big Towns which had volunteered were to receive new (future district) responsibilities in such important areas as: health, social assistance and education.

⁴⁶⁵ Czarski, quoted in *Dziadul Śląsk* no. 4, 1996: 13.

⁴⁶⁶ Big Towns were defined as those with populations over 100,000. Out of 44 Polish towns, 42 volunteered to take part in the project. Furthermore, towns with populations close to that number were added; one was located in the Gdańsk agglomeration and three others in the Katowice agglomeration: Mysłowice, Siemianowice and Świętochłowice. An additional programme was to be prepared separately for Warsaw.

According to Dziewior,⁴⁶⁷ the Pilot Programme was the largest decentralisation programme of its kind, affecting a quarter of all Polish citizens. The aim of the Pilot Programme was to increase the responsibilities of the Big Towns and thereby decentralise administrative power, heavily concentrated at the central level during the forty years of socialism. At the same time, it was to streamline the administrative structure by the creation of a clear division of responsibilities between public administration and self-governing administrative institutions (communes, districts and later, regions). Up to this time, administrative responsibilities had been dispersed and overlapped among numerous central ministries, which had led to further fragmentation and blurring of responsibility. This vertical fragmentation of administrative power was repeated at both regional and local levels. There, in addition to voivodship and local (general) administration offices, numerous so-called special administrations were also active. The special administrations' activity was limited to narrow areas while the perspective of national or regional interests was often lost. As a result of the Pilot Programme, some of these responsibilities were to be taken over by the Big Towns, which were to unite in their office many of the functions which had until then been scattered.

The taking over of additional responsibilities by these towns was, in the opinion of their authorities, crucial because, until then, their responsibilities were quite limited and tailored for the smallest communes. This was despite evident opportunity for those towns to perform a wider range of duties.⁴⁶⁸ Moreover, such narrow definition of their powers substantially hindered towns' performance even in relation to those duties ascribed to them due to heavy dependence on various special administration units directly subordinate to ministries.

This ability to perform additional duties indicates the fact that, during the interviews, the mayors recollected that even before the Pilot Programme started in 1994, some of the largest Upper Silesian towns had already increased some of their responsibilities. Since 1991, by agreement of town mayors with the *voivode* (renewed annually), the *voivode* delegated public administration tasks to local government as these tasks were closely

⁴⁶⁷ *Sejmik Samorządowy*, January 1995.

⁴⁶⁸ Dziewior, mayor of Katowice, in *Sejmik Samorządowy*, January 1995.

related to the functioning of these towns. However, the Pilot Programme was to delegate permanently a whole set of responsibilities.

ii. The drawback of the administrative reform undertaken by Pawlak's government

After the unexpected shift of power from post-Solidarity to post-communist governments as a result of the autumn 1993 election, all administrative reforms were suspended. The coalition government (The Peasant Party – PSL and post-communist – SLD) headed by Pawlak (PSL) had different views of the administrative reform initiated by the previous post-Solidarity governments, among them the most advanced project of the Pilot Programme.

The majority of the Peasant Party voters came from villages and small towns and therefore Pawlak's government saw the proposed reform as politically dangerous. The government assumed that the amalgamation of voivodships and the formation of a few big powerful regional administrative units would weaken the administrative and economic position of small towns and ultimately reduce their prestige (compare the similar motivation of Gierek's reform).⁴⁶⁹

After a temporary stoppage of the Pilot Programme for more than a month, local government pressure forced Prime Minister Pawlak to rescue the programme, although the number of tasks prescribed to communes was reduced.⁴⁷⁰ The new government's efforts to curtail the administrative reform were also seen in the substantial reduction of funds to finance the Pilot Programme. The 14.3 billion złoty which Suchocka had proposed was decreased to 8.3 billion złoty. Moreover, they were to be allocated in the form of earmarked funds sent separately from each ministry instead of the subsidies planned by Suchocka's government, which would have enabled the communes, rather than the ministries to decide how to divide the money. Finally, Suchocka's government had planned to limit the Pilot Programme to just one year, and if it proved successful, to replace it with the next stage, district reform. Instead, what actually happened was that the Pilot Programme alone was continued by the new government until 1996.

⁴⁶⁹ Rolicki, 1990. b.

⁴⁷⁰ Barański 1995.

Among the 46 towns selected for the Pilot Programme, a large percentage – 14 towns – were located in the Katowice voivodship: Bytom, Chorzów, Dąbrowa Górnicza, Gliwice, Katowice, Jastrzębie, Mysłowice, Ruda Śląska, Rybnik, Siemianowice, Sosnowiec, Świętochłowice, Tychy and Zabrze. However, after the shift of power to the Pawlak government, three of the 46 towns declaring a wish to participate in the Pilot Programme withdrew. In the Katowice voivodship, Chorzów and Sosnowiec withdrew (before the start).

iii. The local government response: the motivation to participate or withdraw from the programme

The main motive declared by town mayors in press interviews for their participation in the Pilot Programme was that it would substantially improve the quality of public services by integrating them. Big Towns would take over administrative services which had, until then, been divided among various administrative units. Furthermore, the services taken over by the towns were also to bring financial savings as integration was to make their performance more economical. For example, the mayor of Ruda Śląska, Zygmunt Żymełka, declared:

The communes rule better even if their revenue is not very great.⁴⁷¹

Śmiałek, mayor of Katowice, 1990-1994, emphasised another advantage, that is the improvement of services which would be noticed by town inhabitants:

We decided to go for it, as the Pilot Programme was to bring evident benefits to the inhabitants of Katowice. A lot of issues which were dealt with by various offices are now to be governed by us such as secondary schools and health service centres. It is certain that the inhabitants of our town will gain from the fact that we provide these services.⁴⁷²

Śmiałek believed that the reform would bring about an increase in administrative efficiency and the inhabitants would have more influence over the aims of local development. The local government elite also often emphasised that local government services had primacy as elective councils (local administration) were more democratic,

⁴⁷¹ Żymełka quoted in Tylec, *Dziennik Śląski*, 26 January 1994.

⁴⁷² Śmiałek quoted in *Trybuna Śląska* 3 March 1994.

in that they reflected public wishes, than public administration where decisions were taken by appointed civil servants. Zaguła, mayor of Dąbrowa Górnicza 1990-1997, emphasised even more strongly that local government could develop civil society by teaching the local population that they had influence over local administration actions. This, in consequence, would lead to greater engagement in public life, to development of civil society and, at the same time, to a change in the negative attitude towards administration:

The main idea of the Pilot Programme was that we, as heads of the town, had to be responsible for what was happening here. An inhabitant is not interested in the fact that in certain areas the commune can do nothing as that is the responsibility of the *voivode*. He votes and the town council is elected which in turn chooses a mayor. After that, the inhabitant expects them [the council] to solve problems. Sending a client to a *voivode* or to another manager is a mistake. The Pilot Programme was to correct this and in many cases it did. We do not teach society in any other way than by example... The Pilot Programme was our reaction, indicating that we wanted to influence the shaping of social behaviour [in public life].⁴⁷³

On the other hand, care of the town's interests and protection of its inhabitants were presented by Kopel, the mayor of Chorzów, as an argument for the town council's decision to resign from the Pilot Programme after the change of government in 1993:

It was our sense of responsibility. We... treat our duties seriously in relation to the Pilot Programme. However, when a partner representing the voivodship office in Katowice presented to the communes the new financing conditions for negotiations [delegated tasks], we recognised that we would have to add substantial sums to the Pilot Programme, at the expense of other communal investments, and so we withdrew from the Programme.

It cannot be that certain tasks are delegated without allocating relevant funding for their realisation. That is what discredited the central state policy.⁴⁷⁴

Sosnowiec was the second town in the Katowice voivodship to withdraw from the programme. The town councillors interpreted the decision to stay in the programme as 'financial suicide' for 'political rationale', and thus the town board voted against entering the programme⁴⁷⁵ and the mayor of Sosnowiec, Kleszcz, declared:

Taking over the schools would be good for the town if there were money with which they could all be maintained. I support the Pilot Programme with my heart but I cannot with my pocket.⁴⁷⁶

⁴⁷³ Zaguła, *Wspólnota*, no. 29, 1995.

⁴⁷⁴ Kopel quoted in *Wspólny Chorzów*, October 1995.

⁴⁷⁵ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 5 January 1994.

⁴⁷⁶ Kleszcz quoted in *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 4 January 1994.

Kopel described the decision of other towns to participate in the Pilot Programme and to take on additional responsibilities as, above all, political:

The towns are politically engaged in the process of state decentralisation... It happens that the state authorities represent the left option while local government represents the right.⁴⁷⁷

According to Barański (1995: 95), the financial difficulties of the Big Towns were twofold. The first was the objective worsening of the public finances from which the Pilot Programme was financed. The second was definitely political in that Pawlak's government wanted to delay the district and regional administrative reform.

Towns embarked on the Pilot Programme for the political reason that it would enlarge the town's responsibilities, despite the fact that from the beginning they knew that there would be high financial costs to pay. They knew that they would have to add from their own revenues for the tasks delegated by government, as the government had lowered the quotas which the communes were to receive. For example, the government did not take into account the number of personnel employed in institutions such as schools, hospitals and libraries, taken over by the towns. Quotas for the salaries of their personnel were lowered while the cost of rebuilding and refurbishing those institutions was not considered at all.⁴⁷⁸ According to Barański (1995: 99), towns participating in the programme had to supplement all the Pilot Programme tasks from their own revenues. The highest sums of money required to be added were for the health service, the maintenance of the communal infrastructure, and the running of cultural institutions. As a result, Starkowska⁴⁷⁹ estimates that the Pilot Towns added 42 per cent from their own revenues to the grants which they received from the state budget.

iv. Local government versus central government

The political decision of central government to slow down the Pilot Programme and consequently to put off the whole administrative reform caused local government authorities to declare their opposition to the central government. Thus, the local elite publicly criticised central government for not providing sufficient revenue (even some

⁴⁷⁷ Kopel quoted in Karawat, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 12 January 1994.

⁴⁷⁸ Koral, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 August 1994.

⁴⁷⁹ Starkowska *Wspólnota*, no. 10, 1995.

voivodes agreed publicly with this, despite being representatives of central government!⁴⁸⁰). The local government elite also criticised the political character of their decisions. They showed little respect for the central government's actions as they did not believe it treated local government fairly. However, what was even more important was that they also did not believe that the central government's policy preserved the most basic interests of the state but believed rather, that it was driven by narrow political pursuit. This was often mentioned in the interviews I conducted as well as in press interviews:

We felt cheated. We do not see any logic or concern for the state [by central government] in it.⁴⁸¹

Moreover, Makosz, mayor of Rybnik, specifically criticised central government and its policy towards local government, and especially the Pilot Programme:

The slowing down of the Pilot Programme by Pawlak's government is a big deception... The Pilot Programme was good and it should not be hindered just because it was initiated by Suchocka's government. This country does not have time for such seesawing. We are suffocated by the extent of our external and internal debts. This is a criminal matter, that actions which are necessary are not taken because they are not in the interest of a particular group. This is painful for everybody who is engaged in the reform. We know that a commune is a good thing but it is too little. Districts are needed, while mergers of voivodships and the formation of big regions are also necessary. We went into the Pilot Programme with all our energy and heart. However, calculations [on allocations of funds] are the best measure to show if the game was honest [if central government gave enough].⁴⁸²

The radical criticism of central government was shared by nearly the whole local government elite. The opinion expressed below by Urabańczyk, mayor of Zabrze, also indicates an extremely strong conviction that central government was not fulfilling basic state duties, as it did not maintain even basic conditions for local government to perform its duties effectively:

In the Pilot Programme we took responsibility for all the schools, which we were allowed to take, and we did not give back anything, although logically, all should have been returned as the state was making complete idiots of us. It was laughing at local government. A year ago, Gliwice did not stand for [central government actions], and gave up some of the pilot tasks as they could not accept the way they were treated by central government.

⁴⁸⁰ Koral, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 26 August 1994.

⁴⁸¹ Makosz, quoted in *Nowiny*, [Rybnik], 23 November 1994.

⁴⁸² Makosz, quoted in *Wspólnota*, no. 29, 1995.

We hoped, however, and after many discussions with the board and the whole council ... we decided to put our own money into those tasks in the interim. We had a consensus for this. We have hope that we will be able to wait till normal times come.

At the moment we are not in normal times. We are in a time of semi-reform, where there is no conception of the state, when the state budget takes too much and then it collapses.⁴⁸³

The criticism of the local government elite was expressed not in the language of democratic compromise, as could be expected after the political transition in 1989 towards democracy. Instead, it maintained the language of confrontation and combat typical of the opposition under socialism, even though the system itself had changed. A similar language of opposition and confrontation with central government was evident in the statements of *voivode* Czech.⁴⁸⁴ His interviews indicate that he had been in opposition from the beginning of his rule, so he applied this combative language not just to the post-communist governments after 1993 (although after that date it was significantly intensified). Instead, he criticised all governments since 1989 for maintenance of administrative centralism and vertical fragmentation. Moreover, the voivodship office elite was also critical of the central government's presenting itself as the advocate of the region's interests.⁴⁸⁵

This opposition by the regional administrative elite could, to some extent, be explained by its tradition, rooted in the socialist period, of being in opposition. As a result, even when they came to power, they still maintained these attitudes and criticised the central elite for acting against them. However, the main reason was that the interests of the national and regional elites continued to be seen as completely contradictory after 1990.⁴⁸⁶ This was related to the preservation by the central elite of the highly centralised and ineffective administrative structure of the state.

Opposition to the central government by local government was so strong that it was independent of the party political choice of local government councillors, in the opinion of Frankiewicz, mayor of Gliwice.⁴⁸⁷ For example, the board of the town as a whole, independent of councillors' membership of political parties, was in favour of taking part in the Pilot Programme (and decentralisation).

⁴⁸³ Urabańczyk, *Nasza Gazeta*, no. 2, 1996.

⁴⁸⁴ See chapter three.

⁴⁸⁵ Compare, for example, their opinions before signing the Regional Contract.

⁴⁸⁶ Compare Bennett's reasons for regional tension, page 244.

⁴⁸⁷ Frankiewicz *Wspólnota*, no. 31, 1995.

This strong centralisation of the state and the underprivileged situation of the communes in relation to central government meant that the opposition of the local government elite was not limited to Upper Silesia. This is suggested in many press interviews and common actions of the Pilot Programme Towns against central government. Opposition to central government was also strengthened by local government's belief that they were more efficient than the public administration. Furthermore, the local government elected officials saw themselves as the real advocates of systemic reforms, caring not only about local, but also about national interests, whereas the post-communist governments were fighting to preserve the highly-centralised and sectoral structure of administration.

The interviews I conducted and public press statements suggested that the arrival of Pawlak's government was seen not as a normal shift of policy as in a democratic state, but as a radical retreat, strongly inspired by the former socialist system. It was a return to old habits ('restoration'). This was still possible, as only a short time had passed since the beginning of the transition in 1989. The opinions of my respondents, from local government are also likely to have been strengthened by the fact that this government had post-communist origins. Thus, the local government difficulties were not interpreted as ordinary casual difficulties. Instead, this was considered 'not a normal time' (as suggested in the above quotation of Urbańczyk). The criticism of central government was extreme; its policy was called a 'criminal matter', and it was accused of not having even the most basic interest in the state. Many other similarly radical negative opinions were also expressed.

The regional administrative elite belonged to a transitional period, when the definition of roles and relationships within the administration was fluid. Thus, 'blind' abiding by rules, as proposed by central government, was not much appreciated by the local government elite. The revolutionary character of this elite indicates also their highly emotional language and their rebelliousness against central government. The opinion of the deputy mayor of Rybnik, Kogut, illustrates their emotional attitudes:

We are aware that it is a step backward. It is our personal tragedy.⁴⁸⁸

⁴⁸⁸ Kogut quoted in Troszka, *Nowiny*, [Rybnik] 7 December 1994.

v. *The withdrawal from the Pilot Programme*

The public protest of the Pilot Towns did not change their financial conditions, and the new agreements with central government for 1995 were even more unfavourable to them. In addition, the district reform promised for 1995 was postponed while the Pilot Programme was to last for an indefinite period. In response, on 30 November 1994, the Convention of Mayors of the Big Polish Towns participating in the Pilot Programme ended their meeting with a declaration of their inability to continue the Pilot Programme as central government was not fulfilling its agreement with them.⁴⁸⁹ As a result, they gradually began to give up certain responsibilities in order to decrease the scale of their financial losses. For example, in the first quarter of 1995, Gliwice, Jastrzębie and Rybnik all withdrew.

The decision to withdraw from the Pilot Programme was primarily caused by the financial difficulties of the towns, which received insufficient grants to carry out the tasks delegated to them. In the end, their decision to withdraw was a solution to 'a painful dilemma' between, on the one hand, increasing the responsibilities of the towns, streamlining administrative functioning, and thus improving services, and, on the other hand, increasing their financial burden. Makosz said:

When the projected budget for 1995 came, with revenues below those for 1994, we had to withdraw. We had to withdraw despite it being a government coalition which had come to power declaring an end to under-funding for education and the health service. If they gave even less money, despite these declarations, somebody had to take responsibility.

We have given up the health service and it is in debt again [when it is in the hands of public administration]. At the time of the Pilot Programme we were successful in balancing payments dates and we did not pay even a million in penalties on interest.⁴⁹⁰

After the withdrawal of Rybnik from the Pilot Programme, Makosz called the central government actions a cynical game to discredit local governments by suggesting their low financial efficiency. However, this was caused by insufficient central government grants.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ *Dziennik Śląski*, 8 December 1994.

⁴⁹⁰ Makosz quoted in *Wspólnota*, no. 29, 1995.

⁴⁹¹ *Troszka Nowiny*, [Rybnik] 7 December 1994.

The Pilot Programme towns recognising that the programme was stretching into an indefinite future and that it was not known when the inadequate financing would finish, tried to withdraw from the most expensive tasks, while attempting to fulfil the rest.⁴⁹² According to Starkowska,⁴⁹³ the Pilot Programme towns resigned from about 30 per cent of their initial responsibilities.

At that time, in their opinion, further decentralisation of the administration was to be achieved by applying a gradualist approach. This meant persistently forcing central government to delegate new responsibilities with financial assistance, as indicated by the quotation below of Żymełka, mayor of Ruda Śląska:

This is not a capitulation. We are going to seize the power from central government and the money which they promised us for those tasks.⁴⁹⁴

Although towns finally withdrew from the Pilot Programme, Frankiewicz believed that the Pilot Programme should not be assessed altogether negatively. Despite the difficulties of conducting the programme, in the end, the towns had gone a few steps forward, gaining more responsibilities, and decentralisation was gradually appearing:

I reckon for all its negative aspects, this programme did in the end give a lot. It brought about certain irreversible changes. People received something good, they got accustomed to it, and now nothing can take it away. Gliwice withdrew from the programme, but this does not mean that we returned to the starting point.⁴⁹⁵

Thus, the improvement of services as a result of the Pilot Programme in such important institutions as schools and hospitals was crucial in bringing about a change in social opinion towards administration. A few years later, the view of the Pilot Programme was modified. Some local government leaders lost their belligerence, and some of their confidence, as a result of the prolonged period of unfavourable local government conditions, 'when the financial burden clipped their wings'. Then they concentrated more on surviving than fighting for decentralisation or investing in long-term development. This shift towards far less rebellious attitudes than presented above illustrates the opinion of one of my respondents:

⁴⁹² Frankiewicz *Wspólnota*, no. 31, 1995.

⁴⁹³ Starkowska *Wspólnota*, no. 10, 1995.

⁴⁹⁴ Żymełka quoted in *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 30 December 1994.

⁴⁹⁵ Frankiewicz *Wspólnota*, no. 31, 1995.

These tasks were undertaken too ambitiously at that time... and debts were incurred... The Pilot Programme was to be the trial-run for the formation of districts and consequently state decentralisation. The idea would have been good if it had been accompanied by a real wish to decentralise finances. Then this Pilot Programme would have left good memories. It is a pity that it has not left good memories as tasks were transferred, but not the money... We delayed our investments, our property was deteriorating and we took the loans. In other words, we could not properly conduct our own town's tasks [as all the money went on Pilot Programme tasks]. The Pilot Programme was rather an unhappy experience and fell short of expectations for decentralisation.

vi. Suing the voivode

The second group of the Katowice voivodship towns – Dąbrowa Górnicza, Katowice, Ruda Śląska and Zabrze – did not withdraw from their tasks but instead decided to sue the *voivode* as the representative of central government. He was sued for not fulfilling the financial obligations of the Pilot Programme Agreement. However, suing the *voivode* for not complying with the financial regulations of the Pilot Agreement was not only limited to this one issue but reflected a wider phenomenon – the long-running fight for equal rights between the public administration and local government. The fight was for recognition by central government that finally the situation had changed since the end of socialism and that the independence of local government was to be recognised and respected. Local government emphasised that they were receiving less for tasks delegated to them than if these tasks had stayed in the hands of the public administration.⁴⁹⁶

The verdict of the Arbitration Tribunal (after agreement on both sides to solve the problem by Tribunal and after common selection of the judges) in 1995 confirmed the breaking of the law on the equal treatment of communes compared to the public administration. The verdict was unequivocally confirmed by all seven judges, who were MPs and the most prominent professors of law. Although the verdict was agreed by both sides as final and binding, the *voivode* appealed against the decision and negotiation was prolonged until after 1997.

Even though local government did not receive the money granted to them by the verdict, they still regarded the case as a success. This was primarily because suing the *voivode* for not fulfilling the Pilot Agreement was a method of protecting themselves against

⁴⁹⁶ Żymełka quoted in Jaworska, *Trybuna Śląska*, 29 November 1994.

future discrimination, and of gradually increasing their authority, as one of the mayors of these four towns mentioned. This was only a formal victory by local government, but it was nevertheless important for them, as the judges and the most prominent scholars had agreed and advocated the arguments of the communes. In other words, this was to help them to break free from the expectations of central government, going back to the socialist period of blind subordination of local government to their will:

Four towns sued the *voivode* [for not fulfilling the Pilot Programme conditions] and we won the case morally, although there are still no [financial] results. We won. The Tribunal recognised the reasoning of the communes. However, we did not receive the financial resources. The *voivode* appealed against this verdict to the voivodship court, where the case is still being heard. The *voivode* did not receive money from the state budget to pass on to local government despite our victory, so, as I said, this is only a moral victory. Maybe that will also change and there will be some money, ... But this Arbitration Tribunal was good on the basis of this decision (there were authorities on local government law and representatives of central government) and we can use this verdict to demand the relevant financial subsidies for financing the Big Towns' tasks from government.

5.4 The efficiency of the Big Towns, 1996-1997

i. The reasons for Big Towns reform

On 1 January 1996 the Act on Big Towns was introduced, replacing the Pilot Programme. The financial difficulties of the Pilot towns, as well as the continuation of the Pilot Programme throughout 1995, although it had been proposed initially only for 1994, without any proposals for following up administrative reforms, led to a gradual withdrawal from the programme of successive towns. The towns remaining in the programme also gradually resigned more and more responsibilities. As a result, the scale of the Pilot Programme decreased substantially compared to the responsibilities taken over in January 1994. Moreover, it began to resemble a mosaic of continuously-changing commune responsibilities.⁴⁹⁷

To solve the problem of towns withdrawing from the Pilot Programme, at the end of 1994 a group of MPs proposed a new act which was suddenly supported by government. The new Big Towns Act increased their responsibilities permanently (for example, all secondary schools were delegated as own tasks to the Big Towns) and at the same time

⁴⁹⁷ Jakowska, *Wspólnota*, no. 51-52, 1995.

streamlined them. In contrast to the Pilot Programme, all towns received the same tasks.⁴⁹⁸

At the time when the interviews were conducted, the mayors had a few months' experience of the operation of the Big Towns Act and the resulting relative administrative autonomy. Their remarks concentrated on three main issues; first, the relative autonomy of Big Towns in comparison to the situation in rural areas; second, the financial and legal obstacles substantially weakening the effectiveness of their performance; and finally, the need for further territorial reform.⁴⁹⁹

ii. The relative autonomy of Big Towns

As a result of the introduction of the Big Towns Act, the mayors interpreted that they received responsibilities relevant to those of the future town-districts. Thus, one of the mayors stated that in relation to Big Towns, reform was ended, as tasks of district-towns were already performed by local government there. However, a different situation prevailed in rural areas where rural-districts were not formed. As a result of the absence of districts in less populated areas, there were no supra-local scale development programmes:

This year the Big Towns Act was introduced. X was defined as a Big Town and this act applied to it. I have to say that our town is practically a town-district, with all the responsibilities a town-district should have. The influence of expected administrative reform is felt only in the context which was mentioned [indirectly, with a lack of regional reform and formation of districts in rural areas].

In other words, the Big Towns Act was treated as the establishment of the second level of local government (the districts) in urban areas, as responsibilities were transmitted to Big Towns. Thus, in the opinion of the same mayor, the towns would be better off in future than the rural areas, where the lack of administrative reform of districts slowed down their further local and regional development.

⁴⁹⁸ Jakowska, *Wspólnota*, no. 51-52, 1995.

⁴⁹⁹ Their specific proposals for administrative reforms will be presented in chapter seven.

Thus, the achievements of the Big Towns can be fully evaluated only in comparison with the situation in rural areas. At the time of conducting interviews, according to the mayors in the rural areas and small towns local governments did not carry out local long-term development projects. Local governments in rural areas, due to lack of decentralisation, were only able to meet immediate needs but were not able to undertake further development. Due to the absence of districts, the small communes had limited financial resources and concentrated only on local aims. There were no administrative institutions capable of promoting and co-ordinating the performance of supra-local tasks or of preparing a coherent long-term vision of local and regional development, which was also strongly related to economies of scale. Thus, the main achievement of the Big Towns was their concentration on long-term development, as they had the opportunity and resources to form town planning centres employing various professionals and advisers.

However, town mayors often emphasised that in the Big Towns decentralisation was not a completed process. At that time, the Big Towns were able only to propose development projects on the scale of districts. There were no administrative institutions integrating the regional level development policy due to the lack of further administrative reform (formation of big regions and re-definition of their role).

