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### The issue of national and regional identity at Polish language classes – dilemmas and prospects

The identity of an individual is formed as part of social, intellectual and cultural development by the environment the individual lives in, people surrounding him and the situations that influence his beliefs. Jerzy Nikitorowicz claims that “identity can be defined as a meeting between the present, the past and the anticipated future. Getting to know one’s self is essential in the world of mass culture, apart from that, understanding one’s self provides the opportunity to understand others and gives the prospect of intercultural integration”<sup>1</sup>.

#### Identity vs. postmodernity

Globalisation, seen as a feature of postmodern societies due to the fact that it brings axionormative chaos and commercialization of culture, puts a man in a situation in which it is necessary to discover the sources of his identity. Such task is important and difficult as it requires a reflective approach towards the categories of local and national communities. The more we experience the consequences of globalization, the more we realise the need of local bonds. As Leon Dyczewski claims, “the stronger the globalization process (...), the stronger the tendencies small and great nations, as well as local communities have to keep their identity. Defense mechanisms are triggered in order to protect their cultural identity”<sup>2</sup>.

Zofia Budrewicz, while writing about the crisis of culture and about “national culture traditions fading away” recalls opinions of anthropologists and pedagogues who give the diagnose that in postmodern world we can observe “man’s new cultural identity, one without a communicative memory, i.e. without values passed on from generation to generation”<sup>3</sup>. From the point of formation of system of values and life views of young people, this is a very important issue. The identity of a modern, young generation, defined by Zbyszek Melosik as

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<sup>1</sup> J. Nikitorowicz, *Pogranicze, tożsamość, edukacja międzykulturowa*, Białystok 2001, pp. 68.

<sup>2</sup> L. Dyczewski, *Trwałość i zmienność kultury polskiej*, Lublin 2002, pp. 222.

<sup>3</sup> Z. Budrewicz, *Pamięć i kultura w edukacji polonistycznej. Wczoraj i dziś*, [in:] *Kłopotliwe pamiątki. Trud dziedziczenia*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Sienko, Kraków 2012, pp. 17.

“a global teenager”, to a small extent includes national values and emphasizes popular culture and mass media as the ideology of consumption<sup>4</sup>.

Thus, it is a challenge for the teachers to make the students aware that the bond with one's own region and identifying with a particular community provides a young person with the sense of life certainty by directing his focus to political, economic and social processes surrounding him. It also facilitates the formation of the sense of bond with other, wider communities such as the nation and the European community.

## National identity

Antonina Kłosowska defines national identity as people's attitude towards their own cultural group showing “the awareness of a certain individuality and the sense of bond with the group of their own as well as the awareness of continuity, historical existence of such a group and its collective filiation – coming from common ancestors or an ancestor”<sup>5</sup>. On the other hand, Kazimierz Łastawski claims that vital features of national identity are: nation's cultural heritage, permanent and conscious individuality of people living in a particular territory, common language, characteristic customs and traditions as well as emblems and symbols that consolidate the memory of the community<sup>6</sup>.

Culture which facilitates the existence of the nation is the foundation of national identity. The works of culture, language, customs and maintained social values, ideas, symbols and patterns create a cultural code that defines the identity of Poles. Henryk Gradkowski, by referring to Christian philosophy and education in the spirit of values, lists the examples found in history of Polish literature that show “images of greatness which ensured our national identity”<sup>7</sup>. In his opinion, the works of such poets as Herbert, Różewicz, Szymborska, Mickiewicz, Wojtyła, Konopnicka, Tuwim and Miłosz, Rej or Kochanowski determine our national identity because they are “symbolic milestones for the love of the country that manifest themselves in their merits for the development of a literary language”<sup>8</sup>. The canon of national culture defined in such a way is also formed by Polish patriotic iconography of Grottger, Matejko, Rodakowski and Kossak. Such iconography, being supplemented with Chopin's music, paints the picture of history<sup>9</sup>. The most representative works are, according to Gradkowski, “the essence of our might that protected us from denationalization, as it ensured – for decades – and even now – the love of our language in its best form, shaped by its corypheuses”<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Zob. Z. Melosik, *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży. W niewoli władzy i wolności*, Kraków 2013, pp.141. It is also worth referring to sociological research by Krystyna Szafraniec conducted between 2008-2009 among a group of 13-year-olds, 16-year-olds and 19-year-olds. The analysis of the world of values and life beliefs of studying youth leads to conclusion that most important for young Poles are successful family life, friendship, good education, interesting job. The participants identify themselves with social values to a lesser degree, they rarely describe themselves by relation to the community (to family, to others in general, to religion, to country). K. Szafraniec, *Orientacje życiowe uczącej się młodzieży*, [in:] *Młodzież jako problem i jako wyzwanie ponowoczesności*, ed. K. Szafraniec, Toruń 2011, pp. 31-51.