Nevertheless this autonomy of the Big Towns, as the reform in relation to town-districts was ended, gave the local government elite a relative sense of strength and confidence. Although some the financial and legal obstacles existed, these were relatively small in comparison to those in the rural areas (to be described later).

I think that it may be noticed after some time that despite the fact that the Big Towns have some limitations, (legal and financial about which I talked), they are not relatively serious and thus, these towns-districts develop. However, the rural districts [to be formed] do not develop at all. There will be no further development. There will only be development of communes, but not on the scale of districts.

All these arguments, which are used by the PSL to fight against formation of districts, are absurd and I do not want to discuss them. This is evident stupidity, it is unworthy of discussion, so that policy is a loss for the state [its future].

This quotation shows that the local government elite I interviewed believed that despite the importance of the territorial reform which was to lead to the formation of districts and a few big regions, it was delayed due to the parochial interests of the PSL.

Moreover, they thought this policy would be most severely felt in the rural areas, where the majority of the PSL electorate came from.

a. The financial obstacles

Despite the fact that the Big Towns were in a relatively advantageous situation in relation to the rural areas, the mayors emphasised at the same time that their Big Town authorities worked in highly unstable conditions. They referred to two issues: the instability of financial and of regulations legal acts, which forced the communes to provide from their own funds for the tasks delegated to them by the state.

In relation to the issue of financial regulations, the mayors unequivocally emphasised political whims as favouring central government. This was related to the fact that at that time a mathematical formula was applied to divide revenues among the Big Towns (instead of applying the permanent share of tax between various levels of administration). First, the use of a mathematical formula was criticised by mayors as an artificial solution, partial and highly unstable because it was dependent on the will of finance ministers:

Towns are independent. It is not possible for central government to give political or administrative orders to local governments, which they do not accept. This is a mainstay of democracy, but this is not enough. The amount of money is not sufficient, this issue is to be solved. Now we have a situation in which a minister of finance with one stroke of a pen can decide the size of subsidies.⁵⁰⁰

Another mayor presented a similar criticism:

At the moment this is painful, as I receive money from Warsaw, not a share of taxes. Instead, money is calculated according to a special formula. This is bad in general, as the 46 towns [the Big Towns] in Poland each receive their relevant money from the state budget, calculated according to this model. This formula is bad as the significant figure appears behind the sixth zero after the comma and in the eighth place there are billions of [old] złoty.

This arbitrary view of allocation of funds by central government raised strong emotions. One of the mayors mentioned that the introduction of this formula as the method for

⁵⁰⁰ Frankiewicz, *Śląsk*, no. 5, 1997.

dividing money was, in his opinion, the main cause of the retreat of local government power, which, from 1990 until then, had gradually been increasing:

This bill about Big Towns, which by the 'Q' formula defines the amount of money which we receive for certain services, is a retreat for local government in Poland. My situation is that each year I have formula 'Q', which is not related at all to the budget percentage. This formula is so complex that the commune is shackled. So this is really distribution by the central authorities [as in the socialist period] on a whim.

A second criticism of the use of this method for financing local governments, in the opinion of the mayors, was that it allowed savings on these Big Towns. Instead of receiving a certain percentage of the budget, the 'Q' formula was calculated in this way to allow for central government manipulation. Accordingly, the Big Towns which were thrifty were penalised for their efforts as they received even less money the following year, while towns which were not economic were supported by additional funds, obtained, in their opinion, from savings on those towns which tried to limit their spending:

Simply speaking, calculating money in this manner [according to formula 'Q'], not according to which towns need money, and not according to a general solution [share in tax sharing] is bad. Calculating money for a town based on its previous expenditure is also bad as it gives towns no incentive to make savings. So, in general, this financing of the public tasks of communes in the form of subsidies is incorrect. I absolutely believe that these should be financed from taxes, and it should be mentioned that these taxes are from our inhabitants.

Thirdly, local government elite also criticised this manner of allocating money as it was transferred twice; first it went to Warsaw to the central budget, and then it was transferred again from Warsaw to the communes. As a result, banks earned charges on these funds twice (it has been suggested that former communists have substantial shares in the banking sector). This also indicates the high bureaucratic costs incurred by the use of central government grants:

The money is absolutely wrongly arranged. At the moment there is a new Act on Big Towns, which imposes a lot of duties on us. At the same time, a curious formula was reached to calculate how much each town should receive. This money, without any sense or need, is transferred from our Treasury Office to Warsaw and they return it to me in the form of subsidies, and in this way a few banks make a good living out of it.

As a whole, the use of formula 'Q' was also seen as a tool to blur and then to lower local government subsidies. For example, the formula was based on expected state

revenues which were much higher than real revenues, and these over-estimated revenues caused the final amount of local government subsidies to be lowered. However, as the mayors emphasised, central government did not correct its estimate and thus the retention of these calculations was seen as a deliberate action. Communes made efforts to introduce more objective criteria and after two years some changes appeared; for example, the size of the subsidy for schools depended on the number of pupils or teachers, and so on.

The shift to a post-communist government in 1993 was seen by the local government elite as a radical change of policy toward the communes. In 1994, when the Pilot Programme was started, two tendencies were already observable: first, a gradual decrease in the amount of money given to local government, and second, as one of my respondent recollected, assigning them more and more tasks:

This second tendency, which has existed till now, is that central state, by little steps, not by parliamentary bills but most often by regulations of less importance, by central government or separate ministries, takes away certain revenues and adds tasks at the same time. Those local government revenues cannot be taken directly and there can be no bill that says commune revenue can be lowered from 15 per cent to 14 per cent of the 'poll tax'. It is done in a much more sly manner.

During the Big Town period, the towns began to resign from certain tasks (for example, they handed back to central state administration some of their hospitals which had specialist units serving the whole region). This indicates the change in local government philosophy towards 'decreasing their ambition'. One of the mayors, referring to the earlier period, recollected:

We made one mistake, the mistake of 'too large ambition' as we did not see our ambition in relation to the abilities which we had.

The financial difficulties of the Big Towns resembled, to a certain extent, the situation which the towns had already experienced in the Pilot Programme. In both periods, the funds allocated to the Big Towns were not sufficient to cover the additional responsibilities taken on by them and they had to add funds from their own savings. However, the difficulty of these towns during 'the Big Towns period', in contrast to the Pilot Programme, was that they received certain obligatory tasks – for example, responsibility for secondary schools – which they had to perform and could not give up.

The situation of adding their own money and not being allowed to resign from many tasks caused the towns to become poorer. For example, they could save less for investments, which would influence their further long-term development, as town mayors recollected:

We have only nine per cent invested; at the beginning it was 20 per cent, now it is nine per cent. As a result of our impoverishment the town's future is endangered. I believe that if there is not money for investment we will not develop. The money is decreasing, as we have to add [from our own revenues] to cover the tasks which the government delegates us. It does not give us the necessary financial funding for them. Those are clearly calculated amounts but they do not want to acknowledge them, as they say unanimously that this was not enacted in the budget law and they send us to the *Sejm*. That is why we want legislative guarantees for the financing of these tasks.

At the time when the interviews were conducted, some of the communes had nearly stopped investing in town development; they were 'merely surviving', spending all their money on current payments and 'waiting for better times'. Respondents often mentioned the substantial impoverishment of the communes as a result of the post-communist government's policies. Local government had partially changed their attitudes and the angry demands and protests of the Pilot Programme period began to be replaced by cautious actions and sometimes resignation and 'survival' until 'normal' times.

Another mayor mentioned finances as being the main limitation to their actions and the primary causes of their weakness as they received only 19 per cent from their own revenues and the remaining 81 per cent from state subsidies:

I said during the voivodship assembly meeting that at the moment our discretion could be counted in percentages, and the size of these percentages is defined by the state budget in relation to our own revenues. 19 per cent of our budget is based on our local revenues and the other 81 per cent we just receive in the form of grants, so our discretionary power is the percentage of our own revenue.

Thus, sharing in taxes was seen as a fair solution, allowing a division of financial resources relevant to the tasks delegated to local government. This mayor's solution to the financial problems would also bring stability to the financial system, as it would be regulated by a parliamentary act and would not change annually. This would be in contrast to the then-existing situation in which finance ministers had a free hand to make changes each year. This was to replace the present means, which favoured central government in relation to the communes. Thus, the efforts of the communes were not

recognised because there was no correlation between their own economic performance and money left for investment.

In this context, the formation of districts and regions was presented as a prerequisite for financial reform and the direct sharing in taxes of local governments (communes, districts) and later regional government. Also, the adoption of a new financial system only by parliamentary act was seen by one of my interviewees as a guarantee of establishing the necessary conditions for the effective performance of the communes:

I would like to say that these tasks, delegated mostly by the various town acts, we receive in the form of subventions and that is bad. This should be regulated by an Act on Finances of Communes, and later of self-governing districts to be formed as another level of local government. There should be clearly-defined rules for participation in taxes which the inhabitants pay, which should be assigned to the commune (later the local government at district level) for the fulfilment of its own tasks. We demand that this be unequivocally defined for local governments as all the subventions are usually defined for the year ahead on the basis of criteria which the government defines. As a result, the government saves on local governments in relation to the money given to them.

b. The legal obstacles

The second main area where unfinished reforms were leading to difficulties in the functioning of the Big Towns, mentioned by my respondents, was that of legal regulations. These were, at that time, highly unstable and imprecise, sometimes even contradictory, and often protected central government interests against local government. As a result, as one of my respondents mentioned, the communes had several tasks prescribed without legal acts to enforce them:

In the meantime, the legal acts did not go forward and at a certain time the central government stopped reforms altogether. Thus, we have legislation on duties but we do not have the power to carry them out.

One of the most important problems related to legal regulations which enable ministries to give communes additional obligations without sufficient funds to deal with them is mentioned below:

It does not directly affect Big Towns' functioning [the fact that districts had not been established]. But it does affect them indirectly because of the existing climate and law, in which local government is weak. Thus, local government has little opportunity to demand

the money due to it. Local government is treated in such a way that the central government gives as much as it wants, not as a result of the actions carried out. It does not result from any rational division of funding and that is our problem that the unions (for example, the Union of Polish Towns,) are fighting against.

The quotation below suggests that future territorial administrative reform should be assisted by legal bills curbing the arbitrariness of central ministries to issue their own regulations to maintain power and control over the communes' activities. The absence of coherent and impartial law was illustrated by the Electricity Act, by which the state monopoly regulated the conditions in which energy was provided while the communes were responsible for protecting the supply of energy to their inhabitants. In the words of one mayor, the communes have responsibilities without the means to fulfil them:

The necessity of finishing the local government reform I see in the formation of coherent law in the form of the Local Government Act. This means clearly defining our duties – the tasks which are allocated to us as our own tasks. For example, the Local Government Act requires local government to supply inhabitants with energy and to light the streets. However, the whole property is still in the hands of the energy sector, so the actions required of local government cannot be properly delivered by them. Local governments are forced to be responsible for the supply, while at the same time there are government programmes, like the Electricity Act, which are far from coherent. In this situation, we [the local governments] protest. [...]. The law should be coherent and if local governments are required to fulfil certain tasks, they should have the 'guns' to do it.

The legal regulations after 1993 were also seen as a method of centralisation and linked to supervision over local government activity:

The fight for local government has not ended. As local government began to be pulled back from its responsibilities in 1990, centralisation began to be carried out. At the moment, I receive more and more letters requiring me to explain many issues. The Regional Chamber of Accounting interprets the regulations, but it should not interpret the regulations [further limiting responsibilities] as what is not forbidden can be done. But the X Chamber of Accounting extends its interpretation of regulation, thereby limiting our activity....

iii. The need for further territorial reform

Improvement of the financial conditions in which local government functioned and a change of legal regulations were closely linked to further administrative reform. The reform was intended to end the completely artificial administrative structure with its absence of regional level administration which distinguished Poland from 'all' other

European countries. However, despite the evident necessity of the reform it was, according to one of my respondents, delayed as it was seen as a political issue:

The main limitation affecting the communes is that the Polish State continues to be a centralised state. In general, two types of administration exist in Poland: there is the local government in the communes, and there is the public administration at central level, and there is nothing in addition to that. I believe that according to the concepts of a democratic system, this is rather odd. In no country with a developed democratic system is there any such division. Instead, there are gradations: there is a commune, which has 30 per cent of the money and power; then there is a region or a land or other area, which has the next 30 per cent of the money and power; and finally, there is the central state, which has at its disposition the remaining 40 per cent of money and, in consequence, 40 per cent of the power.

Here [in Poland] simply speaking, there is an arrangement of power whereby the communes have 15 per cent of the money and 15 per cent of the power and the state administration has 85 per cent of the money and 85 per cent of the power. That is the situation at the moment and until the end of 1997 [the expected date of the national election] nothing will change as long as the coalition of SLD and PSL feel comfortable with such an arrangement, especially as it has this 85 per cent of the power and money.

Other opinions also pointed to the post-communist governments as responsible for slowing down the administrative reform:

As such, political forces won the battle for power [the post-communists]. I believe that as long as the SLD have power, the tendency to capture [the whole power] and divide it at the top will last. We see now the renewing of the tendencies to take successive responsibilities [from the communes] to the top ...

How can one trust these people to conduct reform? The political parties which rule the country will have to change for there to be a chance for reform.

5.5 The evaluation of achievements, 1990-1997

The local government reform initiated in 1990 was recognised by the mayors as a great success in providing opportunities for effective rule in the towns, as the reform established the basic acts guaranteeing their financial and legal autonomy. The re-establishment of local government in 1990 led, in their opinion, to several achievements. They emphasised firstly, its economic effectiveness; secondly, the introduction of local democracy; and thirdly, that autonomous local government was significant in the political transition of the state. Finally, the achievements of local government were in their opinion even more evident when their performance was compared with state administration.

i. Economic effectiveness

The economic achievements were emphasised as, according to the local government elite, the period of less than eight years since 1990 brought more intensive local development than the 40 years of socialism as a whole. Moreover, those changes began to be appreciated socially. 'People began to see changes'; for example, in renewed town buildings' facades, as the communes took care of the local infrastructure, which had been greatly neglected during the socialist period. People remembered always seeing broken paving on the pavements and for the first time these were removed and replaced with new paving. This symbolic change from socialist neglect of local development was, according to one of my respondents, noticed by everybody. Thus, economic efficiency was the main element which caused people to appreciate local government work. One of the town mayors praised the economic achievements of local government as one of the most successful reforms and pointed out its social appreciation:

When people talk about the Polish State in the last six years, they emphasise that local government is a success; this effort and commitment have not been wasted.

Comparison of their economic performance with the public administration gave the local government elite a lot of confidence. They suggested that local government was several times more thrifty than the public administration – at a moderate estimate, over 20 per cent. This issue was emphasised in numerous of my interviews. The opinion of Dzewior is a good example:

The achievements by local government authorities in the first five years, despite considerable legislative and financial hindrance, are surely big, some would even say impressive. Local government authorities showed much greater economic rationality than the public administration. They made financial savings on the majority of tasks ranging from a few to several dozen per cent in comparison to the public administration.⁵⁰¹

Dzewior illustrated this efficiency of the towns with the example of schools, as no schools which were run by communes were ever in debt, in contrast to the situation of those schools which were run by the public administration, the majority of which were

⁵⁰¹ Dzewior quoted in *Sejmik Samorządowy*, August 1995.

in debt.⁵⁰² As a result, Dziewior estimates quite radically that local government was 90 per cent more efficient than public administration.

This greater efficiency of local government compared to public administration also illustrates the case of local government taking over the Health Service Office from the public administration. Substantial financial savings were made in the aftermath of the restructuring they conducted:

In 1995, the debts of the Health Service Office [ZOZ] in my town amounted to 16 billion zloty. When we took over the ZOZ on 1 January 1996, that year ended with no debts. Was it a miracle? We did certain things which were necessary; 180 people were made redundant and often without searching too much for those people. There was even a storeroom which had been empty for the previous six years, but four people worked there. They were still employed according to the belief that: 'As there is a post, it is a pity to dismiss anybody, as they [public administration] would not be able to take on anybody later [ministerial permission would be needed to employ somebody]'. This is their way of thinking [central administration's] and it will always function like this. Only local governments will perhaps find out that so many people are not needed.

On the other hand, local government is like a state firm. We were not so marvellous – please do not believe it. I could give many examples of 'safety positions' in 'town administration'.

The mayors sometimes presented their economic achievements with some criticism. Although they saw themselves as more efficient than the central administration, they still saw local government as a type of administration which has a natural tendency to increase the number of employees as well as to alienate inhabitants. This was especially the case in Big Towns of over one 100 inhabitants and was more of a problem, according to my respondent, in towns which often had around 200 inhabitants (in which research was conducted).

Still I am convinced that we organise public life much better than the public administration, which by its nature has a distant view of the concrete tasks, of concrete building, of certain positions and so on. Thus, their inefficiency is inevitable, it also takes place here in local government. I believe that some squandering of money also takes place, or rather some unavoidable squandering of money takes place and will always take place in local government. In bureaucratic structures, money is not spent as it is in private hands where each zloty is looked at several times before it is spent.

In such Big Towns, in the opinion of a mayor, development of civil society – that is 'self-organisation of society' – was to oppose the processes of alienation. For example,

⁵⁰² Compare also Makosz's statement – quoted earlier – that during the Pilot Programme when, as a result of local governments' resigning from running hospitals, they were again taken up by the state and fell back into debt.

if six families decided to set up a kindergarten, they would do it much more cheaply than local government and it would be better organised. It would also adapt better to specific needs with regard to opening hours and so on. This 'self-organisation of society' was also to limit the tendency to bureaucratisation by central institutions. For example, the Ministry of Education issued several regulations about the minimum temperature in kindergarten rooms, and so on.

At the same time, my respondents believed that private ownership was the most efficient. They often planned to privatise many firms run by local government. An example of the inefficiency of local government was the running of a hotel which they owned; when this was run by them, it was 400 million złoty in debt. However, when it was rented to a private business, it produced profits of 2 billion złoty (and as a result local government received a commission). Although local government was not as efficient as private business, it was, in the opinion of one of the town mayors, at least rational compared to public administration. It was rational as it privatised or rented enterprises which did not produce profits, and this distinguished local government from the public administration, which continued to run most of its unprofitable enterprises without any restructuring.

Privatisation and development of civil society were also seen by some mayors as solutions aimed to change the behaviour of town inhabitants by ending the 'social passivity' which was a legacy of the socialist period. The most striking example of 'this social passivity' was the habit of towns inhabitants going to the administration with all their problems instead of trying to solve them themselves. Moreover, when in 1990 communes were suddenly burdened with all these overwhelming social expectations, the situation was aggravated further by the quite radical impoverishment of some social groups:

In the case of our state or our town, there are relatively low living conditions and high expectations after forty years of socialism. People expect that when there are problems, they will be solved by the authorities. Instead of them trying to solve issues by themselves by forming [non-governmental] organisations, such as associations or foundations or companies, they go to the town hall or the *voivode* or somewhere else to solve them.

Those social expectations constituted a financial burden which the communes were not able to bear. Moreover, as one of my respondents mentioned, privatisation and

development of civil society would lead to better allocation of resources than the arbitrary decisions of local government councils; for example, decisions on issues such as the percentage of their budget that should be allocated to the maintenance of kindergartens, an issue important to only to a small proportion of the towns' inhabitants, while the majority might prefer to spend town revenues on building a recreation centre or new roads instead.

ii. Local democracy and political transition

The political significance of the revitalisation of local government was emphasised in the context of state polity transition. The opinion of Dziewior emphasises this:

On 8 March 1995, exactly five years had elapsed since the Local Government Act was passed. This was the most important and probably the most pregnant of legal acts, which fundamentally changed the polity of our state...

The Local Government reform should be recognised as a primary element transforming the polity of our state and the building of a new Republic, based on normal, healthy and civilised rules.⁵⁰³

It has sometimes been emphasised that the introduction of democracy started with the first local election, as this was the first free election after 40 years of communism. At the same time, it was an opportunity for 'us the people of Upper Silesia region' to decide about the most important issues. This is illustrated by the opinion of a Silesian mayor:

I believe that local government was badly needed in Poland after about 45 years or more of socialism. It was good that in 1990 the *Sejm* enacted the Local Government Act and that democratic elections to town and village councils took place. I believe that this organisation of communes as independent legal entities is very necessary in our state. It makes it possible for us inhabitants to be masters of our own house [the region is identified with the house], enabling us to decide on the most important issues of our lives.

⁵⁰³ Dziewior quoted in *Sejmik Samorządowy*, August 1995.

iii. Reformed local government versus public administration

All the above statements suggest a highly enthusiastic assessment of local government performance since its establishment in 1990. These enthusiastic responses are worth emphasising, especially after the socialist period, as it might have been expected that the negative attitude towards administration would last.

Therefore, I can say one thing; the most successful was the local government reform and many local government employees judge it in the same way. However, if there is no further decentralisation of administration and if the next levels of local government are not formed as they are in Europe, since it was through local government that the quick development of those regions was possible, then our country will move backward. Maybe I see it radically but this is how I see it. Concerning district reform, it must be conducted, since all preliminary work has been done. Districts are accepted by the inhabitants; even the latest opinion polls show that people are in favour of districts as a level of local government. This consciousness is already appearing after six years and this is a success.

In contrast, unequivocally negative opinions of the administration were still felt strongly by the voivodship office elite. They believed that administration always has little prestige. The following example is the opinion expressed by a director of the voivodship office:

I think that work in administration is not good, it has never had a good reputation. A lot of political movements made their careers out of the fight with bureaucracy. It has been like that since Lenin, who wrote a lot of treaties on bureaucracy, and also other political movements, like the right wing, for example, fascism, which believed that...

The other interviewees from the voivodship office indicated similarly extreme negative opinions of administration in general:

For a few years I stopped being an ... I work in an administration office, which always worries me. I feel ashamed of it; I feel awfully ashamed, I have to say.

Why ?

This is not a good job; being a civil servant in Poland is not a good profession. A civil servant is usually accused of corruption, a desire to govern, lack of competence – such things. These are common opinions and I feel ashamed that I am a sort of civil servant. I have hope that I may ‘disentangle’ myself from it somehow.

These extreme and opposite sentiments regarding the administration and its performance by the voivodship office and the local government elites were related to their opinions on how much power they had. In this context, the earlier quotation by a member of the

local government elite indicating its highly effective economic performance (as measured by its spending being several times lower than that of the public administration, for example on hospitals, despite the same quality of services provided) is significant. The voivodship office did not have its own budget and was fully dependent financially on the central-level budget. In the period under discussion the low esteem in which administration was held was preserved at the voivodship level. This resulted from the fact that this institution did not go through the reform which would probably have strengthened its powers. In other words, positive opinions on administration were held by the local government elite. Related to this was the fact that this institution had already been reformed and thus lost its socialist legacy. It also had relative autonomy and, in consequence, the members of this elite felt responsible for their own actions, in contrast to the administration in the voivodship office, which preserved the socialist-type subordination:

Our local government [institution] was a fully new construction, not bringing into the new Republic a legacy going back to the PRL [Polish People's Republic]. It is an institution whose first years of functioning should be considered a success, which to some extent is its internal feature due to its institutional self-government arrangement.⁵⁰⁴

That is why the local government elite felt a sense of satisfaction, despite the fact that people did not always fully appreciate their actions. Society was sometimes impatient, after the neglect of the socialist period, having unrealistic expectations of the results of the national transition which was only started in 1989. However, as the opinion below indicates, mayors also believed that inhabitants did, at the same time, begin to notice the economic development appearing in their communities after 1990. They believed that what was noticed most was the renovation of buildings and the new tidy look of streets, in contrast to the unkempt environment that prevailed in the socialist period. They also emphasised the economic rationale of decisions taken by town boards:

Why is that the local government administration not respected? People would of course be against state power [and its administration]. It should be recognised that people will always be against power, however it is organised. Partly they are right as they expect to have good roads immediately... when in actuality the neglect [by the socialist régimes] cannot be so quickly made good. That is why those expectations cannot be met by the abilities [of administration] and this always causes dissatisfaction. But I rate the achievements of the local governments very highly. They had their heads screwed on and spent money sensibly. It is strange that it was virtually decided by a group, which was selected out of 48 people [town-council] in the case of our town. However, as a group they can choose the things which are essential in the end.

⁵⁰⁴ Dzięwior quoted in *Sejmik Samorządowy*, August 1995.

Another opinion also shows appreciation of local government work despite its low social recognition:

The rule in town should be quite efficient and up to date, and having in mind the town's interest, but after all no action could satisfy everybody. We do not avoid criticism; we have to accept it. We have to prove one thing, that we do care for the town, care for its security, care for its future and care for its inhabitants. This is difficult to prove but emphasis should be put on it.

In other words, the town mayors were also able (in contrast to the voivodship office elite) to distance themselves from the negative attitudes towards administration substantially strengthened in society during the socialist period. They also understood that a lot of people had poor knowledge of how administration works. However, they were quite confident that, thanks to frequent meetings with towns' inhabitants, the achievements of local governments would gradually be recognised more and more by local societies:

Administration is still perceived this way. We meet inhabitants very often. A *voivode* does not have to meet inhabitants, but a mayor does. On the other hand, at these meetings, inhabitants very often raise such objections as: 'you only' shut yourself away, 'these officials only' ... and so on. It is difficult to explain to simple people, peasants and blue-collar workers, that these investments need to be prepared, surveyors need to be employed, measures need to be taken and projects have to be drawn up. These projects cost a few million zloty but this does not need to be explained. There is no need to make a problem out of it. It is like this everywhere, in each country.

Mayors met regularly with inhabitants and they emphasised that this was in contrast to the public administration, who were appointed and did not have to meet local people. The low educational level of the inhabitants, as well as their limited knowledge of public administration and local government in particular, were additional facts which the mayors mentioned in explaining why their efforts were not fully recognised. This extremely low level of knowledge of how administration works and the low turn-out in local elections did not disappoint them; instead, they talked about the long-term process of changing social attitudes.

They also saw the differences between their achievements and the ineffective performance of the public administration. They suggested that this kept up the bad opinion of administration in society, as well as the fact that responsibility for nearly everything was put on local government, despite their limited legal and financial opportunities. For example, local government was blamed for the bad condition of roads

(maintenance of which in many cases was in responsibility of central administration).

One of the mayors interviewed by me recollected:

Therefore, I can constantly say one thing: the most successful issue was local government reform... This awareness began to appear after six years. Maybe the turn-out for elections is not good. Turn-out was low compared to the first election when there was this enthusiasm; this cooled a bit, people were discouraged and did not go to vote. But this is because many people expected too much. And still there is a lack of knowledge about what local government can do and what is beyond its powers. As a matter of fact, everything is expected from local government.

This is similar to the opinion of another town mayor who evaluated town administration achievements highly despite the poor knowledge of people about administration as a whole and local government in particular:

People in Poland are not prepared yet. They are often helpless and it seems that self-government has a very important role to play despite the fact that local government, for example, in such big communes as towns of 250, is often anonymous. I would bet all my money that half the inhabitants of X do not know the name of their mayor, that 80 per cent do not know the councillor from their 'borough'. I also believe that 95 per cent of them do not know the division of responsibilities among local government, the voivodship and the special administration. This awareness is missing, and only time, education, patience and the use of economic means can cause this awareness to appear. As a result, there will be a higher turn-out in elections; at the moment, this is between 20 and 30 per cent in the majority of Upper Silesia's communes. In others it is even worse. So it is a long, a really long process to raise this awareness.

In the opinion of the mayors, these local government achievements were also related to the fact that local government reform led to the arrival of better cadres than in the public administration. This was due to different selection mechanisms, as the democratic character of local government encouraged the selection of able candidates. They believed that, by contrast, the public administration maintained the same personnel policy as during the socialist period. This led to the selection of ineffective and irresponsible candidates for whom a few positions at the top of central administration ensured good salaries and offered safe, permanent jobs. These were jobs in which they did not need to take responsibility as they would have to do if they worked in private business. In extreme cases they saw central administration officials only as careerists who did not care about the state. This also seems to be related to different political views and origins. The post-Solidarity elite, although they were not the mainstream activists, often dominated in local government, in contrast to the post-communist central government at that time. However, this radical assessment of central administration is also likely to indicate the local government elite's preservation of negative attitudes

towards administration formed during the socialist period – ‘the schizophrenic attitudes toward the administration’.

On the contrary there are far more valuable people in self-governing administration than in the state administration and central government together.

Here, there are activists who have been working in local government administration for six years. They know how to manage, at least on the scale to which their responsibility extends. The people in local government administration have proved themselves. Meanwhile, the people who govern the country have not even managed firms with two or three employees. They are so-called political activists, sometimes innately, who have done nothing else but been political activists. They have not shown that they know how to manage a small group of people, let alone govern a state. To govern, to hold certain posts, to perform certain duties, experience must be gained and this experience is gained gradually by managing and supervising larger and larger groups of people.⁵⁰⁵

In contrast, positive opinion were expressed about local government cadres due to their selection during local elections:

I have been in local government the whole time I have been a councillor. I did not understand in the beginning what caused the strength and energy of local government. Later, the ‘big lords’- prime ministers, when they talked with the mayors of small towns felt a respect for them as they knew that behind the mayors of even small towns, stood the people [who elected them].⁵⁰⁶

The criticism of central administration personnel is surprising. It might be expected that the local government officials would be less efficient as they began to manage communes in 1990 after only a few months of preparation and without any previous experience or professional qualifications. It was unlike the central administration, which preserved some continuity of administrative personnel and thus should have had at least some professionals. However, economic performance indicated that a lot of local government opinions have not been exaggerated. Town mayors suggested that this was related to the fact that, for example, a minister was not responsible to anybody as it takes the four years of parliament to assess his performance, but a mayor is supervised at the very time when his actions are carried out by the town council.

However, there was some criticism of local government civil servants. One of the town mayors indicated that a director of a department in one of the Big Towns of the region had been appointed by a former mayor despite charges of corruption against him. This was, in his opinion, in striking contrast to the situation of local governments in Germany

⁵⁰⁵ Dzięwior quoted in *Nasza Gazeta*, no. 7, 1996.

⁵⁰⁶ Urbańczyk quoted in *Nasza Gazeta*, no. 2, 1996.

(which he knew about from co-operation between his town and its partner-town in Germany). In Poland, local government was still in a period of formation. Thus, there were no laws, for example, protecting against the appointment of a criminal to the position of mayor (indicating the lack of experience of the authors of the new regulations). This mayor also appreciated the importance of seniority in the career-paths in administration in Germany, where mayors had wide experience and administrative qualifications. By contrast, in Poland, there was far less administrative continuity and there were still some destabilising events, such as the referendum to dismiss the mayor of Dąbrowa Górnicza, and the stalemate over the election of a new mayor in Bytom in 1994. Moreover, the same mayors also complained that, although salaries in local government were a few times larger than in the public administration, they were still relatively low, and an exodus of specialists into private business was taking place as salaries there were several times larger still.

This negative assessment of central government was also important because it influenced the redefinition of local government's role, as the local government elite saw themselves as the main reformist force. As a result, they put themselves in opposition to central government. In particular, they accused central government of not thinking about the state but being driven by parochial interests. Central government was also criticised for its arrogance and immoral actions. This is illustrated by the stories that central government always had money to build recreation centres for itself but at the same time gave less for the maintenance of orphanages.⁵⁰⁷

This moral disgust at the behaviour of central government was also reinforced by the case of the deputy minister who publicly declared that whether a mayor would receive grants depended on his whim. My interviewees referred to this deputy minister as a hooligan. The arrogance of the central administration was also highlighted, with the financial situation of the Polish communes being contrasted with the conditions of local governments in the Czech Republic and Hungary. They suggested that despite similar local government reforms starting there only in 1990, those countries' communes received about 30 to 40 per cent of the state budget, while in Poland it was only 14 per cent. Thus, they believed that this situation was deliberately maintained by the post-

⁵⁰⁷ That year, the orphanages received one third less money, when inflation was above ten per cent. The number of children there rose and it was the town administration which found money to help the orphanage although it was not their responsibility.

communist governments. They also criticised these governments for preserving comfortable conditions for themselves, for example, by avoiding all reforms as they might be unpopular.

However, local government conditions had changed to some extent from the socialist period. For example, when Prime Minister Oleksy did not arrive on time for a meeting with the mayors of the Katowice voivodship towns, and did not even try to phone them to inform them of his delay, they left after waiting for him for 50 minutes. They saw this as a success, as the next time when the Prime Minister arranged to meet them, he was on time. He had to respect them, and could not dismiss mayors for insubordination as had been the case under socialism.

This recognition of high economic performance by local government, and at the same time the conviction that central government was deliberately slowing down the introduction of administrative reform for political reasons was crucial. Thus, the mayors believed that local government was the main force capable of exerting pressure for decentralisation.⁵⁰⁸ It was especially the case as they thought that further delays in administrative reform would not only prevent improvement of their performance but, more importantly, would slow down the further economic development of the country. Thus, their opinions about the present functioning of local government often referred to the necessity for further reform.⁵⁰⁹

I can therefore say one thing: the most successful was the local government reform. However, I and many local government employees also believe that further decentralisation of local government is necessary, Our country would move backward [if the reforms were not carried out]. That is how I see it, maybe in a radical way, but I see the role of local government reform in this way.

To sum up, the local government elite saw itself not only as an effective agent of transition in communes but, above all, as a powerful reformist force of the national economic restructuring and, at the same time, the crucial institution guaranteeing democratic functioning of the new state. The opinion of Dziejwior below illustrates this view of the crucial role of local government in rebuilding a new democratic administrative structure after the fall of communism:

⁵⁰⁸ Compare also, for example, Kopel's statement about the political motivation of the communes to participate in the Pilot Programme.

⁵⁰⁹ Their vision of administrative reform will be presented in chapter seven.

The Polish local government elite can take the credit for success not only in constructing the local dimension, but also as co-founder of the new state and a new mechanism of governing in our country.⁵¹⁰

Conclusion

This chapter focused on the development of local government since its recreation in 1990. The first sections described the local elections of 1990 and 1994. In the investigation of the local elections of 1990 and 1994 the development from the plebiscite type of election against *nomenclatura* to the gradual development of political parties was shown. Moreover, the arrival of new Post-Solidarity elites and the mobilisation of the Upper Silesian Union were presented as these were closely related to the local government elite's high evaluation of its actions. The third and fourth sections of this chapter dealt with the re-centralisation of local government and local attempts to react to it. Thus, a lot of attention was paid to the mayors' opinions of central governments' actions and their reactions such as the withdrawal from the Pilot Programme or suing the *voivode*, and finally the constant emphasis on the necessity for further administrative reform. The chapter finished with a positive, even enthusiastic, evaluation of local government achievements by its elite. What was especially interesting was that local government was created from scratch and had existed only since 1990. This was even more striking in the mayors' contrasting of local government achievements with negative opinion on unreformed central administration.

⁵¹⁰ Dziewior quoted in *Sejmik Samorządowy*, August 1995.

CHAPTER 6

THE REGIONAL CONTRACT – AN INTERIM SOLUTION FOR THE KATOWICE VOIVODSHIP, 1995-1997

The region is not and does not want to be a privileged region, but the uniqueness of its problems – social, ecological, and industrial – caused by excessive and wasteful exploitation in the several previous years, and their size, demand the effort not only of its inhabitants and elite, but also the effort and assistance of the whole of Poland and international support organisations.⁵¹¹

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to show the development of regional policy. It starts with the Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia prepared at the beginning of the nineties and the regional administrative elite's aspiration to be the sole agent of change and it proceeds to the second stage in 1995 when the Regional Contract was signed. Thus, the next issue investigated is the main change in the regional elite's policy at that time, with its efforts to incorporate the national elite in the regional restructuring. The expectations of both sides towards the Regional Contract are presented, followed by a description of the main ideas proposed by the regional administrative elite in the Regional Contract: formation of the Council of the Regional Contract, Local Segments and the Upper Silesian Fund. In this part the main chapters of the Regional Contract are also presented, with the last two sections placing this quite untypical document for Poland in a wider political and historical context. Comparisons with inter-war autonomy are made and the question of the role of the regional elite is raised.

Section four of this chapter is based on the elite interviews I conducted after the introduction of the Contract (1995-1997) supplemented with the press-interviews, the emphasis being placed on their opinions about the Regional Contract. The analysis develops around the issues most frequently mentioned by my respondents of substituting the reform by the Regional Contract and the expectation of further

⁵¹¹ *Kontrakt Regionalny*, 1995, volume 8 Part I, p. 7.

administrative reform. An evaluation of the Contract is also presented according to three distinguishable groups: its advocates, its critics and the most populous group of 'sceptics', who see in the signing of the Contract nearly the same number of advantages and disadvantages.

6.1 The aims of the Regional Contract

The Regional Contract was signed in October 1995 by representatives of the regional elite of the Katowice voivodship and the government. This Contract was the only case when an agreement was signed by central government and representatives of a region. The Regional Contract can be interpreted as an interim solution in the situation of a lack of regional economic restructuring and suspension of administrative reform. After the change of political power in autumn 1993, despite the fact that the district and regional level administrative reform was declared by the SLD as necessary, the regional authorities did not expect its introduction in the foreseeable future. In fact, they did not exclude the possibility that, in unfavourable conditions, this reform could be significantly delayed, even by a few years.

The origins of the Regional Contract can be traced back to the frustration of the regional elite, among them the administration (especially the voivodship office), over the fact that they had very limited responsibilities and were not able to react to the economic and social 'catastrophe' in the region. In addition, the national elite was seen as passive and uninterested, and unable to propose comprehensive projects for regional restructuring. The Regional Contract was a project to modify the regional institutional structure of the administration. It aimed to strengthen the position of the regional authorities and integrate policies at 'district' and 'regional' levels, which were necessary preconditions for the initiation of regional restructuring of heavy-industry. Thus, the Regional Contract was an effort by the regional elite to put pressure on the national elite to decentralise power and to accept certain proposals for reform presented in the document that would lead to engagement of the central elite's in the regional restructuring. Thus, the Regional Contract was proposed and prepared by the regional elite and signed by central government under significant political pressure from regional lobbies, especially the regional Solidarity Trade Union.

In the long run, the Regional Contract was to bring about even greater decentralisation of administration in the region, for the final aim of this contract was the radical proposal for the formation of a self-governing region. This proposal assumed that the regional government would be the main body to decide regional policies. This meant that strategic decisions would be taken by a democratically-elected council of the region, in contrast to the position of the voivodship office at that time as an arm of central government.

The Regional Contract proposals indicate the regional authorities' desire for decentralisation and the democratisation of power by the formation of an elective institution at the regional level. However, the fact that in the long-run it was planned that Upper Silesia should become a self-governing region suggests another particularly important feature. The fact that the Regional Contract's proposals were mainly prepared under the inspiration of experts from the voivodship office suggests that they also believed the regional administration (regional government) should represent first and foremost regional society. Their vision was that future regional development policy should be prepared in the region, not in the centre, as it was taking place there. Regional society should decide what it wants, while the regional government, as an elective institution, should create the opportunity to fulfil these expectations. The fact that the regional elite demanded decentralisation is natural after the period of socialist authoritarianism. However, the regional proposal for a self-governing voivodship (heavily inspired by inter-war autonomy) reflects the belief among the then current voivodship office (despite being formally the representative of central government) that it was regional society that was the 'master' of regional politics. As a result, a particularly significant issue is the role of central interests as subordinate to regional ones.

Moreover, the idea of the self-governing region was supported on financial grounds, as the formation of such a region assumed strong financial discretion, which should finally be sufficient to conduct regional restructuring. At the same time, this idea of the self-governing region meant also that the decisions on region's restructuring would be taken

there. Czarnik, the director of Economic Department, indicates strong support for this idea among the regional elite:⁵¹²

The contract is the introduction of self-government at the voivodship level. It made it possible to initiate restructuring of the region, which will spread over decades. For the first time, a large representation of the Katowice voivodship gathered together, and they supported the idea of the formation of the Contract.⁵¹³

6.2 The origins of the Regional Contract

i. The role of the regional Solidarity Trade Union

The origins of the contract are twofold. On the one hand, it grew out of the Solidarity Trade Union's proposals for the creation of a special system of social guarantees in the region, in the expectation of mass redundancies in the heavy industry sectors. This reflects the fact that coal exploitation and iron production supported the existence of 60-70 per cent of the other firms in the region.⁵¹⁴ On the other hand, the Regional Contract was also the result of the new administrative elite's own project for regional restructuring in the absence of such projects by the national elite.

The project of the Regional Contract was first presented in February 1994 at a meeting of the regional Solidarity Trade Union, by its leader Kempinski.⁵¹⁵ The original Solidarity project was more a list of economic and social demands than a project for regional restructuring. It was only in the final version of the Contract that the emphasis shifted towards regional restructuring and the expectation of social privileges was limited. However, Solidarity's achievement lay in popularising the idea of the Regional Contract beyond the region, gaining the support of the national elite, and finally getting it signed by the government. First, on 17 October 1994, President Wałęsa, preparing for the next presidential election, offered his support to the project of the Regional Contract after a demonstration organised by regional Solidarity in Warsaw. As a result, this proposal was discussed by the national elite, although earlier, before Wałęsa's (Solidarity Trade

⁵¹² In this part of the chapter the opinions of the founders of the Contract are presented; in the second part of the chapter the more varied opinions of the regional administrative elite will be presented, that is, those of Contract participants, sympathisers, and those who were strongly against it.

⁵¹³ Czarnik quoted in *Dziennik Zachodni*, 5 October 1995.

⁵¹⁴ Dziadul, *Polityka*, 13 May 1995.

⁵¹⁵ Żurek, *Gazeta w Katowicach* 6-7 August 1994.

Union origins) recognition, the regional Solidarity demonstration had not been taken into account by the national elite at all.⁵¹⁶

The political strength of regional Solidarity distinguished it from other regional organisations, among them the political parties. Regional political parties were top-down organisations, strong due to the personalities of their leaders rather than their membership numbers. It was regional Solidarity which enjoyed the support of several thousand blue-collar workers. Among them there was a strong representation of coalminers (Kempski himself was a coalminer), who expected to be made redundant. Thus, they were very militant and ready to demonstrate in Warsaw to 'force' the national elite to recognise the economic and social difficulties of Upper Silesia. Gradually the regional Solidarity protests and threats were noted by the national elite, and they expected large-scale political unrest in the region. Kempski himself threatened to instigate strikes and demonstrations by the regional Trade Union. This sounded especially convincing as the regional trade unions, wishing to strengthen their political power, created the special military-type, 'so-called quick-response groups' of the Trade Unions.⁵¹⁷

On the other hand, the Regional Contract proposals became much more attractive to the national political elite immediately before the presidential election, especially due to the fact that, ten per cent of the Polish population lived in the Katowice voivodship.

ii. Regional policy of the Katowice voivodship, 1990-1994 – the independent actions

The origins of the Regional Contract also lie in the regional policies prepared by lobbies independent of heavy industry at the beginning of the nineties. After 1990, the new regional administrative elite arrived. For example, 80 per cent of the councillors chosen then had been selected for the first time.⁵¹⁸ A similar shift of the elite took place at that time in the voivodship office elite.

⁵¹⁶ Dziadul, *Polityka*, 13 May 1995.

⁵¹⁷ Starzyński, *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 18 October 1994.

⁵¹⁸ Kolczyński, 1996: 17.

The Regional Contract was the next stage of the regional elite's work on preparing programmes for regional restructuring, initiated after their arrival in 1990. These early projects for regional restructuring went through significant modifications. At first, there were demands for autonomy, typical of a period of radical and revolutionary change (1990-1994). Gradually, these proposals for autonomy (although what exactly that meant was often unclear) were replaced by more moderate proposals for decentralisation which were more politically acceptable to the national elite. The Regional Contract, formed in the more stable, 'restoration' period in 1995, is the best example of this change of approach. However, all the projects prepared by the regional administrative elite, both the early ones and the Regional Contract, have in common an attempt to adapt a dysfunctional state structure of administration, and to address the even more critical situation of Upper Silesia.

The early concepts of regional restructuring assumed above all that regional restructuring could only be initiated and conducted by the regional and local elite. The situation in Upper Silesia was described by regional scientists as critical because of internal colonisation, that is, the unequal relationship between the centre (the capital) and Upper Silesia (the 'periphery').⁵¹⁹

One of the main projects from which the Regional Contract evolved was the Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia prepared by the Department of the Economy of the voivodship office in October 1992. It was an interesting attempt to improve the economic and social situation in Upper Silesia by extending the discretion of the regional administrative elite. The programme was an attempt to adapt to an extremely centralised state, where strong legal obstacles existed at the regional level enabling the regional administrative elite to introduce and conduct any regional policy directly. The difficulties of the voivodship office authorities were further increased by national conditions, as at that time there was little awareness of a need for regional policies and this issue was missing from the agendas of all the governments after 1989 (until the reforms were initiated in 1998).

Thus, the national elite's decision to sign the Regional Contract was significant, in the opinion of Czarnik, the Director of the Department of Economy of the voivodship

⁵¹⁹ See for example Błasiak *Przegląd tygodniowy* 1989 or Szczepański (1995).

office, who was the key figure in preparing the regional restructuring programmes for Upper Silesia and the founder of the Regional Contract. It shows a meaningful achievement of the voivodship office in Katowice, which gradually made the national elite aware of the need for decentralisation, and for carrying out regional policy.

This process of 'educating' the national elite about the need for a regional policy was, in Czarnik's opinion, hindered by the almost annual changes of government. Thus, not until July 1994 did the Minister of Finance, Kołodko, use the concept of a regional policy for the first time in his 'Strategy for Poland'. At that time, the regional concepts proposed by ministries repeated whole paragraphs from the programme presented by the Department of Economy of the voivodship office, although, in Czarnik's opinion, this was not followed by supportive central government actions:

At most, sentences taken verbatim from our programme appear in some statements of the ministerial civil servants. It is a pity that in practice nothing results from this. Governments and civil servants change too often, but the programme [the Regional Contract] has to operate for 15 to 30 years.⁵²⁰

The Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia was the first stage in the formation of regional policy. At this stage, the regional elite showed considerable confidence in trying to solve the regional problems alone. The programme concentrated on two main regional actors: the communes and businesses located in the region. The role of the voivodship office, in contrast to other institutions, was much more limited, despite its main authors' coming from there. The strong role of local government and the simultaneously limited role for the voivodship office prescribed in this programme reflects the situation that existed at that time in regional administration. As a result, despite its strong desire, the voivodship office's opportunity for participation was limited. Its participation was only possible through indirect action in a network of economic institutions on whose boards the *voivode* sat.

This programme was criticised by Błasiak, Nawrocki and Szczepański (1994) for its lack of integration with state institutions. However, it is questionable whether this criticism is justified, given the situation of such limited voivodship administration responsibilities and abundant legal obstacles which prevented the voivodship office from directly conducting any regional policy. Additionally, central government's

⁵²⁰ Czarnik quoted in *Gość Niedzielny*, 8 May 1994.

passivity itself brought about the actions of the regional authorities, until the national elite signed the Regional Contract and it was incorporated into regional restructuring.

In such a situation, the only administrative institution which could play a crucial role in the region was the commune, which had gone through the 1990 reform. As a result, local government had its own financial resources and administrative independence from central government and was thus able to concentrate on local aims. In the Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia, the commune was to be the nucleus of the network of local institutions, co-operating closely with the firms and economic, social, cultural, and educational associations located in its territory, together pursuing common local aims. Moreover, in the situation of a lack of administrative reform, the communes were also trying to expand this network to district and regional levels.

The Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia did not aim to change institutional state structure but instead tried to adapt (to modify, but not transform) its highly dysfunctional system. Thus, despite the necessity of a powerful institution forming and implementing regional policies at the regional level, the voivodship office's role remained as limited as it had been during the socialist period and was not modified by administrative reform after 1990. In part, voivodship office responsibilities were increased by the formation of several economic institutions supervised by the *voivode* or by directors of various departments, which was to compensate for the limitation of administrative responsibilities at voivodship level. One of the members of the voivodship office elite engaged in regional planning explained the reason for the formation of the new institutions in this manner:

Conducting regional policy is necessary. Because there was 'a gap' [of responsibilities], it was necessary to create such institutions, which would be a sort of replacement for the lack of institutions representing the regional entity. They were to replace those institutions which should function at the regional level, mainly around the *voivode*.

The most important institutions established by the *voivode* were the Upper Silesian Agency of Development and Promotion, an institution organising international commercial exhibitions, an agency promoting Katowice's international airport, and an institution responsible for the development of a regional network of roads. This group of institutions was aimed at attracting foreign and internal investors by means of improving regional facilities. Other agencies were aimed at the recovery of the region's economic performance; for example an agency responsible for regional co-ordination of

construction and another responsible for the electricity supply system. An additional important agency was designed for consultation about the privatisation of some one hundred state companies in the region, which were suffering from the effects of under-investment during the socialist era.

All the regional programmes, from the beginning, had to deal with the problem of collecting the substantial amounts of money necessary for regional restructuring. The Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia was prepared in the absence of substantial funds for regional restructuring. Thus it was crucial for even the smallest revenue gathered in the region to stay in there instead of being transferred to the central budget, as it was believed that the central ministries would not return even a small proportion of the money produced there.

The revenue gathered in the region was to be channelled and circulated into the network of regional institutions. The crucial role in the horizontal circulation was to be played by the new institutions formed by the voivodship office. In other words, the money earned by one institution in the network financed other institutions in the programme, instead of being sent to the voivodship budget and then to central coffers.⁵²¹ However, this was only a partial substitute for the preservation of money produced in the region to be spent on regional restructuring. The best solution was thought to be the expected administrative reform of districts and regions assisted by the decentralisation of finances.

Czarnik, the co-author of the Regional Contract, believed that as long as the money produced in the region did not remain there, talk about Upper Silesia as a privileged region or as a burden for which all of Poland was to be sacrificed would be groundless. In other words, only if the national financial system became transparent, and the money produced in regions stayed there, could the myth that the region subsidises the rest of Poland, or the contrary myth that the national economy subsidises the region, be verified or refuted:

Silesia does not need charity but more discretion and freedom... Besides, not only Silesia but the rest of the voivodships demand the abolition of the centralised tax system. A rational tax structure would be as follows: 35 per cent for the commune, 35 per cent for the region, and 30 per cent for the centre for the performance of national tasks. 'Render unto

⁵²¹ *Kontrakt Regionalny*, 1995, volume 1: 5.

Caesar what belongs to Caesar, but what is left we should control ourselves... Then the money would be here, not in the capital, and it is here that real ideas for Silesia originate.⁵²²

6.3 The concept of the Regional Contract – the agreement of the regional and national elite

Analysis of the Regional Contract will concentrate first on why, in contrast to earlier regional programmes, the decision was taken in the Regional Contract to incorporate the national elite. The second issue to be discussed will be the consolidation of the regional elite before the negotiations with the national elite. The third to be discussed will be negotiations with the central elite and their decision to agree to sign the Regional Contract, and the fourth will be the formation of a common body of central and regional elite, the Council of the Regional Contract, will be discussed. In the fifth section, the main topic areas – ‘chapters’ of the Regional Contract. However, attention will be concentrated mostly in the chapter 4 which deals to the administrative dimension. In the next two sections (six and seven) the two crucial administrative institutions will be presented: Local Segments and the Upper Silesia Fund. Finally in section eight, the inspiration of the inter-war period of autonomy in the work on the Regional Contract and references to the belief that Upper Silesia had been ‘a privileged region’ will be discussed. All these issues indicate the role of the national elite but more importantly the role of the regional elite in initiating the regional restructuring. Thus, in the last section, direct comparisons will be drawn between the role of the regional elite in initiating reforms and the national elite’s actions in 1989 which initiated the national transition.

i. Why was the participation of the national elite necessary?