<sup>5</sup> A. Kłosowska, *Tożsamość i identyfikacja narodowa w perspektywie historycznej i psychologicznej*, “Kultura i Społeczeństwo” 1996 no 3, pp. 134.

<sup>6</sup> K. Łastawski, *Historyczne i współczesne wartości polskiej tożsamości narodowej*, “Słupskie Studia Historyczne”, no 13/2007, pp. 281.

<sup>7</sup> H. Gradkowski, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości... (pedagogika-filozofia-literatura)*, Jelenia Góra 2014, pp. 130-131.

<sup>8</sup> H. Gradkowski, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości...*, pp. 131.

<sup>9</sup> See M. Porębski, *Malowane dzieje*, Warszawa 1962.

<sup>10</sup> H. Gradkowski, *W poszukiwaniu tożsamości...*, pp. 131.

## Regional identity

According to Marek Szczepański, regional identity is a special example of "(...) a social and cultural identity based on regional tradition that refers to a clearly defined and delimited territory, region, its specific social, cultural (symbolic), economic and even topographic features that distinguish it from others (...)"<sup>11</sup>.

If we talk about formation of regional identity, we usually think of it in categories of local communities. It is connected with acceptance of values ingrained in direct, geographical, natural and cultural surrounding of a man and perceiving oneself as being a member of large and small communities, i.e. nation, region or family.

The turn towards "small homelands" as the way to look for ingredients forming the identity of digital natives is an educational challenge because young people do not feel at ease with the rules and norms formed by school and rebel against the pressure of high culture seen as something obligatory and boring. They choose the parts of cultural reality freely, are sceptical about various ideas and far from reflection and contemplation as well as from asking existential questions. Melosik claims that "a global teenager is always "on holiday" from meanings and values typical of his own community and culture"<sup>12</sup>. I do not share this conviction and I cannot fully agree with such a pessimistic diagnosis given by the famous sociologist and pedagogue. I would like to emphasize the need to include national values into the process of supporting the development of personality of the young generation, which is connected with introduction of homeland culture and values<sup>13</sup>. I believe that deepening the knowledge regarding the characteristics of one's own region provides the opportunities to consolidate the feeling of national identity, or as defined by Zofia Budrewicz, "the feeling of students nationality"<sup>14</sup>. This also leads to the situation where national culture is enriched by local values, which facilitates evoking patriotic attitudes.

## Historical awareness – the foundation of regional and national identity

National and regional identity is associated with being attached to history. History is a solid foundation of identity and independence of a man, "the foundation, as Zygmunt Zieliński claims, that reaches deep down inside our culture, statehood, customs, religion"<sup>15</sup>. The place of history in the life of every man is defined by values coming from the past. They are the basics for historical awareness, defined by Jerzy Topolski as "(...) knowledge resources that function as part of human activity (both individual and social) as well as evaluation system regarding the

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<sup>11</sup> M. Szczepański, *Tożsamość regionalna – w kręgu pojęć podstawowych i metodologii badań*, [in:] *Badania nad tożsamością regionalną*, ed. A. Matczak, Łódź-Ciechanów 1999, pp. 8.

<sup>12</sup> Z. Melosik, *Kultura popularna i tożsamość młodzieży...*, pp. 142-143.

<sup>13</sup> Zob. I. Morawska, M. Latoch-Zielińska, *Wartości narodowe w rozumieniu gimnazjalistów i w nawiązaniu do edukacji*, [in:] *O wartościach i wartościowaniu. Historia – Literatura – edukacja*, ed. M. Karwatowska, A. Siwiec, Chełm 2012, pp. 241-257.