In early 1993, the idea of the Regional Contract emerged within the framework of the Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia. The Regional Contract shows the evolution of concepts concerning regional policy by the regional elite. At the beginning of the nineties there were calls for autonomy. These had a rather ideological character and were an expression of the frustration of the regional elite with the national elite’s

⁵²² Czarnik quoted in *Polityka*, 17 December 1994.

complacency (the concept of internal colonisation) rather than including serious proposals or actions aimed at introducing the idea. The Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia introduced in October 1992 concentrated on increasing informal power at the voivodship level by the formation of institutions supervised by the *voivode*. However, the voivodship office authorities, as my interviews indicated, gradually recognised the exhaustion of all the opportunities for action available to the regional elite after the introduction of this programme. In other words, the efforts of the regional elite by itself to be more efficient were exhausted and the incorporation of the national elite was therefore seen as necessary. Thus, the Regional Contract was to increase *voivode* responsibilities but, at this stage, co-operation with the national elite was viewed as essential.

At the same time, the creation of the Regional Contract shows the change in the relationship with the national elite. Radical demands, at the beginning of the nineties, for strong power for regional authorities were made so that they would conduct restructuring alone, and threatening calls for autonomy were replaced by a more diplomatic approach for decentralisation of power. The regional elite still wanted to play the crucial role, but, after 1994, in dialogue with the central elite. One of the founders of the Regional Contract and a member of the voivodship office elite recalls this evolution of regional policy and the decision to incorporate the national elite as the most important change in regional policy until then:

The period when *voivode* Ciszak came to office already required a change in the programme of regional development. The regional programme in the form in which it existed in *voivode* Czech's time, had reached a certain barrier in its evolution... Later [when *voivode* Ciszak came], it was necessary to create such institutions as, for example, the Upper Silesia Fund, which could not be created without the substantial participation of the central budget. As a result, there was a need to incorporate the ministries into the regional programme... This was the main reason for the creation of this idea.

The attempt to redefine the division of powers between the voivodship and central-level in the Regional Contract arose from similar diagnoses to those presented in the earlier programmes at the beginning of the nineties. The national elite was not thought to be able to carry out regional restructuring, as it lacked a comprehensive vision of regional restructuring with all its regional 'reforms' being driven by sectoral and narrow ministerial interests. The national elite was also accused of conscious delays in introducing reforms in Upper Silesia compared to other parts of Poland. It was finally accused of spending insufficient funds on regional restructuring. Moreover, even the

limited amounts of money spent by the separate ministries were being used uneconomically. Thus, more power for the voivodship office administration was seen as necessary for better use of at least those limited resources.⁵²³

The lack of the national elite's engagement in the regional restructuring was also explained by the expected size of the financial resources estimated to be necessary and the anticipated difficulties; for example, the scale of social dissatisfaction and possible unrest. Moreover, the frequent changes of government meant that each new elite only gradually learnt about the 'urgency' of the regional problems, and the policy towards Upper Silesia lacked continuity. As a result, the central authorities were perceived as being unwilling or unable to solve regional problems even though this elite was carrying out fairly radical restructuring on a national scale. Czarnik argued that the cost of restructuring Upper Silesia was seen as the main obstacle to Polish reform, slowing down state development or, more radically, its largest burden. Czarnik contradicted this popular opinion, however, when he argued that not initiating the restructuring of Upper Silesia could slow down the national transition:

Do you remember what Silesia meant for Polish reconstruction after the war? But how is Silesia seen now? In various situations it is seen as a problem – I know this from my own experience. But I argue the opposite; is it really Silesia, with its outdated industry, requiring enormous expenditure on reconstruction, with its devastated technical infrastructure, that is a problem for Poland? Is it Silesia with half of the ecological and health problems in the country, with hundreds of other issues, which brings discredit to civilisation at the end of the twentieth century that is a problem for Poland? On the contrary I argue: Is not it rather due to the maintenance of the conditions which I mentioned earlier in Silesia that reforms in Poland are slow?⁵²⁴

The pre-election situation was seen by the voivodship office elite as a rare chance created by the regional Solidarity Trade Union to force negotiations on regional restructuring with the national elite. The regional elite saw itself as being both more knowledgeable about regional needs and more efficient than the national elite, and believed that consultation with them, even on the sectoral reforms then being carried out (for example, in coalmining) was necessary. In the next stage, the comprehensive projects for regional restructuring were to be worked out by the national and regional elite together.

⁵²³ According to *Kontrakt Regionalny*, 1995, volume 8 Part I: 3.

⁵²⁴ Czarnik quoted in *Polityka*, 17 December 1994.

Today, many exceptionally serious aspects of the Silesian problems escape *voivode* tutelage. There is an attempt to solve problems concerning the functioning of Silesian coalmining and metallurgy in isolation from their natural environment. Similarly, 'Job Centres' are run by special administration units. Let us look, for example, at social assistance, which is mostly addressed to coalminers from liquidated coalmines, who voluntarily resigned from work in the pits. The social assistance schemes were established by a government act and the money was guaranteed. But the fact is that there is little interest in them as coalminers persistently prefer to work in the jobs they always had.⁵²⁵

The regional elite saw itself as the main actor whose participation was considered necessary to carry out regional restructuring. Prolonging the situation while it had very limited responsibilities was completely unacceptable. The regional administrative elite often emphasised the critical ecological and health conditions in the region:

In the meantime, Silesia cannot wait any longer with its problems! We want to speed up what the politicians have been talking about for a long time – we want real restructuring, not declarations.⁵²⁶

Moreover, as Czarnik, one of the key figures in the formation of the Regional Contract, said, the regional elite wanted to initiate the regional reforms immediately as they felt that they had finished preparation of a comprehensive vision of regional restructuring.⁵²⁷ The signing of the Regional Contract was to create the opportunity to introduce regional restructuring and conduct a coherent regional policy by formation of an effective institutional structure, one of the most important institutions being the Council of the Regional Contract.

The Regional Contract was to redefine the division of power between the voivodship administration (voivodship office and local governments) and central government. However, this solution was to be applied only in the Katowice voivodship, although administration in Poland, as a whole structure, was seen as ineffective. This redefinition of responsibilities was to be achieved by the creation of the Council of the Regional Contract, formed by representatives of the regional and central government authorities. They were to take decisions on the most crucial issues for the region and divide the money allocated for heavy industry reforms more economically:

⁵²⁵ Czarnik quoted in *Trybuna Śląska*, 28 July 1994.

⁵²⁶ Czarnik quoted in *Trybuna*, 10-11 June 1995.

⁵²⁷ *Dziennik, Zachodni*, 22 September 1994.

Due to the contract, it will no longer be possible for a decision about the Katowice voivodship to be taken in Warsaw, and for those who are affected by it to learn about it from newspapers and television. Now the decision will be in consultation with the Council of the Regional Contract.⁵²⁸

The Regional Contract was also to create its own – albeit modest – financial resources, the Upper Silesia Fund, and new institutions – Local Segments, from which common plans were to be worked out for ‘district’ restructuring. However, the negotiations with the central elite and their acceptance of the Council of the Regional Contract, the Upper Silesia Fund and Local Segments, were preceded by consolidation of the regional elite as a necessary condition for the creation of the Regional Contract.

At the beginning of the work on the Regional Contract, *voivode* Ciszak, appointed on 1 June 1994, accepted the idea of the Regional Contract as a continuation of the voivodship office regional policy, until then carried out by the Department of Economy. The proposal for the Regional Contract prepared by this department was accepted by *voivode* Ciszak despite the negative views of the ruling coalition which had just appointed him. Instead, Ciszak made signing the Regional Contract an instrumental part of efforts to solve regional problems⁵²⁹ and preserve social peace in the region.⁵³⁰

ii. Consolidation of the regional elite

On 6 June 1995 the Regional Social Agreement was signed by the representatives of the regional elite. It symbolised the consolidation and ability of various political, administrative and social actors in Uppers Silesia to present a common and coherent regional policy. The list of signatories shows the participation of various regional groups in the Regional Social Agreement: economic and trade unions, local governments, and regional organisations, among them the Upper Silesia Union.

Among the main signatories of the Contract were the voivodship assembly, the Regional Economic Council, the Regional Economic Chamber, Silesia-Dąbrowa Solidarity Trade Union, the Union of Upper Silesian communes and Northern Moravia, the Agreement of Coalmining Trade Union ‘Cadre’, the Transport Association of Upper

⁵²⁸ Czarnik quoted in Grygiel *Wieczór*, 2 October 1995.

⁵²⁹ *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 20 December- 1 January 1995.

⁵³⁰ *Przegląd katowicki*, no. 1, 1995.

Silesia, Silesia-Dąbrowa Economic Association, the All-Poland Agreement of Trade Unions, and the Upper Silesia Union.

Consolidation of the regional elite was presented by the founders of the contract as an aim *per se*. Even if the Regional Contract negotiations with the national elite had not led to signing of the contract, or the implementation of the Regional Contract had not been successful, the first stage, the regional consolidation, by itself would have been an achievement. The founders believed that the regional consolidation in any case moved the work of introducing regional restructuring one step forward.

Its fundamental value is that it has been born in a climate of full consolidation of regional groups – at least, those which are to be respected. So it is an attempt to create consensus, to create together a common policy [of regional restructuring].⁵³¹

The need for regional consolidation was especially emphasised after the socialist period, which had left society extremely fragmented. Only after 1989 did some rudimentary social organisation take place. This consolidation of the regional elite was hindered by the extreme centralisation of power, with strong subordination of the regional elite in the socialist period, although in the Katowice voivodship the tradition of inter-war autonomy weakened, to some extent, the socialist legacy and eased regional consolidation. The scale of consolidation is indicated by the number of participants: 55 of the 99 communes, 39 firms, 28 economic associations, 33 trade unions and 24 other institutions.⁵³² As engagement in public life and the proliferation of social organisation had only started in 1989, it was still at the first fragmentary stage. This regional organisational fragmentation illustrates the number of regional signatories, for example; several trade union organisations. The existence of many, usually small, organisations was somewhat dangerous as potentially common action could be destroyed by contradictory aims since the actions of these organisations were often motivated mainly by opposition to a stronger organisation in order not to be absorbed by it.

Although this organisational fragmentation was, to a large extent, caused by the socialist period, and similar difficulties could be observed in many post-socialist countries, in the case of Poland it appeared in such a radical form that it is to be explained also by one more factor. This was the pre-partition Polish cult of

⁵³¹ Czarnik quoted in *Trybuna*, 10-11 June 1995.

⁵³² Cieślak, *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 22 August 1995.

individuality, placing personal freedom above consolidation, which was seen as 'subordination'. In pre-partition Poland this reached such an extreme that the objection of an individual nobleman could invalidate the decision of the whole parliament (*liberum veto*).

The consolidation of the regional elite before the signing of the contract was the first time that this had taken place on such a scale. For example, MPs from one of the ruling coalition parties (the SLD), which at the beginning had been against the project, arguing that it attempted to legalise the special, privileged treatment of the region, joined the work on the Contract. They joined the project so not to stay isolated from the mainstream regional consolidation. Exclusion from work on the Regional Contract would mean the absence of their voice during negotiations with central government and later, when the Contract would come into force, their absence from participation in the work of the Council of the Regional Contract. The SLD's arguments were politically motivated; their opposition to joining the Regional Contract was also due to political division at central level, and the fact that the Contract had been initiated by the Solidarity Trade Union prompted them to attack it.

This regional consolidation in the end forced even those who had earlier been opposed to join the work on the Regional Contract. However, signing the Regional Social Agreement raised the question of what the role of the *voivode* and the voivodship office should be. The question was whether the *voivode* or the voivodship office – the representatives of central government in the region – should also join the regional consolidation 'movement' and put their signatures to the Regional Social Agreement.

In the end, *voivode* Ciszak did not sign, despite the major role of the voivodship office in initiating and co-ordinating the work on the Regional Contract. During the drafting of the Contract, the members of voivodship office administration had presented a comprehensive project for regional restructuring as they were the main agents in developing the regional policy. There was also a main centre promoting regional consolidation. The voivodship office authorities preparing the projects for regional policy were especially aware of the critical economic situation in the region and the necessity for quick regional restructuring. This inclined them to define themselves as defenders of regional interests, despite the fact that in law they were representatives of

central government. One of the members of the voivodship office elite and a co-author of the Regional Contract recollected this ambivalence of the voivodship office role:

From the beginning of the work on the Contract, the *voivode* was on the regional side, but the constitutional arrangement put him on the central government side. As a result, the *voivode* and the voivodship office decided to stand in the middle [despite their wish to stand on the regional side], to be a mediators between the social (regional) side and the central government side. It happened that the initiators and organisers of it all were voivodship office civil servants. Thus, it happened that in those early negotiations the *voivode*'s civil servants served as experts on both sides, for the social and the central governments, and that is how it worked.

The conflict around the role of the *voivode* intensified a few days before the signing of the contract. The signing of a contract between the central government and the regional elite, aimed at increasing the powers of the regional elite, was expected to force the *voivode* to declare on which side he stood. Despite legal arrangements, the *voivode* and the voivodship office authorities' actions during negotiations suggested that they would 'choose' the regional side. Only a few days before the agreement, the regional press suggested a change of mind by the *voivode* and was surprised by his decision not to sign the Regional Social Agreement.⁵³³ The same person from the voivodship office indicates this inner conflict over the *voivode*'s role:

The constitutional arrangements concerning the position of the *voivode* meant that the *voivode* was an arm of the government in the voivodship. Thus, the *voivode* signed the contract as a representative of the government. The voivodship office's civil servants were pushed from the regional side towards the central government side and to some extent became more conservative.

However, despite the fact that formally the *voivode* was separated from the regional side and remained the representative of central government, one of the voivodship office interviewees mentioned, during negotiations, that central government had to remind the *voivode* that he was its representative. This was because the voivodship office identified and sympathised strongly with the region and was 'forcing from the centre' obligations in favour of the region.

⁵³³ Wiśniewki, *Gazeta Wyborcza – Handlowa*, 8 June 1995.

iii. The negotiations

After the signing of the Regional Social Agreement in June 1995, negotiations with central government started. Five months later the Regional Contract was signed between the representatives of the regional and central elite. Although the central government signed the Regional Contract, the negotiations and the Regional Contract formula suggest the national elite's reservations about the regional elite's proposals. For example, the negotiations were initiated by the Ministry of Agriculture, which was surprising considering that Silesia was a region of heavy industry.

The central government's indecisiveness and wilfulness were also seen in relation to the decision about who should sign the contract. In the end, the main government representative who signed the Regional Contract was *voivode* Ciszak, in the presence of the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, Kołodko; the second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Agriculture and Food Economy, Jagieliński; and the Minister and Head of the Council of Ministers' Office, Borowski (the ministers 'put their signatures' to the contract to confirm their presence and validate the *voivode*'s signature).

There were no regulations which decided or explained why the *voivode* should sign and those representatives of central government confirm his signature, or why the Prime Minister did not sign the Regional Contract, since he had declared his support for the idea. Moreover, the Prime Minister, Oleksy, was present during the signing of the Contract but, unlike his ministers, his presence was not mentioned in the document, and he did not put his 'confirming signature' to the Contract. This suggests central government's wish to reduce the importance of the Contract and to avoid responsibility.

The fact that central government decided to sign the contract indicates that they wanted to gain pre-election support from the Katowice voivodship inhabitants, but it seems that they wished at the same time to decrease its importance. Only three days before the signing of the contract, the regional press suggested that the contract would be signed by the Prime Minister himself, while up until then it was not even certain if the contract would be signed at all.⁵³⁴ This illustrates the government's indecisiveness about the contract and the fluidity of opinion during the negotiations.

⁵³⁴ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 2 October 1995.

Cieszewska indicates that the contradictions clung to the Regional Contract as a pre-electoral decision and that central government did not really wish to decentralise power and engage in the introduction of the Contract. She points out that on the same day on which the government accepted the Regional Contract in which it declared the wish for decentralisation, it did not agree to a bill proposing an increase of *voivodes'* powers. In her opinion, this last decision reveals the real face of Oleksy's government which wished to preserve the centralised model of ruling.⁵³⁵

The main signatory for the region (the so-called 'social side') was the chairman of the voivodship assembly, Frąckowiak, assisted by representatives of various economic, trade union and regional organisations.

iv. The Council

Although the founders were not fully satisfied with the results of the negotiations,⁵³⁶ they decided to sign the Regional Contract. However, the Contract, with all its imprecision and weaknesses, was to guarantee the initiation and continuation of regional restructuring. The main advantage of the Regional Contract was the limitation of the good or bad will of the central government. The Council of the Regional Contract was composed of representatives of the national and regional elite, and its formation meant their joint decision on regional restructuring. As a result, central government wilfulness was expected to be limited. After the formation of the Council, the region was supposed to be less vulnerable to the frequent changes of government and their policies. It would be the council's efficiency which would determine the speed of regional restructuring. In addition, the founders expected that the Council's position would be substantially strengthened by a parliamentary act defining the powers and obligations of all participants in the restructuring (limiting central government's wilfulness). However, this was not passed.

The formation of the Council of the Regional Contract was also to put the decision-making process close to the region. The inspiration was derived from the regional restructuring experiences of such countries as Germany, France and Denmark, where such councils had been formed. Czarnik remarked in a press interview:

⁵³⁵ Cieszewska, *Rzeczpospolita*, 6 October 1995.

⁵³⁶ Grygiel *Wieczór*, 2 October 1995.

Do you not believe in the goodwill of the government?

How to restructure the region? In democratic states it is done by regional councils, which are constitutionally arranged. For example, such councils were formed in Germany, France and Denmark. You made the assumption that I do not believe in the goodwill of government. Until now, we acted waiting for the goodwill of the government. And in the meantime five years went by and many people lost in consequence of this transition. Only agreement with the government, independent of political and government games, will start the real restructuring of the region.⁵³⁷

The Council of the Regional Contract was a body formed by the *voivode* and representatives of 13 ministries and central institutions. The regional elite consisted of the chairman of the voivodship assembly, representatives of regional trade unions, representatives of the communes and commune associations, organisations of employers, and, finally, representatives of social and cultural organisations. Altogether, the council comprised of 32 members, although right up to the last moment, the size of the council had not been defined.⁵³⁸ In the end, the number agreed seemed to have been tailored to the composition of the regional elite.

v. The Chapters of the Regional Contract

The contract was divided into six chapters, according to main subject. These were the areas recognised as the most crucial for regional restructuring. The first chapter concerned education. Its aim was to promote higher and secondary education and to change educational profiles to fit the new economic structure of the region (note that the Katowice voivodship was traditionally the region with the lowest level of education). Second, came social security. This chapter was mostly written in accordance with the demands of regional trade unions and was to compensate for the difficulties of regional restructuring by introducing additional social assistance systems. The third chapter, about the environment, aimed to co-ordinate regional transportation and planning of construction.

The fourth chapter focused on the development of self-government (*samorządność*) by the formation of elective institutions above the existing local level of the communes as it referred to districts and, most of all, to a self-governing region. The final aim of this development was declared to be the formation of a self-governing region, with the inter-

⁵³⁷ Czarnik quoted in *Trybuna*, 10-11 June 1995.

⁵³⁸ *Dziennik Zachodni*, 20 November 1995.

war autonomy to be replaced by larger discretion for a self-governing voivodship ruled by an elective regional council.

The sides participating in the contract recognise that the aim of the contract is the permanent increase of the responsibilities and discretion of voivodship institutions, with the final aim of the formation of a self-governing voivodship.⁵³⁹

In the situation of the absence of further reform of the administration, the development of self-government (*samorządność*) in the Katowice voivodship was due to the formation of two institutions: first, self-governing voivodship, and second, Local Segments at the district level. These proposals for further development of self-government (at district and regional levels) received their greatest inspiration from the establishment of local government at the commune level in 1990. As a result, the communes became effective administrative institutions, in contrast to central government.⁵⁴⁰ For example, the effectiveness of communes indicates the economic effectiveness of towns participating in the Pilot Programme, compared with public administration performing similar tasks in rural areas. Thus, the promotion of self-governing regional institutions was seen as better than being ruled by a 'far away' ineffective centre.

The Contract was expected to lead in the long-run to the formation of the self-governing Katowice voivodship. This process was to resemble the process of decentralisation of the Big Towns as a result of their participation in the Pilot Programme. In the case of Big Towns, their economic efficiency, despite political hindrances, had finally brought about the permanent delegation of the powers they first received during the Pilot Programme. In other words, their economic effectiveness forced decentralisation, and consequently systemic administrative reform moved one step forward. In the same way, it was hoped that in the long run the Regional Contract would promote decentralisation and force further systemic administrative reform, which would transform current voivodships into self-governing voivodships in Poland as a whole. In this context, the Regional Contract was seen as an instrument of decentralisation and a means of forcing

⁵³⁹ *Kontrakt Regionalny*, Project Version 2.1. Chapter 6 p: 16.

⁵⁴⁰ During the Pilot Programme the Big Towns performed the same tasks as the public administration in rural areas, but the economic results of the Big Towns were several times better, whereas the institutions supervised by the public administration (such as schools) were often declared bankrupt (see also chapter five).

administrative reform at the regional level in the long run. This is illustrated by a quotation from the official declaration:

The parties understand that the condition necessary for the implementation of the Regional Contract is the permanent enlargement of the authority and competence of local communities.⁵⁴¹

A self-governing voivodship also meant that in the future the voivodship office would represent a region. This contrasted with the situation during the Regional Contract negotiations, when the voivodship office had been the representative of central government despite its having to be reminded of this fact. This distinguished the voivodship office from the communes, which were 'the true representatives' of the region.⁵⁴² Thus, the communes could present independent opinions, even those opposing the views of central government, and criticise its actions when these were against their interests, as when local government grants were insufficient. In the opposite situation was the voivodship office, which could not officially criticise central government, even if it was very critical, especially on the issues of regional restructuring and extreme centralisation of administrative power.

vi. Local Segments

One of the central ideas of the Regional Contract was the formation of Local Segments, which were substitutes for districts and were organised by the communes in co-operation with the economic and social organisations in their territory. In addition, each Local Segment was supposed to have a representative of the *voivode*. As one of the negotiators recalled, in addition to central government's agreement to form the Upper Silesia Fund, Local Segments were the second issue for which it was the most difficult to gain approval by the central elite, while concessions on those two issues were considered impossible by the regional elite. The formation of Local Segments was to compensate for the sectoral reforms, isolated from other sectors and from local needs, which had been carried out until then.

⁵⁴¹ 'Kontrakt Regionalny' compact disc, 1997.

⁵⁴² Similarly, in Great Britain local government is also only representative of the local community, without being representative of central government. However, in Poland, at least at the district level, there has always been a representative of central authorities.

The core of the Regional Contract was an answer to the problem of how to restructure heavy industry. This reform could not be isolated from the problem of finding new places of work and re-training the unemployed in a situation of mass redundancies. These problems were to be solved by the specially-formed Local Segments. As a result, the main aims of the Local Segments were decrease unemployment by the development of new places of work, to create conditions to facilitate the formation and existence of small businesses, and finally, to assist in the restructuring of heavy-industry firms.

The difficulty central government had in accepting the idea of Local Segments during the negotiations was related to the fact that the power of ministries would be substantially limited and it would also be necessary to change the way various ministries functioned. 'Independent' until then, the reforms proposed by each ministry separately had to be co-ordinated at central level to reflect a correlation among those economic sectors and those co-ordinated projects that would be presented to Local Segments.

Moreover, the communes and representatives of the *voivode*, economic firms, and educational and social institutions located in Local Segment territory would participate in decision-making as they had to be consulted about decisions taken by ministries. Moreover, financial decisions had to be reached together. As a result, the existing situation, which the regional authorities found completely unacceptable, of not being informed about programmes of regional restructuring, would come to an end. The director of the Department of Economy in the voivodship office argued:

It should be remembered that the restructuring of coalmining and metallurgy in our country is subordinate to the Ministry of Industry. Due to the law, there is no participation by regional authorities in planning on those issues at all. After all, the social results of sectoral actions which are within ministerial scope concern us directly, so we should have the right to say something!⁵⁴³

In this context, the Local Segments and their councils could be treated as smaller units of the Regional Contract for the Katowice voivodship, which was to be governed at voivodship level through the Council of the Regional Contract. In the same way, the Local Segments operating in the territory of a few communes, similar to 'district size', were to be smaller units, each forming its own council composed of representatives of

⁵⁴³ Czarnik quoted in *Gość Niedzielny*, 8 May 1994.

organisations acting in those segments. The co-ordination of policy and its adaptation to the particular needs and advantages of the territory in which the segment was formed was to take place in this council.

It was assumed that the Katowice voivodship was too big and too diversified an area for an effective initiation of regional policy, and therefore it should be divided into smaller entities: the Local Segments.⁵⁴⁴

The formation of Local Segments also aimed to enable the *voivode* to participate in the activity of the segments through the presence of his representatives on their councils, and later, through a network of Local Segments, the *voivode* would be able to co-ordinate policies in the whole voivodship. At the same time, the Local Segments to a certain extent were to substitute for the non-existence of district-level administration and to make possible the formulation of a common policy at a supra-local level, thus uniting the actions of isolated communes. By the middle of 1997, 11 Local Segments had been created, consisting of 69 (that is two-thirds) of all the Katowice voivodship communes.

At times, it was also emphasised that the effects of extreme centralisation of administration were even stronger in the Katowice voivodship, which differed greatly from other typical Polish voivodships in relation to its dense population, urbanisation and heavy-industry production. However, the central government treated every voivodship in the same manner, not recognising any particular needs of a voivodship, which in the opinion, of the regional administrative elite, resulted in the region not being treated fairly. The key example was subsidies for transport out of the towns. As the Katowice voivodship was one big metropolis, almost all transport was within towns, and, as a result, the Katowice voivodship did not receive these subsidies. The main explanation for this 'unjust' treatment was the central government's lack of knowledge about the particular problems of the region. In the regional administrative opinion, it was also one of the main reasons why the government did not know how to govern Upper Silesia, and this was another argument used in the Regional Contract for decentralisation.⁵⁴⁵

⁵⁴⁴ *Kontrakt Regionalny*, compact disc, 1997.

⁵⁴⁵ Compare also chapter seven, especially section 7.4.

The heavy urbanisation of this voivodship also meant that the Regional Contract considered the issue of a specifically-metropolitan type of administrative arrangement to improve the co-ordination and effectiveness of local governments. However, this was defined as a long-term aim and the Regional Contract did not present any detailed proposals on this kind of problem.

The fifth chapter on the economy is also particularly important. These proposals of this chapter were the continuation of policies put forward by the Programme of Regional Economic Policy for Upper Silesia in 1992. In contrast to earlier projects, the critical issues for the further development of the region – the restructuring of coalmining and metallurgy – were at the core of the programme. Thus, the Regional Contract is to be interpreted as the next stage of the work of preparing a regional policy, trying to solve the most challenging issue of regional restructuring.

The Regional Contract assumed firstly that the modernising of coalmining would require substantial grants from the central budget. Secondly, it assumed that the central government had heavy obligations to regional society. The contract required that redundancies in coalmining be preceded by preparation in terms of re-training, the provision of educational centres and investment in the development of new places of work:

Coalmining needs help – most of all, the transformation of its structure into a highly profitable and competitive economic organisation; when it achieves this condition, the sector will get the chance to rise to the position of the leading European coal producer...

Second, the state and the region are obligated to assist its reform and free coalmining from excessive employment. Doing this in a civilised manner means the obligation first to form new places of work outside coalmining and in this manner avoid mass redundancies.⁵⁴⁶

vii. The Upper Silesian Fund

The last chapter, concerning finances, concentrates on obtaining the means for regional restructuring. The major institution aimed at guaranteeing revenues for regional restructuring was the Upper Silesia Fund formed in December 1995. The fund was

⁵⁴⁶ Czarnik quoted in *Trybuna Górnica*, 9 March 1995.

headed by Czarnik, the former director of the Department of Economy of the voivodship office.

The concept of the Upper Silesia Fund was in part inspired by the Silesian Treasury, which existed in the inter-war period. It was to be the region's own budget. Moreover, both these institutions (Local Segments and the Upper Silesia Fund) were to be peculiar only to this region. The Silesian Treasury was formed out of taxes gathered in the region, as 83 per cent of these were left in the region. The new name, the Upper Silesia Fund, was to emphasise its distinctiveness from the Silesian Treasury, which during the inter-war period had been the institution guaranteeing economic autonomy.

The Upper Silesia Fund also had different means of operating as money needed for restructuring would be received in four payments transferred from central government. It would not be a permanent inflow of money as it had been in the inter-war period. In 1996, a total of 100 million złoty was to be received from the central budget. For each of the next two years 40 million złoty were to be added, and in the last year, 1998, 30 million złoty.⁵⁴⁷ Central-level revenues from the state budget were given by separate ministries in the form of earmarked subsidies. This form of financing the Upper Silesia Fund shows the maintenance of socialist vertical fragmentation in administration.

Second, the Upper Silesia Fund was also to be financed from regional and local resources, that is, from local government budgets. In addition, Czarnik expected to receive money from regional banks, but this demanded state guarantees which would encourage banking activity. He argued:

It is a pity but there is no serious capital in the region, and the changes proposed by us require financial revenues to be spent on investment at high risk. Thus, the banks will not give credit, so investment funds which receive government guarantees need to be formed. Without central government guarantees, the contract does not make any sense.⁵⁴⁸

The World Bank analysis of February 1994 indicated that the region needed 200 million dollars in a period of between 15 and 30 years, depending on the speed of the restructuring. According to Czarnik, this was an unimaginable amount of money for the Polish central budget.⁵⁴⁹ As a result, the third important source of revenue was to come

⁵⁴⁷ Cieszewska *Rzeczpospolita*, 22 December 1995.

⁵⁴⁸ Czarnik quoted in *Trybuna Śląska*, 13 December 1994.

⁵⁴⁹ *Gość Niedzielny*, 8 May 1994.

from foreign sources in the form of loans and grants. Among these, the most important was the European Union's PHARE fund and its earmarked programme, STRUDER, directed towards the structural development of selected regions in Central and Eastern Europe. In the case of Poland, Upper Silesia was one of these regions.

The Upper Silesia Fund was aimed at collecting capital, organising regional infrastructure projects, and providing financial guarantees to banks giving loans for the restructuring of heavy-industry firms. In 1996 the Fund co-operated with nine banks. The Upper Silesia Fund also aimed for closer co-operation with the communes, (or example, communes were educated on how to issue bonds).

viii. The Regional Contract – towards autonomy or decentralisation

The creation of the Regional Contract raised the issue of the special treatment of Upper Silesia, especially with reference to its earlier experience: autonomy in the inter-war period and the privileged status of the heavy-industry centre during the socialist period. Despite this, the Regional Contract was not presented by its founders as an example of special treatment but rather as a demand for more discretion and decentralisation.

However, despite declarations of founders of the Contract trying to distance themselves from the inter-war autonomy on political grounds and thus interpreting the Regional Contract as a demand for stronger decentralisation, the inter-war inspiration is evident. The Regional Contract was a more moderate version than earlier proposals for regional autonomy, and was thus more easily acceptable to the national authorities. Nevertheless, it was also, to a large extent, inspired by the regional autonomy of the pre-war period. In the opinion of the regional elite, there had been intensive regional development as a result of the efficient rule of regional authorities who had a great deal of autonomy. They also emphasised that the region had been able to reinvest regional revenues through the Silesian Treasury, only seven per cent of which went to central government in Warsaw.

However, the political conditions of the nineties, when the restructuring of Upper Silesia was to be carried out, differed from those of the inter-war period.⁵⁵⁰ The question was how far the inter-war inspiration should go and what the final result of the Regional Contract was to be. The final aim of the Regional Contract was ambiguous – there were two contradictory opinions. The first body of opinion suggested that interpreting actions of the regional elite as aimed towards autonomy was unreasonable, while the second group argued the opposite. The first body of opinion was presented by the voivodship office administration, which declared that its members made the central elite aware of the need for regional policy and for forcing the decentralisation of a highly-centralised state. According to this option any suggestions that autonomy was to be a final aim were unreasonable. The argument that the Regional Contract was only limited to decentralisation was also to be confirmed by the fact that similar projects could be prepared for other regions. They considered that the solutions proposed in the Regional Contract could be repeated in other regions wishing to decentralise and obtain more discretion for their regional and local authorities.⁵⁵¹

For us, it is about a decentralised model of the state, as in reality we are in an extremely centralised state. The situation... is no different from the Stalinist period, at least in relation to the state budget.

So it is about administrative reform with an element of autonomy?

By no means. Let us look at it from another angle. Would an act in the constitution cause us to become a decentralised state? Or would the administrative and local government reforms lead to the formation of a regional entity? After all, we have heard about introducing reform from Prime Ministers since Bielecki and Suchocka. The former minister Strak postponed this problem to 2015. And the present minister, Borowski, only drew it back to 1997.⁵⁵²

In other words, the regional elite promoted the idea that they did not want any special treatment for the Katowice voivodship. Instead they wanted to pilot a regional decentralisation programme which could then be carried out in other regions. This was to resemble the Pilot Programme for the Big Towns which was to precede the district reform.⁵⁵³

⁵⁵⁰ To mention the most important issues: after the Second World War, the change of border meant that it was 'natural' that the whole of Upper Silesia would belong to Poland and the special autonomy of Upper Silesia became redundant.

⁵⁵¹ Dziadul, *Polityka*, 13 May 1995.

⁵⁵² Czarnik quoted in *Trybuna*, 10-11 June 1995.

⁵⁵³ Compare section 7. 3. on the Pilot Programme.

Silesia does not want special status but an agreement for piloting [regional administration reform]. The agreement is not even named a contract for the Katowice voivodship but is regional, so other regions could follow the same path.⁵⁵⁴

However, the other group of opinions shows that some felt endangered by the signing of the Regional Contract as in their opinion it could lead to autonomy or even the secession of the region. For example, accusations of autonomy were made in relation to the formation of the Upper Silesia Fund.⁵⁵⁵ Cieszewska⁵⁵⁶ accused the Regional Contract of confirming the privileged status of the region.

Despite the declaration of the founders of the Regional Contract, its signing only in the Katowice voivodship was often interpreted as the special treatment of Upper Silesia, which however did receive some social acceptance. The national opinion polls indicated that respondents believed that although during the transition initiated in 1989 certain regions went into recession, 25 per cent of Poles believed that Upper Silesia had lost most during the national transition. This research also confirms that half the Poles believed that the scale of the difficulties of the region meant that they accepted the region's right to larger state grants than other parts of Poland. However, one quarter was against this. It is also interesting that the research suggests that 72 per cent believed that before 1989 living conditions in Upper Silesia had been better than in the rest of the country.⁵⁵⁷

The inter-war autonomy and the Regional Contract also seem to differ with respect to the administrative arrangements. The inter-war autonomy had its own legal arrangements – ‘the Regional Constitution’ (*Status Organiczny*). By contrast, the Regional Contract initiative had a much more provisional character: it was valid for a period of 20 years (till the end of regional restructuring, which was to last at least for two decades); and it was only a governmental agreement, without parliamentary legitimisation. The Regional Contract initiative of the regional elite had been proposed in the absence of regional restructuring and in the absence of any wish on the part of central government to decentralise finances and introduce administrative reforms at district and, above all, at regional level. Thus, the Regional Contract was to be, to some extent, a temporary substitute for the lack of administrative reforms. One of my interviewees in the voivodship office, and the founder of the contract, said:

⁵⁵⁴ Czarnik quoted in Dziadul, *Polityka*, 13 May 1995.

⁵⁵⁵ Madej, *Dziennik Zachodni*, 6 July 1995.

⁵⁵⁶ Cieszewska *Rzeczpospolita*, 6 October 1995. b.

⁵⁵⁷ *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 15-16 July 1995.

The Regional Contract was always seen as a sort of substitute for a self-governing voivodship. Through the contract we wanted to take responsibility at least for some issues, and we wanted to act. So it was a sort of breakthrough in our efforts to decentralise. And if somebody says that the Contract experience should be used for proposed decentralisation, I believe this is very proper and right. The contract certainly was a break in centralisation.

The central government's changes of opinion during negotiations, the imprecision of the Regional Contract documents, the fact that the *voivode* signed the contract, and that the role of Prime Minister Oleksy was not defined all contrasted with the inter-war period. In the inter-war period regional privileges were guaranteed in the *Status Organiczny* and in the constitution. Instead, the Regional Contract was quite imprecise and had a voluntary character. This strengthened the argument that central government preferred to sign the Regional Contract rather than carry out real administrative reform, and that made the central government's response inauthentic.

ix. Regional restructuring – does the regional elite matter?

The Regional Contract indicated the crucial role of the regional elite in attempts to initiate regional restructuring. This resembled the primary role of the national elite in initiating the national transition in 1989. Similarly, both national and regional reforms were possible only after the Round Table agreement of the national elite or, in the case of the regional elite, by the regional consolidation, as the signing of the Regional Contract with the national elite was preceded by the regional elite's consolidation (Regional Social Agreement).

On the other hand, the Regional Contract, like the Round Table Agreement, was an agreement of elites, the first between the regional and the national elite, and the second between the opposition and the national post-communist elite. But in contrast to the Round Table Agreement, the effects of the agreement of the Regional Contract elite seemed to be much more limited and provisional. This was due to the unequal balance of power between the central and regional elite; for example the financial wilfulness of the central elite, which substantially hindered the conducting of regional restructuring. As a result, the discretion of the regional elite (after the formation of the Council of Regional Contract) also seemed to be much more limited than was expected before the contract was signed.

The Regional Contract is interesting also as it indicates the crucial role of the administrative elite in the promotion of regional consolidation. It reveals the actions of the administrative elite going beyond the confines of its role. This is typical of less stable periods, when a redefinition of roles takes place. In the case of the regional administration, the definition of roles imposed during socialism was completely inadequate after 1989. On the other hand, the absence of systemic administrative reform meant that the new roles were not defined yet. The absence of regional administrative reform with the lack of elective institutions also meant there was a political institutional vacuum at this level, with no political actors who could present the interests of regions. Thus, the regional administrative elite usurped the role of presenting and consolidating regional interests. In addition, because of the above-mentioned structural arrangements with an absence of elective institutions at voivodship level, regional consolidation was not promoted by the political regional elite (MPs from the region). The political elite was strongly divided at regional level, as there was no incentive to integrate around common regional interests. Instead, the elite's opinions rigorously reflected the political divisions at central level in parliament. This deep division over national issues made it difficult for them to unite around common regional policies, even on a basic level.

The institutional vacuum at regional level contrasted with much stronger consolidation at central and local levels, where elective institutions existed. According to Surażka (1993), this resulted in the provisional character of institutional solutions at regional level with the formation of an indirectly elected voivodship assembly with limited responsibilities. It was expected that in short time, as a consequence of reforms at district and regional levels, voivodship assembly would be replaced by directly elected regional and district governments, equipped with wide powers. To some extent, the Council of the Regional Contract was a substitute for regional government, an instrument for the co-ordination of action at regional level and a means to maintain the unity of the regional elite.

Finally, work on the Regional Contract led to self-selection of the regional elite to negotiate with the national elite. As such, the behaviour of the regional elite resembled that of the national elite during the Round Table talks in 1989. Although this was an agreement by a self-selected national elite, only a few months later it gained its social legitimisation via the ballot box. (The election, which took place in June 1989, was democratic, at least in relation to the opposition, for although 35 per cent of seats were

reserved for the communists, all other seats were available for the opposition to fight in a fully-democratic competition.) In contrast, in the case of the Regional Contract, no electoral legitimisation took place and the self-selected Council of the Regional Contract was formed.

6.4 The opinions of the regional administrative elite about the Regional Contract

Assessment of the Regional Contract is quite difficult as the regional administrative elite's opinions developed over time. The contract first evolved from radical regional demands presented by the regional Solidarity Trade Union in 1994. Later, before it was signed in October 1995, during negotiations with central government there were certain changes and concessions. The third stage was its introduction throughout 1996 and 1997.⁵⁵⁸ The regional administrative elite opinions changed in each of these periods, gradually becoming more negative.

i. Substitute

The Regional Contract was regarded by my respondents from the regional administrative elite as an interim solution, and assessment of its strengths and weaknesses was related to this fact. An example of this opinion is presented by one of the towns mayors:

On the Regional Contract I have a quite clear opinion. The written record pretends to be an agreement; this is not an agreement. 'Contract' is not an adequate name. The form in which its articles are written is a nightmare; they say nothing and they are sometimes contradictory, or do not make sense. Of the written record nothing good can be said; it is a nightmare. On its idea little good can be said as it is artificial, phoney. It is a substitute for regional reform which was not introduced despite being necessary. If reform was conducted establishing regions in a proper form, with proper definition of the *voivode*'s role which should be strengthened, that contract would not exist. Thus, it is a substitute [for administrative reform].

The Regional Contract was seen as a temporary substitute for anticipated territorial reform which would lead to the formation of big regions ruled by a *voivode* provided with wide responsibilities. This regional reform was to enable regional policy to be

⁵⁵⁸ The role of the Contract changed radically after the 1997 parliamentary election and the ensuing preparation of work on further administrative reform.

conducted and would make regional restructuring possible. However, in the meantime, when it was not known when such reform would be introduced, this provisional solution was accepted despite – in the opinion of the majority of respondents – its evident weakness. Nevertheless, the necessity to do something in the region to start regional restructuring was seen as essential. This was the reason why the members of the regional administrative elite was much more critical of the Regional Contract in my interviews than the same persons had been in the press interviews, when they felt that although it was an imperfect solution, it had to be accepted.

The mayor quoted above added that the provisional character of the Contract was related to the regional administrative elite's opinion that central government did not really wish to decentralise responsibilities and strengthen the *voivode*. Thus, the formation of the Council of Regional Contract was a substitute for regional government, transferring substantial power to the *voivode*, who, if the administrative reform was conducted, would prepare the regional policy. However, in the meantime, the Council enabled the regional elites to at least partially participate in Silesian restructuring. The Council was criticised for not being a democratically-elected body but instead being self-selected. A further negative feature was that responsibility lay in this collective body, making it difficult to hold it accountable for its actions, rather than responsibility being given to a single man, the *voivode*, in the case of decentralisation.

The government and Social Side signed the contract. The Social Side is a sort of social emanation but how it was chosen was quite arbitrary. It was selected, not democratically for sure and it was selected without any clear criteria. Nobody could explain who should represent regional society or why.

This provisional character of the Regional Contract document meant that it was criticised for its ambiguous statements. In consequence, division of responsibilities between the central elite and the regional side was blurred and putting the Regional Contract into effect was uncertain. In addition, the money promised by central government was seen as depending on their inclination as there was no stable, long-term obligation based on plans for regional restructuring but merely an isolated declaration by central government. Another member of the regional administrative elite also saw the Regional Contract as an artificial solution. However, his opinion was more positive as for him it was, at the same time, an opportunity for the regional elite to introduce regional restructuring:

I agree more or less with those who say that there is nothing in the Regional Contract, although I am one of its co-authors. However, we could never sign an agreement which solves all our problems. Personally, I call it a declaration of goodwill, of co-operation between all those who signed the contract. However, whether it is put into effect depends on us here in the voivodship.

Sometimes the idea of the Regional Contract was seen by members of the regional administrative elite as artificial as it is not possible for a region to sign a contract with central government. The explanation for this 'strange' idea was, in the opinion of the interviewee, to gain some more money from the highly-centralised state:

To be honest, I do not know if the contract could be signed – with whom? With the government? So, what can we offer? What were our expectations? In particular, finances were never sufficient here and we were always making up various ideas to gain revenues. This is the misfortune of a state which is ruled from the centre. We invented the contract, again counting on the money to come, but half a million is still too little.

The first person quoted in this section, who interpreted the regional elite's efforts to sign the Regional Contract as a substitute which was to bring at least partial decentralisation, spoke at the same time about the danger of a political 'fig-leaf'. The Regional Contract was to confirm central government's efforts even though in reality its influence on regional restructuring was minimal. It was due to mere token financing. However, in his opinion, the blame would be put on the regional elite – the Social Side, rather than on central government.

ii. Advantages

Despite various opinions about the Regional Contract, at the moment of its signing two main advantages were nearly always presented, both related to work on the preparation of the Regional Contract. The first issue was the recognition 'at last' of Upper Silesia's problems by the national elite. The second was regional consolidation and the formation of a common regional strategy. Many members of the regional elite argued that it convinced the national elite that conditions in the region were critical and thus it was necessary to introduce the regional restructuring as quickly as possible. At the same time the national elite recognised that they were not able to carry out regional restructuring alone and decided to include the regional elite. This also indicates the dysfunctional performance of the centralised state, where the role of the national elite

was all-important, and it took a very long time to inform them and induce them to recognise a problem, not to mention solve it.

In the case of Upper Silesia, one of the voivodship office departmental directors mentioned that the Regional Contract was eventually achieved only as 'they' (the regional elite, although he especially emphasised the role of the several members of the voivodship office) had spent a lot of time in repeatedly presenting the regional problems to the national elite. Thus, he and a few other respondents from the voivodship office considered the initiation of discussion with the national elite on regional restructuring as being in itself an achievement. In this context, the Regional Contract was sometimes seen as an initial stage in the development of the national elite's involvement in regional restructuring, and therefore worth pursuing, even if it was not a success due to its minimal financial influence on restructuring. The voivodship office departmental director in question mentioned that as a result of this repeated presentation of regional problems in their contacts with central government, the national elite began to recognise the Upper Silesian problems, talk about them, and stopped avoiding this issue as it had been doing earlier. The national elite also began to appreciate its financial obligations:

There is a certain critical moment when something has to be done. And we referred to this critical moment and said that we had an idea. Here is the idea. Nobody from outside is able to do it. The centre not only had to agree with this but recognised it as logical that for a real, thorough restructuring they had to do it together with us.

The second issue was that it was hard to push our way through, but we did make our way through to central government's awareness and to take separate ministries and made them aware that there were a lot of issues which could not be dealt with by local action only. There has to be certain legislative and financial support from the centre, and that is written in the Regional Contract. There are some financial obligations of central government's budget which must be enforced, and that is a very positive result of the contract.

Another member of the voivodship office elite had an opposite opinion, suggesting that 'Warsaw' wanted to get rid of the problem by signing the Regional Contract. In other words, 'they' did not recognise the seriousness of the regional problem, or did not care about Silesia, as another member of the voivodship office suggested, but instead reacted to the danger of social unrest and the militancy of the regional Solidarity Trade Union. Finally, they were not convinced but rather signed due to the nuisance of constant reminders by the regional authorities' of Upper Silesia's problems:

There is no chance to present Silesian interests and problems. Poland does not see Silesia. Poland does not like Silesia. Poland has never liked Silesia and probably never will like it. Why should it?

However, the dominant opinion among the regional administrative elite concerned the right to special treatment due to regional peculiarities (urbanisation, heavy-industry production) distinguishing Upper Silesia from most of other regions:

We were hammering [on Warsaw's door] that Silesia was something different from the 'respected' rest. There could be no talk here of equality between at least 45 voivodships in Poland and the Katowice voivodship... Many times, in many ministerial departments I explained... that the regulations were appropriate to 45 voivodships but not to the Silesian agglomeration.

These opinions emphasised the region's expectation of special treatment because of the particular and distinctive situation in Upper Silesia compared to other regions rather than its political prominence as a heavy industry region in the past. Others attributed it to the industrial and highly-populated character of the region. These peculiarities of the region resulted in the widespread opinion of the regional administrative elite of the unjust treatment of the region, evident, for example, when central government was dividing money. The voivodships generally received more or less similar amounts. However, in relation to issues where the number of inhabitants had primary influence on the amount of money which had to be spent (like the construction of flats and transport), the fact that ten per cent of the Polish population lived in this voivodship was a big disadvantage. This is illustrated by the opinion of a member of the voivodship office elite:

I believe that central government will try to repeat the programmes which made up the Regional Contract with similar programmes, which could be applied in other regions of Poland and that could be done with little money. So I believe the government and parliament still believe that Upper Silesia is similar, for example, to Western Pomerania, or Mazovia, that there is nothing distinctive [about the Katowice voivodship], and it seems to me that this thinking is wrong.

Moreover, the regional administrative elite indicated that the Regional Contract brought about regional consolidation, which was especially important as it was initiated from below – 'self-organisation'. Moreover, the consolidation was seen as important due to the scale of those who joined the discussion on regional strategy – 'all the important regional forces' put aside their individual and often opposing aims and recognised their basic common interest. This ability of the regional elite to present a coherent strategy could be contrasted with the functioning of the central government, orientated towards separate sectors, so that the common aim was often greatly obscured there. As a result, the Contract was to change the way in which resources were spent, as the narrow sector-

orientation of central government was to be replaced by territorially-based projects. For example, money which, until then, had been spent by 'coalminers' (the only ministry which had spent some money on restructuring) was considered to have been squandered. The central elite did not know how to prepare a comprehensive, territorially-based regional policy which the regional authorities thought should also deal with organising the educational system in the region to adapt it to new, more modern, regional production, or how to re-train former coalminers. The Regional Contract was to be a solution as it was to promote a different organisation of the administration as sector-orientation was to be replaced by territorially-based projects: regional – the Council of the Regional Contract, and by 'districts' – Local Segments.

The contract is above all an opportunity to reach central government funds. This is how I see it. At the moment the industry is still divided into sectors [due to vertical fragmentation], it is 'sectoral Poland': it is construction [sector]; it is coalmining [sector]. They have money for restructuring but do not know how to spend it.

In other words, the critical economic situation of the region led to regional consolidation. Thus, the regional elite saw itself as more progressive since it had broken with the sectoral-orientation, replacing it with much more efficient territorial orientation, while the central level preserved the sectoral-orientation resulting from the vertical fragmentation of central administration and thus was much more conservative. The opinion of one mayor illustrates this:

The contract is to be an alternative to 'sectoral' Silesia and that is the most important thing, as central government is sector-orientated and central government could not free itself from the sector-orientated thinking which had been established during the socialist period. There it is divided case by case, as if market rules were applied in industry and agriculture, and they would have nothing else to do.

Another member of the local government elite added that even those limited central government revenues could be spent more economically. Thus, regional consolidation and the formation of a common strategy was as important as receiving large revenues:

Financial revenues are of course needed, but the truth is that we squander revenue enormously, that we are not able to use it... If we started really professionally by preparing a strategy, there would be a chance for the maximal use of revenues.

Others also emphasised the importance of the contract as the real regional restructuring would be initiated only if the policy for the region's restructuring could be prepared in the region by the regional elite. However, for many, the revenues which were to be

given were the main basis on which the Regional Contract and central government's 'goodwill' was judged. Nawrocki, the mayor of Mysłowice, argued:

It is an idea. If we did not have a common programme or conception here, nobody else [outside the region] would prepare those concepts and solve the problems ... With goodwill on all sides the contract could be signed. The main problem is how the money for its realisation is to be found.⁵⁵⁹

iii. Criticism

After more than a year of the Regional Contract's existence, the main criterion by which it was assessed was the amount of money received from central government, which was described as symbolical, and thus the opinions of the Regional Contract were often negative or very negative. For example, it was emphasised that the money which was to arrive in the next three years would total one half or one-third of the revenues needed to close just one coalmine, when there were in fact more than 60 of them:

How do you assess the Regional Contract ?

The same way you do ... Very weak, what does the Regional Contract mean? How much money is there? It would be enough for a very small commune. Is it possible to carry out the restructuring about which we dreamed then? – 40 thousand – it is absolutely nothing. What is happening with this money? Have you heard in the last two years that it has organised anything?

iv. The ambivalent attitudes

There were also two other types of attitude: some rather positively assessed the Contract but they also had some doubts. Others were ambivalent about the Regional Contract as they believed that it brought the same amount of advantages as disadvantages – the ambivalent attitude. The Regional Contract was considered positively by some as it was an opportunity to gain additional revenues after the preparation of a comprehensive local government development project (the Council of the Regional Contract gave money to a few projects selected by them). Before 1989, communes had received money automatically, but after the free market regulations were introduced, conditions

⁵⁵⁹ Nawrocki quoted in *Echo*, 10-11 October 1994.

for their functioning had changed and they had to be active to gain grants. Thus, some believed the Regional Contract created such opportunities and mayors urged commune civil servants to make efforts to prepare such projects. Sometimes they had positive expectations as the Regional Contract was just beginning – in the organisational stage – and felt that they should wait longer for its results to appear.

The third type of attitude, the ambivalent attitude, was often related to the fact that the Regional Contract was seen rather negatively as its role was minimal, but at the same time, the discussion with central government was more concrete, and it began to see Upper Silesia's distinctiveness and its problems. Moreover, as one of the members of the Council of the Regional Contract observed, the formation of this Council initiated discussion between the regional and the national elite about regional development and common strategy. The obligation to consult with the regional elite which sat on the Council of the Regional Contract, even in the case of sector-orientated projects for the restructuring of heavy-industry in Upper Silesia proposed by the central elite, also had the side-effect of producing some decentralisation of decision-making. In the opinion of the above-mentioned member of the Council of the Regional Contract, it was an achievement that members of the regional elite were, for the first time, consulted on projects of regional restructuring. However, the fact that the Council was not democratically-elected cannot be forgotten.

What could this contract lead to? – It has certainly already contributed to the initiation of discussion on the formation of big regions and the need for regional policy. That is a great achievement of the creation of this contract, for the organisers of this project. In addition, the existence of the contract has brought about some decentralisation of power, and this is an interesting phenomenon. Maybe this decentralisation was not even planned. In the contract the Government Side had to promise, for example, to consult on restructuring programmes or other issues in the council where the social side is represented. In this way, local government, economic associations and other groups in public life will gain insight into what the government side prepares, and in fact, decentralisation to some limited extent will take place.

v. The Regional Contract and the administrative reform

It is interesting that some communes protested against taking on the new obligations imposed on them by the Regional Contract which they called 'the next burden'. These additional powers were related to formation of Local Segments, as the association of a

few communes and various organisations located on their territories, were to perform supra-local (district-type) tasks.

The Regional Contract was much less attractive to the powerful communes' elites than to the voivodship office authorities, who had very limited responsibilities and thus played only an advisory role. For voivodship office authorities, the Regional Contract was an attempt to strengthen their powers. Sometimes they had much larger expectations of local government activity, as indicated by the opinion of one member of the voivodship office elite.

However, today it is still like that; often, the functioning of local government is not only local administrative duties *per se*. But in this interim period local government has to engage in certain additional obligations. The commune administration is to define – it has to define – how it can serve, what it can do for the town [and region] despite this going beyond its obligation, but it has to help to create conditions for wider-scale development. On the other hand, the public administration, we [the voivodship office] are strongly engaged, we are aware that our help is needed; we offer our ideas; we are here the link [between the central administration and local government].

During 'the Big Town period' communes saw themselves being handed numerous tasks which were difficult to fulfil due to limited revenues. Thus, the mayors of the Big Towns sometimes felt that their responsibilities were too extensive. These additional tasks should be carried out by higher levels of administration, by 'proper districts', not by associations of communes. This would not happen if the administrative reform were complete (district and regional). Thus, the towns mayors advocated 'proper' administrative reform, not a substitute in the form of the Regional Contract. Thus, as one of the mayors argued, making communes the main agents responsible for organising projects for restructuring at local level was seen as too much:

We will not, as communes, take restructuring on ourselves; we will not take on ourselves the task of developing new jobs. We can only provide some building under certain conditions [favourable to promoting small business] but it is not our role to create new places of work in order to retard unemployment. We have other tasks; we have enough to occupy our time; and we do not have the means for these [new] tasks.

In general, for the communes, the Regional Contract was not that attractive as some mayors believed they did not need to increase their responsibilities; for them, the option of district and regional reform would have been better than commune associations in the form of Local Segments. In particular that idea of the Contract itself and Local Segments was quite imprecise for them:

Do we have to talk about the Contract? For me it is nothing very concrete, neither the Contract nor the Local Segments. I tried to deal with this idea of Local Segments, really, with a lot of goodwill; I tried, but I couldn't.

The other mayor expressed a similar negative attitude:

The Contract as it is now is just a collection of slogans... It is empty words. I did not get involved in it, with the exception of the Fund [the Upper Silesian Fund]... I do not know how the contract could help me.

It is strange, this so-called Contract, strange, short of being a precise project, full of rather pompous slogans from which not very much results are achieved. It is to assure somebody that something is being done, that is all.

Local government was in favour of administrative reform, not of the formation of such additional administrative institutions as the Agencies of Development, the Council of the Regional Contract, or even the Upper Silesian Fund, proposed by the Regional Contract. These institutions were criticised for unclear definitions of their functions and employment of large numbers of officials and for being costly. However, most of all, they duplicated functions which could be conducted by communes, districts and regions if the reform was conducted.

Sometimes the idea of the Upper Silesian Fund was highly valued, and this concept was the only positive element of the Regional Contract. Thus, the Upper Silesian Fund was considered worth establishing even if regional reform was conducted:

I said I had not become involved in it [the Regional Contract]. I do not see any action [by the Contract] despite the Upper Silesian Fund, which I believe is a marvellous idea. The fund would embark on a task, for example assisting in the restructuring of a company, and at a certain time it would withdraw. When the company restructuring would begin to bring results, the money would be reinvested somewhere else.

However, some mayors were in favour of the idea of leaving in the region the taxes on the goods produced there, instead of the Upper Silesian Fund, which was formed out of central government subsidies. Leaving the taxes in the region would mean that the amount of money expected would be much higher and more stable.

This idea was tied closely to regional reform, as decentralisation of powers was to be assisted by decentralisation of finances. The idea of retrieving taxes on goods produced there was supported by native Silesians. In contrast, some newcomers believed that this

solution might work against the region as it was not strong enough to finance itself and the state would probably have to add subsidies to the region:

I would be satisfied with what is produced in the Katowice voivodship by all those firms which pay taxes if all the money would stay. Of course, I believe that the situation which exists now is not acceptable. Now taxes are paid where the headquarters of a company is located, not in the voivodship where the revenue is really produced. The tax should be paid where the company is located; as it carries its production/service in that territory, so that area should benefit.⁵⁶⁰

These opinions on the insufficient proportion of money left in the region were often assisted by negative opinions of the Upper Silesian Fund. Its role was seen as minimal and inadequate to stop regional recession, which raised fears of total catastrophe and the abandonment of the whole region. The Upper Silesian Fund was also accused of concentrating its revenues on restructuring firms and of not granting any loans to the communes.

The discussion around the introduction of the Regional Contract versus regional reform also focused around the extent of certain decentralisation of power. In the first case it was only to be applied to Upper Silesia, and in the second case to Poland as a whole. According to my respondents, Upper Silesia did not want any privileges from the central government. Instead, they expected the regional and district reform, assisted by decentralisation of finances, to create opportunities for effective performance of regional administration. At the same time it would mean that central government and other voivodships would not need to contribute to this region, as the region would have its own financial resources. However, sometimes the Upper Silesian Fund was seen as an interim solution for regional finances.

There was one more financial proposal (to release the region from paying taxes derived from regional production for a certain period of time) but this was understood not as a privilege but rather as a repayment of inter-war and socialist period state 'debts' to the region. In other words, 'do not give us anything extra but give Upper Silesia only what we have the right to', as Upper Silesians believed that the development of Poland had been achieved at the expense of the region. Native Silesians sometimes had very strong

⁵⁶⁰ In many cases, the headquarters of firms were located in Warsaw and it was that voivodship which received the taxes although most branches were located somewhere else. For example, even if these firms were contaminating other voivodships, these voivodships or communes did not receive any compensation. Compare also the quotation on slag-heaps in Ruda Śląska – (next quotation). This form of tax-collection was a legacy of the socialist period's highly centralised state.

memories of the region's sacrifice to the Polish state, mentioning, for example, the inter-war regional loan to the Polish state which was never paid back. Another native Silesian emphasised:

I consider the Contract as a very static body without any future as only real administrative reform could solve our problems. The Regional Contract – let us not pull the wool over our eyes – when they gave Upper Silesia the Regional Contract, they gave Upper Silesia a few groszy [100 groszy – 1 złoty] and we [the commune] have produced a miracle.

If the state, for a period of 40, 50 years, lived off this voivodship which was breaking its back, then it should assume the moral responsibility of giving something to this voivodship for five years. But it is not to be taken from other voivodships and given to us. Let us not collect taxes from the voivodship for, let us say, five years and leave them all here, and we would be able to solve the regional problems here. We would deal with that land despoiled by the extraction of coal, those contaminated slag-heaps ... In Ruda Śląska there are about 30 different types of slag-heaps with different heavy metal and coalmine slag... and this has to be got rid of, has to be recycled ... This poor commune was badly exploited and now it has to deal with it.

To sum up, the regional administrative elite's opinion of the Regional Contract indicates that the Contract raised more expectations than it was able to realise. As a result, it was rather negatively considered. The attitudes of the member of the regional administrative elite towards the Regional Contract also indicate their dissatisfaction as the regional restructuring had still not started despite their opinion of its urgency; the lack of financial resources was the main source of their criticism. Regional restructuring was therefore seen as closely related to the introduction of regional and district reform. Lastly, the regional administrative elite's opinions suggest the importance of regional consolidation and work for a common strategy.

Conclusion

This chapter aimed to investigate the role of the regional elite in initiating the region's restructuring, which culminated in the proposal of the Regional Contract. It was of special interest to show the development of early proposals of restructuring, which were to be conducted only by the regional administrative elite, which in 1995 were already seen as insufficient. Thus, the national elite was to be incorporated. However, the successes of restructuring were to be achieved only after adopting three institutions proposed by the regional administrative elite: the Regional Contract Council, which was to guarantee its participation in the decision-making process and Local Segments which were to enable 'district-scale' restructuring. The last institution was to be the Upper

Silesian Fund, which was to guarantee its own, although minimal, regional finances. Although the often sceptical regional administrative elite's opinion towards the Contract, discussed in the last section, suggests that they would rather have been supporters of further regional and district reform than the Regional Contract embodied, nevertheless the signing of the Contract was particularly important. It shows their great efforts and the advancement of their regional planning, at a time when the central authorities were introducing separate industry sectoral-orientated restructuring projects. By contrast, the regional administrative elite was advocating the necessity of preparation of the comprehensive territorially-integrated restructuring projects at three levels: local, district and regional.

CHAPTER 7

THE REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE ELITE'S PROPOSALS FOR REFORMS: AUTONOMY, SEPARATISM, OR DECENTRALISATION?

Introduction

In this chapter, the regional administrative elite's attitudes towards further administrative reform are to be investigated, starting with the negative evaluation of the current situation and the demand for further reform, which it saw as necessary. Next, the regional administrative elite's expectations of regional reform, are presented, as radical changes are expected: the formation of a few big regions, re-division of power and finances between the centre and regions as well as substantial strengthening of the *voivode*'s role. Then, the district reform closely related to the regional reform is presented. This section is followed by two issues of particular importance for Upper Silesia region: the proposal for agglomeration regulation, and regional autonomy as a viable solution.

7.1 Assessment of the current situation

The views of the regional administrative elite regarding the need for further administrative reform were closely related to its assessment of conditions after the fall of communism – conditions which the new elites considered to be highly dysfunctional. Their description of the administrative performance is therefore inextricable from their plans for reform.

The majority of my respondents thought that district and regional administrative reform was an urgent necessity. In almost all cases this view was held independently of whether the respondent was a right- or left-wing party member or sympathiser. Sometimes the left-wing party members refrained from criticising the administrative

situation. However, at the same time, they wanted decentralisation and substantial strengthening of regional-level administration. Thus, the differences between the right and left party members or sympathisers in the case of the regional administrative elite was secondary, as far as this issue was concerned. Moreover, at that time, division on the right- and left-wing was only important at the national level. Instead, the regional administrative elite was rather a coherent group. In practice, it formed a 'regional party' integrated around the defence of regional interests. At that time there was a tendency to present interests in terms 'us' (regional society) against 'them' (central government).⁵⁶¹

If there is a factor which distinguished the members of the regional administrative elite, it was their Silesian origins. This tended to be associated with higher and more radical expectations in the area of administrative reform. This was probably due to their favourable impressions of the inter-war autonomy period.⁵⁶² Most native Silesians believed that the inter-war period had been characterised by effective regional administration. They associated this with 'autonomy', which they mostly defined as extreme decentralisation of power that allowed most decisions concerning the region to be taken in the region itself. In other words, they emphasised not the distinctiveness of Silesia compared to other regions, but rather the fact that its regional authorities used to enjoy wider powers. They also had a very strong sense of the need for some form of 'home rule' in Upper Silesia; that is, for regional society to 'rule itself in Upper Silesia'. Thus, the regional elite's views on decentralisation were much more radical than in the other regions. Gradually, newcomers too living in Upper Silesia began to demand radical decentralisation; for example, for the *voivode* to be elected by the regional society. This decentralisation proposal was even more radical than even the inter-war arrangements.

⁵⁶¹ Political division within the regional administrative elite would start to have a significant impact on its policies only after the completion of those administrative reforms that were seen by it as essential. Moreover, the formation of elected regional government would lead to the formation of political parties at that level with different political agendas on further regional development.

⁵⁶² This however does not mean demands for the revival of autonomy at that time. More details are provided in section 9.5.

i. Why the further administrative reform was seen as urgent

The regional administrative elite strongly believed that further administrative reform was necessary, not only in the interest of improved performance at the regional and local level, but also because it was crucial for the development of Poland as a whole.

The lack of further administrative reform aimed at the formation of local government at district level and regional government is a big problem for all of Poland. It causes losses each day, colossal losses, malfunctioning... and most of all it slows down the development of the whole state.

Indeed, most of the regional administrative elite saw further administrative reform as one of the most fundamental issues facing post-communist Poland. For example, Urbańczyk argued that it was unacceptable to wait any longer for the reform. The delay in carrying out the necessary reform prevented local and regional authorities from fulfilling their administrative obligations; it also had decisive consequences for the further development of the state:

Five years went by and the next level of local government was not formed in Poland, districts were not formed. Current voivodships were not merged into few big voivodships, we did not carry out the reform to the end. Five years is too long. It was necessary to take the next step so that we would not have so many problems.⁵⁶³

Moreover, in the opinion of the regional administrative elite, administrative reform was a necessary precondition for the economic restructuring of Upper Silesia. The existing vertical fragmentation of the administration meant that reforms carried out on the basis of industrial sectors would not give due attention to the common aims of regional development. For example, reform in the coalmining sector was improving the financial conditions of the coalmining industry, but only at the cost of higher debt burdens for the communes in whose territory the coalmines were located. In consequence, the host communities were becoming poorer as the financial conditions of the coal industry improved. According to Frankiewicz, mayor of Gliwice, the unreformed administrative structures were an obstacle to development at regional and national levels:

⁵⁶³ Urbańczyk, *Nasza Gazeta*, no. 2, 1996.

Decentralisation is a necessary condition for the quick and stable development of our state. Without it, we will not go further and, at a certain moment, we will find ourselves up against a wall. This obstacle is slowing down our development already. The industrial restructuring of Silesia illustrates this as programmes according to sectors of industry have been developed. These sectoral programmes were not optimal, only the territorially-orientated projects could be optimal. It is not important for citizens that metallurgy performs well, or that coalmining is carried out at the cost of communes. They want to have good conditions of life.⁵⁶⁴

The urgency of further administrative reform was related to the recognition of the poor efficiency of the existing regional administrative structure, a state of affairs that was rooted in the institutional arrangements inherited from the socialist period.⁵⁶⁵ During that time, most of the power had been transferred from the territorial (general) administration made up of voivodships, districts and communes, to central ministries, where it was divided among numerous narrowly-defined sectors. The central ministries exercised their power in the territory through 'special' administrative units that were controlled directly from the centre. As a result, central ministries as a whole would have to lose significant powers if any meaningful administrative reform of districts and regions was to take place. It is therefore not surprising that they were the most conservative part of administration, in contrast to the communes and voivodship levels. Dziejwior suggested that the central bureaucracies would not only lose their dominating role, but that their employees would not be able to retain their positions if they were under such supervision as existed in *elective* bodies such as communes.

It should be asked, who does not want local government at district level and regional government [elective institutions] in Poland? Those most against it are the ministries, as those in the public administration system [not elective institutions] who will lose their positions and also the opportunity for additional 'earnings' that exist when they allocate goods [concessions]. The strongest defence [of the *status quo*] is therefore in the ministries.⁵⁶⁶

Moreover, the expected administrative reform was to improve administrative performance in regions and districts not only by decentralisation of power, but also by democratisation of its institutions. The reformers strongly believed that self-governing institutions (*elective* regional and local government) would perform much better than the public (central) administration, as their members were appointed, not elected. Thus, the proposed reforms had two mutually reinforcing objectives: the first was the decentralisation of competencies and the integration of fragmented powers around new

⁵⁶⁴ Frankiewicz *Śląsk*, no. 5, 1997.

⁵⁶⁵ See chapter two for a full discussion.

⁵⁶⁶ Dziejwior quoted in *Śląsk*, no. 1, 1996.

focal points at the regional, district and local levels; the second was the democratisation of public life at all levels of Polish society.

The transfer of power to regions and districts was to involve the abolition of the vertical fragmentation and sectoral orientation that characterised central government. Several ministries were to be merged; their special administrative units would be abolished and their power transferred to regional, district and local administrations. This sectoral orientation of administration was highlighted by almost all respondents, irrespective of whether they worked in the voivodship office or in local government. All of them emphasised that it was one of the main obstacles to effective performance by the regional administration. The opinion reproduced below is just one of the many arguing this point.

So a *voivode* is, in principle, the governor of the economy of a territory. He cannot do much here. And the restructuring cannot be carried out from Warsaw. Problems would appear, as at the moment with the restructuring of the coalmining industry. One deputy minister is interested in developing the industrial sector for which he is responsible, without looking at the effect this restructuring would have on neighbouring industrial sectors, or local government, or the region as a whole. These sectoral programmes are at the heart of our misfortune.

This transfer of competencies was also to improve administrative co-ordination. For example, *voivodes*, sub-prefects and mayors were to co-ordinate administrative action in their territories (as in the inter-war period). In other words, decentralisation would limit vertical fragmentation because, for example, effective co-ordination of regional policy was not possible at the central level.⁵⁶⁷

The next factor, in addition to this vertical fragmentation left by the socialist period, was that the administrative reform was incomplete. At the beginning of the transitional period, some responsibilities had been transferred to the communes, but the tasks which were to be delegated to the districts and regions in the next stage were, for the most part, still retained by the central ministries, partly because it was recognised that this could not be done within the territorial framework inherited from the socialist period. In consequence, Dziewior that argued there was an administrative gap at the regional and district levels:

⁵⁶⁷ This vertical fragmentation was similarly repeated at the voivodship level in relation to local and supra-local issues. The solution to this was, as in the first case, decentralisation: from voivodships to districts and communes.

First of all, it should be said that the Polish state is, according to its administrative structure, badly organised. And from this statement arises the question, so how should it be organised?... At the moment the public administration does not have any connection with self-governing administration. It could be drawn like this: vertically there is the central (public) administration, then a gap [at district and regional levels], and below, horizontally, there is local government at the level of the commune.⁵⁶⁸

The existence of the administrative gap at the regional and 'district' levels (as the strong administrative units existed only at central and local levels) also meant weak representation of regional society at those levels. At that time, the voivodship assembly existed only as a gathering of local government councillors with rather limited and not precisely-defined responsibilities.

The absence of strong regional-level administration was strongly felt, as the role of the voivodship office was minimal and the *voivode* was a figurehead. At the time, the voivodship office was formally an arm of central government. However, there were numerous special administrative units at voivodship level, all of them answering to ministries at the centre, which were not supervised by the *voivode*; the voivodship office was not even informed about their actions in its region. The *voivode* also had only marginal financial competency as the voivodship office did not have its own budget. This low status of the *voivode*, as well as lack of an independent budget, were often mentioned in my interviews. The following critical opinion was expressed by one of the mayors:

The *voivode* is strictly speaking an executor of the Prime Minister in a certain territory. And he spends money, which he receives from the state budget as he has no competency, with the exception of monitoring if the funds delivered for voivodship tasks are spent according to the current budget bill.

Moreover, my respondents added that any expenditure by the voivodship office had to be authorised by the centre, and any surpluses had to be sent back to the central budget. The *voivode* could not shift revenues among the various administrative departments. Moreover, the *voivode* did not receive any 'general' or 'contingency' funds to cover the cost of handling emergencies (by definition unforeseen) such as forest fires.

The *voivode* receives money from the state budget as he does not have his own budget, only a scrap from the state budget. Before 1990 the *voivode* had his own budget and his role was much stronger, and not because of the money alone. It is well-known that he who has money rules, but this is of course simplifying the matter. At the moment he is to a large extent blocked by Warsaw because he does not have money. About 80 per cent of his

⁵⁶⁸ Dziewior quoted in *Śląsk*, no.1, 1997.

budget consists of funding which he has to spend on the health service; so with some exaggeration it could be said that the voivodship office is a big Department of Health. There is no money for any other activities that the voivodship office conducts.

In other words, the voivodship office in that period was a passive agent executing central government policy, with no opportunity to adapt policies to regional needs, despite its knowledge of these needs. Moreover, the fact that there were 49 voivodships also limited the communication of their interests to central government. As a result, communication was primarily one-directional, from the centre to the regions.

However, a small minority of the regional administrative elite, while favourable to the idea of extending administrative reform to the regional and district level, did not consider the issue to be of overwhelming importance. One respondent believed that the heart of the problem was the absence of active public participation in local and regional societies. In his opinion, in richer societies people were more active and often tried to organise facilities themselves: libraries, kindergartens or sports clubs. As a result, the role of public administration and of regional and local governments should be substantially limited and their tasks performed by foundations and other non-governmental organisations. The role of the administration was to create the conditions for civil society to develop:

In my opinion, even the best organisation of state institutions, decentralisation of administration and transfer of power is less than 20 per cent of the solution to this issue, and 80 per cent is just the economic condition of society, which results from economic development [which this town mayor believed would guarantee the development of civil society].

Another opinion suggested that further administrative reform would have been better delayed until 1998 (for about two years), till the end of the second term of the local governments. The electorate was very tired of elections, since elections had recently been taking place every year (local, parliamentary and presidential). Thus, an election for the district council and regional diet, held in the middle of a term, would not attract a high turnout and social support would be marginal.

It seems that it is necessary to form districts, and necessary also to create a few big voivodships [by merging the existing voivodships] and to establish them as self-governing institutions. I would be against the formation of districts in the middle of the term. Consequently districts would not be established before 1998, but there would be elections to the communes and district councils at the same time. I say this because I have the feeling that our society is very tired of turning out for elections ... We do not in Poland have the habit of participating in elections or having the experience that our participation enables

us to influence decisions. So, as many things as possible should be gathered in a single election.

Although this respondent considered that administrative structure and financial conditions at that time were not favourable to local government, he also believed that the ideal situation would never arrive (not even after the administrative reform). It was, therefore, better to concentrate on improving existing performance as a lot could still be done, than so strongly to demand further reforms. However, it is significant that this opinion was presented by a mayor – at that time conditions were much more favourable to mayors than to *voivodes*, as he himself points out:

There are two contradictory arguments which I believe in. On the one hand, of course, I am in favour of decentralisation. However, on the other hand, I argue the opposite when there is talk of decentralisation, which means for us taking additional responsibilities. I always ask whether we use adequately all the opportunities which we have now, due to already transferred responsibilities. Today, we [local government] already have extensive responsibilities, so the second, contradictory argument, means that maybe after all we already have enough responsibilities.

The regional administrative elite's proposals for administrative reform called for substantial changes at the regional and district levels. In addition, they proposed some changes at the commune level to improve their functioning, and sometimes special solutions for the Katowice agglomeration. The last issue was regional autonomy. The purpose of this last section is to see their attitudes towards autonomy. Was it a historic administrative experience only applicable to the inter-war period? How did inter-war autonomy modify their proposals of administrative reforms, if they were affected at all? Or was the inter-war influence so strong that the demand for autonomy was still seen as a viable solution to the region's future?

7.2 The expectations of regional reform

The regional reform was expected to have a major impact on the future role of the regional administration (local government and the voivodship office). First, it would strengthen the position of the Katowice voivodship as the formation of big voivodships would lead to an increase in its economic potential in the new regions. Second, it would precisely define the division of powers between the central and territorial administration and, in consequence, limit the wilfulness of the centre. Thirdly, the relationships between society and the regional administrative elite would change as the system

became more democratic, with public administration being replaced by democratically - *elective* local (communes and districts) and regional governments. Fourth, the decentralisation of finances would create the conditions for the effective performance of regional administration. Fifth, the role of the *voivode* would be substantially strengthened and a new regional institution, the regional government, with wide responsibilities, would be established.

i. Territorial mergers and formation of strong regions

The main purpose of the territorial reform was to form a few strong administrative regions. The members of the regional administrative elite believed that the Katowice voivodship would preserve its independence, whatever was accepted as the final number of regions the state was to be divided into. As a result, projects proposing a radical reduction in number, to 12 regions or even fewer, gained the strongest support (for if the proposals were accepted, the political and economic strength of the region would be even greater). Thus, two other less radical central government proposals, calling for a system of 17 or 25 regions, were considered unattractive.⁵⁶⁹

Division of the country into a few large voivodships was seen as necessary for the new regions to be able to shoulder substantial responsibilities. Division into a larger number of relatively small regions would mean that the new regions would be too small to carry the range of powers that the reformers wanted to see transferred to the regional level. Thus, the formation of 12 voivodships was seen by my respondents as a guarantee of substantial decentralisation. Sometimes there were proposals for an even smaller number – ten, even eight – than the minimum of 12 proposed by central government. This was seen as the best solution as the new regions would then have the greatest economic potential and would be able to carry out their own regional policy, even though it was a radical change from the traditional number of regions (17 in the inter-war period and before the 1975 reform). A small number of regions would also mean that each would have a substantial economic base; this would eliminate the need for the wealthier regions to subsidise the poorer ones. These opinions were fairly typical, as the quotation below from an interview with one of the Silesian mayors indicates:

⁵⁶⁹ One respondent said that he supported the introduction of any reform, even the PSL's proposal to change the administrative character of the 49 voivodships by making them self-government institutions (instead of units of public administration ruled by a centrally-appointed *voivode*). He believed that this solution would be better than the provisional arrangements in which he currently had to perform. However, if he could choose, he would be in favour of reducing the number of voivodships.

12 is the number talked of – 17 is too many. So 12 is the maximum, as the creation of regions has to be related to the decentralisation of finances. The state then has to transfer the majority of its responsibilities and leave itself relatively few as most of them would be transferred to the regions.

Another opinion of my respondent from the voivodship office shows the advantage of big regions as guaranteeing their economic potential.

I am of course in favour of voivodships being both self-government institutions and being relatively big ones. On the scale of the country, it should be ten to 12 regions. They would be independent and they would be able to conduct their own economic policy.

It was suggested, for example, by one interviewee from the voivodship office, that economic potential, not always size, should guide the formation of the new regions because despite the fact that in most cases big regions should guarantee economic potential, there could be some exceptions. Just as there were small states, like Liechtenstein, which had large economic potential, so there were small voivodships, such as Bielsko-Biała, which were very efficient and should stay. However, as the quotation below suggests, he also saw the other side of the argument and criticised the formation of too many small voivodships as this would increase the costs of running national administration, which would mean higher taxes for all taxpayers.

In my opinion, 12 is optimal from the state's point of view, at least I see it like this. In relation to the Katowice voivodship, to tell the truth, it does not make any difference [how many regions are formed]. We will always be a big voivodship and have the economic potential which a voivodship should have. However, if those small voivodships were preserved and they did not have the potential, it would be their fault.

On the other hand, size is not the decisive criterion in relation to a voivodship. There are small states which work well, such as Liechtenstein, which probably has fewer people than Bielsko-Biała voivodship and yet it is a state and exists. In my opinion, it is not a matter of the size of a voivodship in relation to its performance. However, it matters in relation to the price which every taxpayer would have to pay for administration, and therefore, there should be few voivodships.

The mayor of Katowice also believed that the territorial division of the regions should be based on economic rationale rather than inspired by traditional regional borders.

I would like to emphasise that discussions about the administrative division of the state should never start with topography as that leads to a dead end. They should start with the functionality of a certain region, which should be able to fulfil certain functions for its inhabitants. The region should be big enough to be strong and have efficient administration. It should be strong enough to be financially self-sufficient and to pay its part for providing public services delivered by central [national] administration. On the other hand, if it is possible, it should be said clearly when and how much certain regions are subsidised by other stronger regions through the central budget. Discussions should start with a simulation of

the financial costs and profits of formation of a region, and geography should be only secondary.⁵⁷⁰

The formation of strong, self-sufficient regions, as respondents both in the voivodship and local government emphasised, would bring transparency to the financial system by substantially limiting central government subsidies. The reform would end the existing financial system which obscured financial flows between the centre and the regions and confused the issue of how much a voivodship gave to the central budget and how much it received from the central budget. This gave rise to the sense of unjust treatment common in nearly every voivodship as the quotation below from one of my interviewees, the departmental director in the voivodship office, indicates:

Each voivodship must have the right of self-rule and to create its own fortune. The state administration system should be transparent, so should the financial system. Nobody [in the voivodship] should feel cheated, nobody should think that he has won, which is heard sometimes.

ii. The re-division of powers between the centre and the regions

At the same time, the formation of these few strong regions was to raise the problem of re-division of tasks between the regional and central administration. The division of powers between the centre and the region was often considered according to the liberal concept of the state – the less state, the better, with the greatest possible decentralisation of all powers which could be assured by regions and districts. This was especially emphasised by the local government elite, as seen for example in the opinion of Frankiewicz below:

As few state responsibilities as possible, only as few as are necessary. The state [central administration] should only perform those tasks which nobody else is able to perform: foreign policy, the national economic policy and internal affairs.⁵⁷¹

It was also Frankiewicz's opinion that calls for the maximum decentralisation of responsibilities were often prompted by criticism of central government's low efficiency. As a result, the most radical proposals for decentralisation advocated

⁵⁷⁰ Dziewior quoted in *Śląsk*, no. 1, 1997.

⁵⁷¹ Frankiewicz, *Śląsk*, no.5, 1997.

extreme limitation of Warsaw's functions and the assumption of most of these by regions.⁵⁷²

iii. The democratic territorial administration

It was the opinion of my respondents that the formation of a few strong regions and the transfer of substantial power to them would achieve two aims: it would raise the economic efficiency of administration, and establish more democratic forms of rule. The central administration in Warsaw was seen as distant, and not just in geographical terms: the respondents felt that it was unable to recognise and satisfy regional and local needs. The establishment of the regional and district levels as self-governing institutions (rather than arms of the central public administration), as one of my interviewee argued, would allow policies to be decided closer to their final consumers – regional society. Moreover, establishment of *elective* local governments (at commune and district levels) and regional government would oblige administrative personnel to listen to regional and local societies. Thus, as one of the town mayors emphasised, formation of elective institutions would encourage the development of civil society as people would gradually become more active, and their participation would not be limited to a vote once every four years.

Administrative reform is needed. Big and self-governing voivodships are needed, as those levels of administration could be directly supervised by the inhabitants. It would not be the case that a man is satisfied as he votes once every four years and then he washes his hands.

In other words, it was expected that the reform would achieve two things. It would substantially reverse the centralisation and vertical fragmentation of administration by transferring powers to lower levels, and at the same time heal the rift between bureaucrat and citizen by removing the barriers that were at the root of society's alienation from the administration. The new regions would be equipped with regional government, which would replace weak and indirectly elected voivodship assemblies. The new regional governments would give a voice to regional interests; as the native Silesian elite used to say it would enable 'us the people of the region to decide'.

⁵⁷² Frankiewicz, *Śląsk*, no. 5, 1997.

Engagement of society in public life would also be increased by the fact that all the most crucial decisions related to regional development would thereafter be taken in the region. The regional government in the opinion of my respondents would be the best institution for recognising regional peculiarities and preparing a regional strategy reflecting them. The regional government position would also be strengthened, as many of my respondents, believed transfer of powers to prepare regional policy would be assisted by granting regional authorities with substantial revenues (their own regional budget) to carry out those policies. According to some of the interviewees, the regional government should also select the *voivode*.

The formation of regional strategy was important as it would lead to the consolidation of the administration around unanimously-selected goals for further development. It would end the existing administration's performance, in which many actions were uncoordinated or even contradictory, as the main aims of regional development had not been formulated. This resulted in wasted money and effort, vividly illustrated by sector-orientated coalmining reform.

iv. Finances

Decentralisation of state responsibilities to regions was to be accompanied by radical change in the method of financing the administration, as earmarked grants received from each ministry separately would be replaced by participation in taxes. Some of the interviewees (especially from the voivodship office) mentioned that the number of the Katowice voivodship inhabitants should be taken into account as a necessary condition for the just treatment of the region. The decentralisation of finances to the regional government, which was to allocate regional funds was often the main indication of central government's true intention. The current experience of earmarked financing of local government and extensive supervision by the central elite of the local budget caused members of the regional administrative elite to be suspicious of central governments' intentions to decentralise finances in the future. For example, one of my respondents mentioned that he doubted about 'Warsaw's desire to decentralise finances, despite decentralisation of finance and financial decision-making in the regions being a core aspect of reform:

It is high time that Warsaw was not deciding about the money which a region earns.... If we talk about seeing development on a wider scale, in regional development programmes, it is to be done by self-government. It would be these people selected by the region's own inhabitants, it would be a representation of the whole self-governing region. Regional government would function like a national parliament, which would decide a certain vision for the further development of the state. I believe that if there were a regional government here, it would be closer, it would be better versed in what should be done, having the revenues and having certain means. The central government would carry out those tasks which have arisen out of the need for unification of the whole state.

Sometimes the percentage of a region's share in taxes was precisely defined; for example *voivode* Czech calculated precisely that 30 per cent should be left at regional level and 40 per cent sent to the centre. It was understood that leaving this amount of money at regional level was a test of the real desire of central authorities to decentralise finances, as transferring a smaller proportion of the budget would not guarantee the effective performance of regional administration.

v. The voivode

The second important issue, in addition to the formation of a new institution at the regional level (the regional government), was the redefinition of the position of the *voivode* (and of the voivodship office). Both these issues would have a major influence on the future role of the regional administrative elite.

The fundamental question was whether a *voivode* should be the representative of a region or of central government, or should perform both functions.⁵⁷³ Opinions on this issue varied. Some declared that he should unite both functions, but most of all it was emphasised that the *voivode* should be the head (*gospodarz*) of the region. Those who believed that a *voivode* should represent regional interests felt that the *voivode*'s existing role, as a representative of central government, was highly dysfunctional. As a result, there was nobody who would present and defend regional interests. This meant, for example, that in negotiations between the regional and national elite related to the Regional Contract, *voivode* Cizak was the strongest advocate of central government at the cost of regional interests. He was seen not as trying to balance both interests but as acting against the regional interests, leading to a sense of betrayal.

⁵⁷³ This issue probably does not raise such emotions in Britain, where in local governments there are no representatives of central government. However, in Poland it was a very sensitive issue. A *voivode* was traditionally the representative of central government and this debate indicated the possibility of radical change in his role.

Always when we meet with the *voivode* there is the problem of who he represents. Is he our [regional] representative in Warsaw? Or does he primarily represent Warsaw in the region? According to law the *voivode* should be the representative of central government in the region. And I have to say with regret that in our case... during negotiations with the government in Warsaw the harshest and worst voice for Upper Silesia is that of our Katowice *voivode*. That is a contradiction. In the Poland of the future [after the regional reform] in my opinion a *voivode* should be the representative of a self-governing region. It should be our voice in Warsaw, not the voice of Warsaw in Katowice.

In consequence, many of my respondents expressed extreme dissatisfaction with the existing situation when the *voivode* was only the representative of central government and they advocated a quite radical redefinition of his role, making him only the representative of the region. Such a radical redefinition of the *voivode*'s role seems to be tied to the desire to strengthen regional authorities. This would be achieved by substantial decentralisation of power and making the *voivode* the guarantor that regional interests would be presented and defended.

The best guarantee that the *voivode* would represent regional interests adequately was if he was elected by regional society. Thus, he would be independent of the prime minister, according to the respondent:

It should be a directly-elected *voivode*, because if he were directly elected, it would be positive. If he were elected, he would not need to bow in the front of the Prime Minister, but it is very difficult to get this idea accepted by central government. Can you imagine how they would lose importance?

The mayor of Gliwice emphasised that the *voivode* should be elected by regional society. This would strengthen the regional feeling that society is really engaged in the rule of the region (and state). This would be positive for the development of civil society after the socialist period of forced social passivity.

This idea of an elected *voivode* pointed to the strong democratic tendencies of the regional administrative elite, which were, to some extent, inspired by the inter-war autonomy. However, it is also, a reaction to the extreme ineffectiveness of regional administration left by the socialist period, as a result of excessive centralisation and the vertical fragmentation of central government. Moreover, this radical demand that the *voivode* would become the representative of the region also seems to have had its roots in proposals by *voivode* Czech when he called for a substantial strengthening of regional authority. The definition of the *voivode*'s position proposed by the regional

administrative elite therefore broke with the prevailing traditional view (among the national elite) of the role of the *voivode* as a central government representative.

The second group of regional administrative elite opinions on the future character of the voivodship and the *voivode* was more moderate. They suggested that although the voivodship level should first of all be a self-governing unit (an elective institution) in the form of regional government, there should also be a representative of the central government, a *voivode*. These respondents emphasised that the influence of both types of administrative institutions, central and regional government, should be balanced. The *voivode* should be a representative of central administration, but he was to be assisted by a regional government equipped with wide responsibilities, which would maintain the significant role of *elective* institutions. In other words, this *elective* institution would make possible social participation and the formation of regional development strategy in the region. At the same time, emphasis was put on the need for a representative of central government at the voivodship level to co-ordinate central government policy, although the respondents added that central state powers should be substantially reduced compared to the situation at that time.

Those big voivodships should be public and (*elective*) self-governing administrative units.

Other moderate opinions expressed included the following:

I believe that a voivodship should be a public and (*elective*) self-governing administrative unit. Self-governing administration is as follows: in a commune, a district and a voivodship. The strategy of development is to be prepared in voivodships. They should decide on finance and the strategy of development. People have to know what they want, it has to be a social consensus, as a strategy is put in practice with money earned by those people.

On the other hand, I cannot imagine that there would not be a representative of central government in the region, but he should concentrate on public order, foreign policy, on the image of the region and so on.

There were a few opinions that the regional level should be the public administrative unit only, (although its shape was not precisely defined), as the role of regional representation would be nearly marginal. These respondents feared that the formation of a self-governing administration at the voivodship level would mean giving those authorities extensive powers (similar to those at the commune level) that could endanger state unity.

In Poland in the inter-war period, to which reference is most often made, the voivodship administration was the public administration. The voivodship office was always the representative of the central government. Now the talk is only that the voivodship should have its fixed share of the budget. In consequence, how the money is spent should be decided according to the needs of the region. Of course, the formation of a new regional structure would be needed. The issue is not that a *voivode* should himself decide on the division of that money, or how to spend it, instead the *voivode* could be assisted by a mixed body [state administration officials] and also local government representation which has the competence to decide, or at least to offer its opinion about how to divide those funds.

7.3 Opinions about district reform

The formation of a few big regions would necessitate the creation of an intermediate level between them and the communes. The resulting districts were to manage supra-local tasks such as secondary education or the running of hospitals. It was mentioned during my interviews that at the time the voivodship office, like the central-level administration, was overburdened with responsibilities as it decided on numerous detailed issues, ruling case by case and often losing the overall perspective. After the reform, the voivodship administration would concentrate on defining regional development, and the performance of many tasks would be delegated to the districts according to the principle of subsidiarity.

At the moment the public administration at voivodship level is totally overburdened with responsibilities. There is no doubt about it. Like the central administration, it is burdened with several detailed tasks which it is not able to carry out. The public administration at voivodship level in the future has to decide strategic issues, not rule case by case. Certain things are absolutely to be decided at lower levels.

It was sometimes felt that in the Katowice voivodship the district reform was not as important as the regional. The Big Towns were already performing district tasks (they were to be the future town-districts). This was in contrast to rural areas where a few communes were to be united to form rural districts.

Concerning the districts in principle in X. and in the Katowice agglomeration [as a whole] not much would be changed as in those Big Towns a change of responsibilities is not expected with the establishment of districts.

The opposite opinions were presented by the mayors of Katowice and Rybnik as although the Katowice voivodship was highly populated and most of the future town-districts' tasks were already performed by Big Towns, they still emphasised that the formation of rural districts would improve the performance of regional administration.

They recognised that the Big Towns were subsidising the small towns or villages surrounding them as their populations were not paying for the services which they received in the Big Towns.

Districts are also needed. Let us imagine a situation which takes place now in a Big Town – commune which is surrounded by several hamlets. How should such a town be governed? For the town itself, money is needed, and in the meantime several heads of hamlets want to take this money for the commune's surrounding areas. Water pipelines are needed there, a road has to be built there. These are tasks just for a rural district, not for a town-commune... Thus, district reform is greatly needed.⁵⁷⁴

The formation of districts would enable the introduction of economies of scale and the employment of professionals. Moreover, supra-local (district) development plans would be prepared, in contrast to the local scale development plans existing at that time. These wider supra-local plans would be especially important for the poor in disadvantaged circumstances, such as in the rural communes.

In relation to the Silesian communes (the Big Towns) the introduction of districts would also have an indirect influence. This would strengthen the position of self-governing administration relative to central government and should lead to a more positive approach towards them. At the same time they believed the main obstacle – that is further administrative reform – to quick development at the state level would be removed.

The formation of districts and regions would also improve communication with central and regional administration. At that time small villages found it difficult to gain the attention of the *voivode* and inform him about their problems as there were hundreds of such villages in a voivodship. The Big Towns (although they were in fact districts) also had difficulties communicating their problems to central administration, which reached decisions case by case. For all of them the substantial decrease in the number of regions and formation of districts provided a chance to be heard. Even more, as one respondent said, the mergers of voivodships meant the decentralisation of powers, so that those problems dealt with by ministries could very likely be solved in future by a *voivode*.

⁵⁷⁴ Dzięwior quoted in *Śląsk*, no. 1, 1997.

The most important point is the participation of the communes in the division of state revenue. It is also a problem that our *voivode* is weak according to legal definitions of his position, so problems can only be efficiently tackled in ministries, in Warsaw. There are a lot of towns and ministries, that do not want to know them, as they have hundreds of towns to deal with.

The success of territorial reform – regional and district – was often related to the size of the future units, which were to be quite large in order to be strong enough to be independent and financially efficient. Moreover, emphasis was often put on the fact that delegated responsibilities had to be assisted by transferring revenues sufficient for their performance.

7.4 The proposals of the Katowice Agglomeration Association

Despite the formation of districts and regions, the heavy urbanisation of the Katowice voivodship raised the question of adapting the administrative solution to this region's peculiarity. The formation of a metropolitan association was to unite the fragmented Katowice voivodship towns (communes). It was supposed that this would improve their performance substantially as their activity was already closely connected. For example, the borders between towns were often only symbolical and some streets ran across several towns. Moreover, the inhabitants of those towns often worked in neighbouring towns, and the children attended schools in other towns; when they were ill they were often treated in specialist units of hospitals located in neighbouring towns. All these facts pointed to the need for close ties between towns. Thus, the concept of the Metropolitan Association of the Katowice Agglomeration, a legally-established self-governing administrative unit was sometimes proposed to replace the voluntary unions of communes often aimed at fulfilling one task, for example, the Communication Union of the Katowice voivodship.

A metropolitan association is desirable as the Upper Silesian agglomeration towns would be seen as one Big Town, which in fact they are. This is not in fact an area which is clearly separated as one town flows into another. One could talk about 11 Big Towns which make one town. This idea does not meet a response in the Polish legislature. The idea of this metropolis was seen as an attempt to create something new [better]. But why does Warsaw, which is *de facto* a smaller town than Upper Silesia, have its special bill and as a result special privileges, but Upper Silesia does not?

Until 1990 the activity of this area was co-ordinated by the functioning of the voivodship administration, to which the communes were subordinate. However, the

local government reform, which brought independence to the communes and made them local government institutions, created a problem of co-ordinating their functioning on the scale of the metropolis. The problems, according to my respondents, were worsened by the attitudes of communes, which in 1990 were suddenly freed from blind subordination to higher levels of administration, and cherished their individuality and independence which they had gained with such difficulty. These attitudes often hindered their integration and co-ordination, which they saw as risking centralisation and subordination.

The other issue was recognition of the peculiarity of Upper Silesia by the central elite. My interviewees felt that the Katowice agglomeration could perhaps be 'compared' to the Gdańsk agglomeration and Warsaw, although the Katowice agglomeration was much larger, with a population 2.7 million people. The peculiarities of the Katowice voivodship, which were not recognised by the central elite due to continued administrative centralisation after 1990, brought financial disadvantages to those towns. For example, due to the regional specificity, Silesian towns did not receive certain transport grants. Other voivodships received grants for transport out of the towns but in the Katowice voivodship almost all communication was within towns. Thus, the voivodship was given hardly any grants and the burden of financing transport had to be borne by local governments. Formation of a metropolitan association would mean recognition of this specificity and guarantee subsidies for voivodship transport.

In Poland, talk about specificity is not liked (as they think we want privileges). However, if somebody comes here, he sees what it looks like, that it is different from, for example, Rzeszów, or most other Polish regions where there are cottages all around regional capitals. Here it is a totally different situation.

Opinions about the formation of a metropolitan association varied. There were many supporters, some were rather indifferent, but there were also a few opponents. One mayor from the Dąbrowa part of the voivodship was against obligatory association to form 'one town'. He argued that it would cause centralisation and the subordination of the communes to the vision presented by the metropolis. Nevertheless, it is likely that the desire to preserve Dąbrowa region's historical distinctiveness also promoted his opposition to this project which would probably lead to domination of the Upper Silesian part of the voivodship. In his opinion, the association of communes would be efficient enough to co-ordinate the functioning of the agglomeration.

In the opinion of the supporters, formation of such an obligatory metropolitan association would strengthen regional co-ordination. After a short period of functioning of independent local government, communes sometimes concentrated only on local interests, not seeing the metropolitan (regional) perspective. As a result, they were against the formation of various aims co-ordinating units and the only solution to improve co-ordination in the whole voivodship was the formation of an obligatory body. For example, if one commune participating in an association considered that the financial conditions were unfavourable to it, this commune could withdraw and paralyse a transport network. The issue of co-ordinating transport and state subsidies seemed to be of special importance and was mentioned by nearly everybody.

7.5 The administrative reform and the myth of regional autonomy

The living memory of the inter-war autonomy and demands for its renewal suggested by the Upper Silesian Union and the marginal Movement for Autonomy for Silesia at the beginning of the nineties meant that the opinions of the regional administrative elite were closely observed. Their views on more discretion for the regional authorities were also carefully listened to for any hints of leaning towards autonomy.

In Poland, which regained its independence only in 1918 after more than a hundred years of partition, the concept of regional autonomy raised strong fears of separatism. This was the case especially at the beginning of the nineties, when painful economic transition sometimes inspired warm sentiments in Upper Silesia towards prosperous neighbouring Germany. This sense of the vulnerability of the Polish state caused misunderstandings and accusations of separatism, even when it came to demands for more discretion for Upper Silesian authorities and a larger proportion of financial revenues to be divided by them. The accusations were made despite the fact that the administrative structure of the state left by the socialist period was highly centralised and, as a result, extremely dysfunctional, and that demands for decentralisation were justifiable. It seems that when such demands were formulated by Silesian authorities they raised more suspicions than if the same demands were formulated in other regions.

Moreover, at the beginning of the nineties, the demands of the Silesian elite were radical, befitting the period of revolutionary changes; the word 'autonomy' was often

used. The experience of pre-war autonomy distinguished Upper Silesia from other parts of Poland. Elsewhere, reformers demanded decentralisation, but in Upper Silesia this was not enough. They asked for autonomy, but what exactly that meant was often unclear. Thus, in other parts of Poland, this provoked strong fears about the accusation of 'separatism' and regional betrayal of Silesians because they were not considered really Polish.

The first revolutionary period left a deep fear of their separatist tendencies. In my interviews in the middle of the nineties, the opinions of the regional administrative elite had evolved and were presented in a much more moderate manner, that was more acceptable to Polish society as a whole. However, it seems that the desire for autonomy remained deeply hidden, and sometimes found strong supporters, although without any desire for separatism. The regional administrative elite's views in relation to the question of autonomy were varied, although on many other issues they were quite similar due to their frequent contacts, discussions and common aims. In relation to autonomy there were strong sympathisers and those who were totally against it.

First, the concept of regional autonomy sometimes arose from warm sentiments about the inter-war autonomy, which was seen by native Silesians as a period of prosperity:

In relation to the management of the voivodship I am definitely in favour. I believe that the voivodship before the war was ruled well and this structure turned out to be successful. It is a pity that it was not adopted in other voivodships and that after the war Silesian autonomy was abandoned.

This opinion of a sympathiser of autonomy (a native Silesian) is quite typical as he does not go into considerations of precisely-defined institutional arrangements for the region; it is related more to the wish for decentralisation and a return to the inter-war 'golden age'. Moreover, the inspiration of the inter-war regional rule seemed to be important in the middle of the nineties, when the same respondents often mentioned the ineffectiveness, arrogance and centralist tendencies of the post-communist central authorities. Thus, autonomy or decentralisation was to be the solution, limiting the negative influence of central government. It seems that sometimes the concepts of autonomy and decentralisation overlapped. The difficulty in making a clear-cut distinction is indicated, for example, by their reference to the concept of 'partial autonomy'. My respondents mentioned that they did not want separate bills to be issued by regional authorities, and in nearly all opinions 'autonomy' was instead only related

to greater financial discretion. The opinion presented below was rare in quite precisely distinguishing between autonomy, self-government and decentralisation:

In my opinion the autonomy should not take place. Insofar as it refers to legislation I am strongly for law in Poland to be the same everywhere. There should not be any separate legal regulations anywhere... However, in relation to the creation of a budget and its spending, it is not autonomy, but self-government. And this self-government should certainly exist at the regional level. However, what form the state participation will take place (whether the *voivode* is appointed by the government or appointed by the regional council) is not very important.

The opposite view was presented in public declarations by the mayor of Katowice, Dziewior, for whom autonomy and self-government were treated as one:

Let us give autonomy its proper meaning, as it is regarded with prejudice. It should be explained how it was formed. It was the Upper Silesians' efforts which brought Silesia into the Polish state – that is a fact. Let us add that in the autonomous Silesian voivodship, administration functioned best, as in Greater Poland. And if the inter-war Poland lasted longer, maybe the Silesian solution would be adopted in the other regions. Then one could talk of a Poland formed out of autonomous regions. Thus, autonomy is not separatism, but the highest level of self-government [regional discretion]. And this is the need. Man is due to form the state, to use the state but he is also to serve this state. It is difficult to serve a centralised state. Somebody from a faraway location has no chance to make his voice heard, much less be understood.⁵⁷⁵

In this context, autonomy was to guarantee minimum central government participation and interference in regional policy. This was also linked to the considerable confidence of the Katowice voivodship communes and their belief that the closer to regional issues decisions are taken, the more rational and economical they are. Moreover, autonomy was to make possible the development of civil society by promoting a high degree of social participation. Whereas the highly-centralised system led to citizens' passivity and alienation from state institutions, by contrast, autonomy would represent the greatest possible level of state decentralisation. This optimal administrative structure could accordingly be adopted in the whole of Poland.

This attitude towards autonomy as the most effective and possible decentralised administrative structure often differed between native Silesians and newcomers. For the latter, autonomy still mainly aroused fear and thus they did not see this greatest possible level of decentralisation as an advantage. By contrast, some Silesians were still attracted by the concept of autonomy, although in a modified form, compared to the inter-war

⁵⁷⁵ Dziewior quoted in *Śląsk*, no. 1, 1997.

model, as it would not mean special treatment for the region but instead more discretion for a Poland divided into autonomous regions.

Unlike the central elite of the day, the inter-war administration was respected and seen as effective. For example, people pointed to the reduction in administrative personnel due to its efficiency. The inter-war rule in the Silesian voivodship by regional authorities was presented as a model of honesty and prosperity.

Accordingly to what people who remember this inter-war period say, one has the feeling that somehow this voivodship was probably better ruled. My grandpa always said of something that was good that it was like in old Poland [the Second Republic], so during the time of old Poland they lived well.

Moreover, the strong tradition of administrative order and great respect for the state which took root during Prussian rule in the region seemed to influence native Silesian attitudes towards the state and its authorities; thus they mentioned the arrogance of the central authorities more frequently than the newcomers. The inter-war autonomy was also seen as enabling Silesians to participate in the rule of the region even though at that time the newcomer Poles had already arrived, and they were much more lordly in their behaviour than the previous German officials.

As for autonomy, to make it clear, I am Silesian in flesh and blood, as is the whole of my genealogical tree. Thus, I do not have any inhibitions in relation to this issue [separatist fears] and in fact we feel that these Silesians behaved strangely, but the Poles also caused a lot mischief. My grandpa was a commissar during the Rising, and it seems that when they brought Silesia back into Poland, it was believed everything would be marvellous. And then the Poles came and established their rule [This he evaluated negatively but the existence of the Silesian Diet made it possible to defend the native population interests. This was in contrast to the situation when the interview was conducted when he believed the region did not have any *elective* institution defending against central arrogance.]

In the majority of cases, the concept of autonomy was rejected by its opponents on the grounds of political or national arguments. However, there was also the opinion of a native Silesian who saw it as a dream. He believed that the region could not afford it as the cost of regional restructuring was too great to be borne mainly by regional society. In this situation, he demanded an improvement of the financial situation of the communes by replacing the wilfulness of central government's allocation of grants with local government's sharing in taxes

We are not in a good position to pursue autonomy at all costs. We would not be able to sustain it. At the moment this is a dream.

Another opinion of a Silesian suggested that Upper Silesia could not afford autonomy due to its financial cost:

We are in a different situation from that before the war. The situation has arisen several times that Silesia (I mean the Katowice voivodship) was not first in relation to revenues sent to the central budget; instead it was probably the Warsaw voivodship [This meant that the regional revenue was insufficient to demand autonomy and costly especially as the regional restructuring was necessary].

The next opinion also indicates the positive attitudes towards autonomy which arose from the inter-war experience. However, at the same time, the respondent believed the region had been drained by 'the centre' so that it could not afford autonomy. Thus, 'the state' should re-pay its debts to the region

But I am afraid of what lies ahead for Upper Silesia. I think about restructuring in the whole region in relation to the backlog of the past. If people talk about autonomy, that would be a mistake. We would not be able to bear all this burden, which is related to restructuring, rebuilding and improving the environment and so on. It is high time for 'the state' to repay some of its debts to Silesia.

However, he saw the formation of autonomous regions for the whole state as an alternative.

The opponents of autonomy could be divided into two groups. First were those who were totally against it, who considered autonomy as being negative and dangerous and not worth thinking about:

They are really irresponsible, these opinions about Silesian autonomy. They are very harmful. I cannot find any specific essential argument in favour of it, not any.

Similar opinions were expressed by another (newcomer) respondent:

I am an enemy of solutions involving autonomy. This should not take place in Poland.

The second group of opponents considered that autonomy was primarily a historical phenomenon, inappropriate in the situation at that time and dangerous in that it raised animosity towards Upper Silesia:

I believe that inter-war autonomy had a mainly political character. As in the case of Poland, which is one nation state, the granting of autonomy to only one region would cause a lot of bad feeling in the national-perspective.

He also mentioned the evolution of the concept of autonomy, which at the beginning of the nineties had been used by very militant Upper Silesian Union activists, who, however, gradually replaced this with a more moderate idea of Poland as a Republic of Regions. Because the concept of autonomy for one region had previously aroused fear and animosity, they began to advocate larger financial discretion for the regions to be formed as a result of the anticipated territorial reform.

It could not be said that opposition to the concept of autonomy was limited to newcomers; there were also some Silesians who were strongly against it. All emphasised that it could be a threat to the preservation of sovereignty and national unity.

I say sincerely that I am not in favour of autonomy. I believe that the unity of the Polish State must be preserved. As for autonomy, when we become integrated into Europe, I do not know if in the future Upper Silesia may not be more attracted by Berlin than Warsaw. We could not lead to this. Thus, I am against autonomy on political and national grounds. We have had bad experience in the past... After all, we live in Poland [geopolitics], the issue of Silesia existed before the Second World War, much earlier we had the partition and then we had the national risings. So we have to think about the integrity of the Polish state, and the nation.

Concerning entrance into the European Union, Poland's accession with the preservation of its national and regional identity was seen as not endangered. Thus, 'closure' of a region or nation was seen as contrary to the whole European principle of unification and openness.

The early hints of autonomy, which later evolved into demands for decentralisation, meant that the region was at the forefront in its demands for introduction of regional reform. This was also the view of Frankiewicz, the chairman of the Union of Upper Silesian Communes, an organisation previously closely linked in its radicalism to the Upper Silesian Union (during Paczocha's leadership). In the middle of the nineties Frankiewicz had, however, broken away from the concept of autonomy. Nevertheless, he demanded radical decentralisation, breaking even with the inter-war tradition, as the

voivode would not be a representative of central government but only the representative of the region.⁵⁷⁶

We would like to avoid reference to Silesian autonomy. We believe that what is needed is decentralisation of the state administration, so that everything it is possible to deal with below the level of central institutions and of the voivodship offices is dealt with below then. In other words, all possible responsibilities should be given to the communes. Those responsibilities which cannot be carried out by a commune should be performed by a district. The rest should be in the region, but on the condition that we effect it from its own budget and through its own executive power, with an elected *voivode* and the participation of the region in the sharing of taxes. Then, separate economic policies could be conducted in various regions, not a unified one.⁵⁷⁷

Later, the concept of a self-governing voivodship, prepared by the regional Freedom Union, became the national policy of the Union.⁵⁷⁸

Conclusion

The regional administrative elite took the view at the time of the research that regional and district administrative reform was necessary and urgent, as their situation was unbearable. This unequivocally confirms their opinion of functioning in the transitional period. They all emphasised that the local government reform broke the socialist legacy but, at the same time, that further district and regional level reform was necessary. This was to be the pre-condition for 'normal' and effective functioning of the regional administration as a whole.

At the back of their minds, and often, as the interviews show, at the forefront of their minds was the inter-war autonomy, thought to be a crucial experience that inspired the regional administrative elite as a whole, making them the strongest advocates of decentralisation and democratisation. This was often declared by Silesians in the form: 'We are the people of the region who want to rule in our region – home'.

⁵⁷⁶ In the inter-war period even the sub-prefect at district level (one level below) had been a representative of central government.

⁵⁷⁷ Frankiewicz, *Śląsk*, no. 5, 1997.

⁵⁷⁸ Cieślak, *Gazeta w Katowicach*, 22 August 1995.

CONCLUSION

This study has investigated the regional administrative elite of Upper Silesia in the period of the administrative transition between 1990 and 1997.

- The first chapter presented the aims of the project and its research methodology. The main aim was to analyse the role of the Upper Silesian regional elite in the new decentralised administrative structure of Poland, and to trace the sequence of events which, after 1997, finally stabilised its position. The research is based on a historical narrative and on the analysis of political decisions. This has been supplemented by unstructured-interviews (of one to two hours) with 30 members of the regional elite, and by detailed analysis of press reports, about both my interviewees and other members of the regional administrative elite, published in the main regional and national press over the years 1990-1997. These methods of investigation were the only methods available to discover the decisions and opinions of the regional elite, given that most official records remain inaccessible. The last two sections of this theoretical chapter present Polish local government reform in the wider European context. It starts with the section on the administrative reforms 1990-1997 in the context of European inspirations and Polish tradition, followed by the literature review on elites in local government.
- Chapter two is a historical introduction. It explained the geographical setting and early historical background. This chapter also described more recent historical experiences, in particular the taking over of a part of Upper Silesia by Poland and its social and administrative integration into the state in the inter-war period. Some regional distinctiveness was preserved at that time. This is most evident in the granting of special rights and privileges in the form of regional autonomy for Upper Silesia, with significant powers for the regional authorities. This period is important as it was later redefined by the native regional elite as the 'golden age' of highly decentralised or even autonomous administration. References to this period were central to the debate about whether the new region of Upper Silesia should regain autonomy or be endowed with administrative institutions specially designed only for this region. The last part of this historical analysis focused on the crucial period of socialism. This was the strongest influence on the

formation of the regional elite in the 'restoration' phase of the transitional period (1993-1997). This influence was most evident in the re-appearance of some *nomenklatura* personnel among the regional elite, and the continuity of socialist policies towards heavy industry.

- Chapter three described the personality and policies of *voivode* Czech (1990-1994), whose 'radical and romantic' characteristics were seen in his policy towards regional administrative reform, and the restructuring of the voivodship office. A second important issue during his tenure was the renewal of Silesian regional identity. The consequences of this were seen in his identification with Silesian ethnicity, and in his redefinition of the *voivode*'s role, since he saw himself mainly as a representative of the region, not of central government.
- The next chapter concerned his successor, the 'Bourbon' *voivode* Ciszak (1994-1997). The analysis of his rule started by presenting his attitudes towards the need for administrative reform. In contrast to his predecessor, Czech, he seemed much more content with the legacy of the socialist era, which limited the importance of regional administration and marginalised the role of the *voivode*, making him, in reality, little more than a figurehead. In addition, the very evident politicisation of the administration in the restoration phase was investigated.
- Chapter five focused on the developments in local government between 1990 and 1997, especially the local elections: the motivation of people who stood for these elections, and the role of the political parties. The chapter also aimed to describe the power of local government in these years, the gradual decentralisation at the beginning of the nineties and, after the post-communist take-over of power, the subsequent centralisation of administration. This chapter also considered the importance of elective local and regional government administration and the consequences of the perception that these communities really represented local society: that 'we the people' can rule in Upper Silesia.
- Chapter six investigated the efforts of the regional administrative elite to decentralise the administration and give regional authorities more power, a move that the regional administrative elite saw as necessary to initiate regional restructuring. These actions by

the regional administrative elite culminated in 1995 with the proposal of the Regional Contract.

- The final chapter presented the regional administrative elite's demands for further administrative reforms. This chapter also dealt with issues related to the uniqueness of the Silesian region's experiences and characteristics: its inter-war autonomy, and the metropolitan structure of the region. This chapter also addresses the question of how the experience of inter-war autonomy influenced the regional administrative elite's proposals for administrative reform, and also considered the issue of the special administrative proposals for the cities of the region.

The distinctive contribution of this research lies in the analysis of a regional elite over a seven-years period of flux, when the process of the formation of the elite was particularly interesting due to the pace, scale and intensity of political and economic change. In the past, elite studies concentrated for the most part, on stable periods, and most dealt with national elites. The transition from socialism brought a renewed interest in Poland as elsewhere in the composition of elites during periods of change. Wasliewski and Wesołowski's researches on the parliamentary elite, which used both quantitative and qualitative approaches, and prosopographical research by Drąg and Indraszkiewicz on the regional elite, were particularly notable. There were similar researches on local elites in Upper Silesia.⁵⁷⁹ There has, however, been little or no research of the kind conducted in this thesis, that is, of regional level elite, through the period of transition which makes use of a qualitative approach. Since the transition must, if it is to succeed, be a multi-level process, this investigation has been conducted in the belief that the role of the regional elite is of quite fundamental importance.

Overall, the thesis brings to the fore the role of the regional elite, a new and distinctive agent in the Polish polity. This agent appeared as a result of initial decentralisation of power after the fall of communism in 1989, through the years 1990 and 1997; this was the creative phase in its formation, crystallisation and stabilisation.

⁵⁷⁹ Dobrowolski (ed.) 1994, Dobrowolski and Frąckiewicz (ed.) 1994, Dobrowolski, and Wróbel, (ed) 1995.

The emergence of this group is significant at least in two ways:

1. as part of the establishment of political freedom and the emergence of native Silesian groups defending their political rights and culture, which had been impossible under socialism;
2. it challenged the centralised 'socialist monopoly' of decision-making and participated in the redefinition of the central-regional balance of power, regarding:
 - A. the decentralisation and democratisation of administration, and
 - B. the engagement of the national elite in the regional restructuring.

First, in relation to the establishment of political freedom and the emergence of native Silesian groups these are to be seen in the context of political liberalisation. One of the main reasons for the fall of communism was the *nomenklatura*'s control over the whole public sphere and the elimination of even the most basic of political freedoms for citizens. Thus, during the Round Table negotiations in 1989 and after the formation of the first non-communist government of Mazowiecki, the main aims of the new elite were not only the transformation of the economy, which was in a critical condition, but also a fundamental redefinition of the role of the state. The state was expected to guarantee the right of all citizens to participate actively in political life. This necessitated the complete rebuilding of the whole framework of the political and administrative institutions.

The establishment of freedom and democracy in 1989 led, most of all, to the emergence of very fundamental issues that could not have been raised during the socialist period: the taking over of power from the *nomenklatura* and taking responsibility for the management of the state and the region. In the case of Upper Silesia, an additional issue was the preservation of regional identity by the native population. The first issue characterised the national election of 1989 and the local elections in 1990, which concentrated on removing the *nomenklatura* elite in Poland as a whole. In Upper Silesia, the local election was also concentrated on the opportunity of native Silesians 'to rule in the region themselves', especially as they had, in practice, been forbidden that right previously. Thus, the most distinctive feature of the new revolutionary elite which arrived in 1990 (directors of the voivodship office appointed by *voivode* Czech and councillors elected in local elections) was their Silesian origins.

An understanding of the regional elite's policies and its demands for decentralisation of power in the period under examination requires some reference to their motivation in entering the administration. The decision to work in administration was a re-definition of citizens' role as being of fundamental importance. It broke the deeply-rooted tradition which went back some 200 years to the period of the partition, which had been significantly reinforced during the socialist era and which completely separated the public and private spheres. Working or participating in public institutions was then understood as a betrayal both of national and regional interests: the state, its administration and all public organisations were seen as alien and indifferent to the public interest, whether regional or national. Those who entered the public sphere were seen as careerists and national traitors.⁵⁸⁰

In 1989/1990, for the first time in several centuries, the role of the patriotic citizen enabled him/her to serve the state and society by working in public institutions. This re-definition was only possible due to the national and regional post-Solidarity elite's view of the events of 1989 as 'an extraordinary opportunity in the history of the nation'. For the first time, the elite felt that the society as a whole, rather than external powers, could and should form the policy of the state and that they, as its members, could also participate in this process. However, this view was still limited to rather narrow self-selected groups, at both the national and regional level, who had entered the public sphere, and formed the respective post-Solidarity elites.

Among the native Silesians in the regional elite there was a quite different motivation to enter the administration. This seems to have drawn on some memory of the native population's to participate in the administration of the region during the inter-war period of regional autonomy, as well as the earlier effective and democratic Prussian state and its administration. This gave rise to a motivation completely distinct from that of the other Poles. Native Silesians had a strong tradition of social activity, and, in contrast to other Poles, remained active in the public sphere in a covert manner, even during the socialist period. For example, they often participated in such organisations as the Scout movement, professional organisations, or Catholic organisations. Like other Poles, however, they

⁵⁸⁰ However, informal and unofficial networks, sometimes even quite sophisticated ones, could exist and preserve various social interests. This tradition of comprehensive and efficient, though informal, networks of organisations is best illustrated by the 'underground state' during the Second World War, which managed to perform all the basic state functions, and indicated the ability of Poles to organise themselves. However, those organisations were opposed to the 'official' state and its institutions, and did not disturb the sense of the relative autonomy of the private sphere, effectively separated from the public-official sphere.

declined to enter political organisations which they saw as exclusive to the *nomenklatura*. The only organisation in which all Poles enrolled quickly and in large numbers was Solidarity, and then only in the last decade of socialism.

The regional tradition of inter-war autonomy, with its decentralisation in favour of a strong regional authority and high degree of discretion for regional and local democratic institutions (most of all, the Silesian Diet), had substantial influence in overcoming the traditional negative social attitudes to the public sphere. This was reflected in the widespread Silesian belief that it was regional society which should rule in the region – ‘in their own home’.

The appearance of the regional elite was also significant, as it was the challenge to the centralised ‘socialist monopoly’ of decision-making by the regional administrative elite’s active, even usurper, role. In addition, they demanded that the new decentralised institutions be democratically-elected. Their demands for the formation of an elective and decentralised administrative structure have to be seen in the context of the socialist legacy. The structure of administration in the socialist period was extremely centralised, vertically fragmented, and not only inefficient but above all alienated from the citizens. This extreme centralisation is a unique feature of socialist countries. In Western European states, although administration has gone through periods of decentralisation and centralisation, there appear to be few cases where the administrative structure was ever as centralised, or ever thought to be as distorted and ineffective as that of the socialist countries. Accordingly, the issue of the division of administrative competencies among the various levels of administration, with the transference of as many of them as possible to the lowest levels, was of primary importance to the whole transition process. These issues were first strongly raised by the regional elite.

This regional reform meant the first substantial shift of power to regional authorities. Decentralisation was seen as the pre-condition for regional and national development. However, this handing over of powers was to be assisted by the equally important transformation of regional public administration units into elective institutions at district and regional levels. The elective institutions (local government at the district level and regional government equipped with wide powers) were to be the backbone of all social activity, the development of civil society, and democracy. It would lead to a situation where the regional society would realise that they, ‘the people’, and not the ‘officials’ had the power to decide.

Social activity was to emerge gradually as people recognised that they could organise themselves to present and defend their aims and interests.

The experience of the success of local government reform in 1990 (which established the communes as elective bodies and made them financially independent) made both the local government elite itself and the voivodship office aware that similarly elective units, with substantial power and financial resources, were also necessary at the district and regional levels. This belief in the need for administrative reform at these levels was much stronger among the regional than the national elite. Moreover, the experience of inter-war autonomy prompted native Silesians, and, after some time, newcomers as well, to believe that the solution to extreme centralisation was not only for the administration to be decentralised, but also that for institutions to be elective. Thus, the primary expectation from further administrative reform was that it would create conditions for the region to have its own voice at the national level, and above all enable 'the people' to rule in the region.

Finally, analysis of the whole 1990-1997 period reveals the crucial role of the regional administrative elite in initiating regional restructuring. A year earlier, in 1989, the national transition had been initiated with the introduction of a comprehensive package of simultaneous political and economic reform. In May 1990, the transition at the regional level began: the new *voivode* was appointed, and the first democratic local election took place. However, throughout this whole period of 1990-1997, the national elite concentrated on projects on the national scale, not recognising the issues on the regional scale. This was due to the vacuum of power at the regional level; all public administration was still extremely centralised and fragmented by branches of industry, as in the socialist years. Thus, the central elite only noticed the interests of narrow sectors of industry and was not able to put them together and see them interacting in the context of the region. The administrative structure which centralised power at the national level and marginalised the regional level also limited the central elite's ability to exercise power effectively at the regional level. In the case of Upper Silesia, the regional problems were exacerbated by the distinctiveness of the region within Poland as a whole, and in particular by its unique problems related to the restructuring of heavy industry.

In this critical situation, the regional elite tried to assume responsibility from the national elite, and even to usurp power, in order to initiate the regional restructuring by themselves.

However, these efforts failed, and, as the Regional Contract of October 1995 indicates, their policy since then has gradually shifted towards an integration of the national elite into regional policy prepared by the regional elite, as if were forcing the national elite into action.

Thus, the regional administrative elite's great achievement over this period was to compel the central elite to recognise the need for Silesian restructuring, as well as for the formation of an effective decentralised regional administrative structure. The political reforms carried out by the national elite since 1997 have recognised these issues. They have created the opportunity for regional scale restructuring programmes, and power has been decentralised by the establishment of elective institutions at all levels: commune, district and region.

On 10 November 1998, local government elections were held at the commune, and for the first time at the district and regional levels. The national turnout was around 45-47 per cent, in contrast to four years earlier when only 34 per cent of those eligible voted.⁵⁸¹ These elections suggest that, in general, Polish society had started to believe that local and regional response made a difference, and that the community has a voice in local and regional policy. Although turnout in one election can hardly be conclusive,⁵⁸² data for these elections would seem to suggest that the local, district and regional administrations are considered to be as legitimate as national institutions: the turnout in the national elections in the previous year was 47.9 per cent. In most countries, turnout in local government elections is much lower than in national elections, so the roughly equal turnout is of some significance.

The period of administrative transition may be said to have ended with the establishment of the framework of decentralised and elective institutions and its legitimisation by the electorate. However, there is no reason to think the situation is now completely stable: the central-regional relationship is not finally determined, nor is the role of civil society, although both, it seems safe to say, will change within the framework that has been established in the past decade and that has been the subject of this thesis.

This thesis aims to contribute research on the role of the regional elite in the decentralised and democratic states. Such research may be interesting both for Poland as a whole and for

⁵⁸¹ Wróbel, *Rzeczpospolita* 24 October 1998

⁵⁸² Rose, Munro and Mackie, *Elections in Central and Eastern Europe Since 1990*, Glasgow: University of Strathclyde Studies in Public Policy No.300.

other post-socialist countries. In the case of Poland, the number of regional elite studies is rather limited. Wasilewski (1997) one of the most authoritative contributors to elite studies in Poland (the chairman of the first department of elite studies) ended of his review of elite studies in Poland with a summarised bibliography of all the literature on the Polish elite. However, among around 110 researches, only 3 entries concentrated on regional or local elite studies.

This academic over-concentration on the national elite has to be re-addressed. The main challenge for the near future will be to draw a portrait of several or all regional elites, probably according to the lines of the 16 new regions. These researches will first concentrate on answering the basic questions such as: a comparison between who the regional elites are, their policies, their roles in democratic states, and their similarities to, distinctiveness from and relationship with the national elite. As such researches do not yet exist, one can only speculate about how this portrait will look and how many observations drawn from Upper Silesia can be generalised to other regions. The research of Indraszkiewicz and Drag, that compared Upper Silesia with two neighbouring regions, Cracow and Tarnów, revealed certain similarities between the three. For example, in comparing the local government elites in all three voivodships to state administration and business elites, they found that changes of personnel were much more radical in the first group. The second group, the state administration elite, also had Solidarity origins in all three regions. However, the changes there were much less radical, and the elite was more stable. The last group - the business elite, had, in general, post-communist origins in each of these three regions.

One suspects, however, that history still matters and Upper Silesian distinctiveness will be preserved, to a large extent, as a result of its inter-war period autonomy, which distinguished it from the rest of Poland. The regional elite in Upper Silesia is probably more assertive, and the plans for regional policies are more advanced in comparison with the other regions, as the process of emancipation of the regional elite, as a result of its inter-war based experience, had already shown itself from the beginning of the nineties.⁵⁸³ Moreover, one suspects that the

⁵⁸³ For example, the Regional Contract signed in 1995 and the Upper Silesian Fund are now seen as solutions, which should be repeated in other regions to make them better-equipped for conducting regional policy in the European Union after enlargements. There are now plans to sign fifteen regional contracts and to establish a regional fund in every region.

This assumption also preliminarily confirms the prominent role of the regional elite in national organisations of local government, Polish towns and so on.

portrait of regional elites in Poland as whole, will be more important as EU enlargement proceeds and regions are given a more prominent role.⁵⁸⁴ One can also speculate that with the experience of living between two national cultures - borderland awareness, the Upper Silesian authorities, with their experience of decentralised and powerful regional authorities will be particularly well equipped for the challenges and demands.⁵⁸⁵

Despite the certain distinctiveness between Upper Silesia and the rest of Poland it still seems that comparison with certain regions can be particularly provocative. A comparison with the traditionally much poorer and stringently communist Dąbrowa will be particularly illuminating, due to the fact that since 1945 they formed one administrative unit. Is the division between these two parts of the region still significant? For example, Åberg's research on the development of social capital in Lvov, western Ukraine (formerly Galicia) is contrasted with eastern Ukraine due to its different historical experience as the former Soviet Ukraine.⁵⁸⁶ Similarly, it will be interesting to see how much earlier historical experiences count and how much the fact that Upper Silesia was part of Prussia and Dąbrowa belonged to Russian partition matters in Poland. Among foreign regions, comparison with Moravia will be particularly illuminating due to the fact that it was once united with Upper Silesia and was part of one administrative unit. At the beginning of the nineties it also demanded autonomy within the Czech Republic.⁵⁸⁷ Comparison can also be made with 'Padania', in north of Italy especially the role of the *Lega Lombarda*/League North, which explicitly introduced the issue of regionalism into national politics, asserting that the territorial organisation of state for preserving the centralised power was similar to the influence of the Upper Silesian Union in promoting regionalisation in Poland.⁵⁸⁸

Finally, the issue, that should attract particular attention from academics is the cross-regional comparison of regional elites in Poland and cross-national comparison of regional elites in the post-socialist countries. I wish to emphasise, once more, that in democratic societies, the local and regional elites are as important as the national one. These cross-regional and cross-

⁵⁸⁴ One of the first examples of this type of research was conducted in 1990 by Bokajlo in his study of local elites' attitudes towards 'the Europe of Regions' on the Polish German Border in Lower Silesia.

⁵⁸⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that its representatives, headed by the marshall of the region, Jan Olbrych, enhance European integration ideas and the concept of subsidiarity and are the most active among Polish lobbies in Brussels.

⁵⁸⁶ Åberg, *Europe-Asia Studies*, vol 52, no 2, 2000.

⁵⁸⁷ Dostal and Hampl (1993: p. 267) indicate similar separatist and autonomous tendencies in Moravia.

⁵⁸⁸ Keating, *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 1997, volume 15. p. 391.

national researches will be critical to identify more general trends of the formation and stabilisation of regional elites in these countries. This is especially, so due to the similarity of the regional elite's role in other post-socialist countries over time that is, the decentralisation of power to the communes at the beginning of the nineties and re-centralisation in the middle of the nineties.⁵⁸⁹

Moreover, investigation of certain cross-national trends should be considered to see: Do they mirror the national elites, are they confident new actors deserving much more academic attention? What is their role in the new democratic states? Many have argued that in Poland, local administration was more efficient and democratic than the central administration, but was this also the case in other post-socialist countries? If so, was this due to the fact that local government elite alone changed? What about administrative reform, especially decentralisation of power and democratisation of its institutions? How does this affect the formation of self-reliant regional elites?

⁵⁸⁹ Illner 1998: 1-7.

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