<sup>14</sup> Z. Budrewicz, "Więcej Słonimskiego, a mniej Sienkiewicza"? *Zagadnienie polskości w nauczaniu języka polskiego*, [in:] *Historia- Pamięć – Tożsamość w edukacji humanistycznej. Vol. 2. Literatura i kultura*, ed. Z. Budrewicz, M. Sienko, Kraków 2013, pp. 256.

<sup>15</sup> Z. Zieliński, *Kłopoty z tożsamością. Historia na wysypisku*, Toruń 2014, pp. 170.

past of a society”<sup>16</sup>. The source is also literature which refers to history. The works of Kraszewski, Sienkiewicz, Mickiewicz and Żeromski solidified the continuity and historical awareness. By teaching history in an attractive, colourful way, they built the bond between generations. Some authors such as Słowacki, Wyspiański, Słonimski, Miłosz, Gombrowicz or Herbert showed the meaning of patriotism as well as its critical image.

Literature helps reconstruct history as a device for storing cultural memory. The images of culture found in literary texts made the history a live matter and fed imagination. By functioning as the literary canon, these works form a collective, community identity on a local-regional and ethnic-national level.

Literature that belongs to Polish canon is dominated by **Polish national-catholic values**; the remnants of noble traditions (Sarmatian), the tradition of Europe’s “prewall”, Romantic ethos, aspirations of independence, national and religious tolerance. On the basis of important works of Polish literature, Edmund Lewandowski points out seven characteristic features of **Poles’ ethnic syndrome**: lability and weak will, attachment to equality and freedom, the tendency to discussion, favouring fight and entertainment over work, lordly pride and envy, complex of unfulfilled possibilities and the belief of tolerance and hope<sup>17</sup>.

The Poles, as any other nation, have their own vices and numerous virtues. That is why both can be omitted completely in building up the sense of national identity in students. Shaping social, national, religious and ethical attitudes requires returning to the past and referring to historical education. Zygmunt Zieliński demands national education based on historical foundations, history, according to the researcher, is marginalized. However, it is an important tool in social education. If we write about historical education at school, Zieliński emphasizes the role of a teacher in evoking interests in the past. If the history teacher is flexible in terms of his approach towards teaching programme, he is able to “convince the student that history is not about memorizing dates, names and events out of context but it mainly is the way to understand the place, time, culture and tradition in which the student lives and creates. The student’s task is simply to get to know why me, the world and people are what they are. What is our legacy? Where to find role models?”<sup>18</sup>.

### School narration – Polish and historical discourse of memory culture

Historical and cultural heritage are considered to be unalienable ingredients of national and regional education. In Polish education, Agnieszka Kania, underlines “the necessity to turn back from cultural stereotypes and the need to redefine collective identity as well as make an attempt to create the space where young people will notice themselves and the value of creating their own sense of cultural and national identity”<sup>19</sup>. While using stereotypical content during Polish classes and schematic ways of discussing literature, a young person cannot be convinced that, in terms of identification, it is important or even vital to get involved in discussion regarding the ways of understanding national ethos and the category of “Polishness”.

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<sup>16</sup> J. Topolski, Wstęp, [in:] *Świadomość historyczna Polaków*, Łódź 1981, pp. 5-6.

<sup>17</sup> E. Lewandowski, *Charakter narodowy Polaków i innych*, Londyn-Warszawa 1995, pp. 130-184.

<sup>18</sup> Z. Zieliński, *Kłopoty z tożsamością. Historia na wysypisku*, Toruń 2014, pp. 43- 44.

<sup>19</sup> A. Kania, “Polak młody” na lekcjach języka polskiego. *Edukacja polonistyczna a kształtowanie poczucia tożsamości narodowej*, Kraków 2015, pp. 136. See B. Myrdzik, *O kształtowaniu tożsamości narodowej w procesie edukacji polonistycznej. Refleksje i kontrowersje*, [in:] *W trosce o dobrą edukację. Prace dedykowane Profesor Jadwidze Kowalikowej z okazji 40-lecia pracy naukowej*, ed. A. Janus-Sitarz, Kraków 2009.

We are gradually moving away from a noncritical acquisition or enforcement of national values as the authoritarian ones. Polish teachers who chose books, which are important for the Poles and are included in the canon, is aware that it is necessary to reinterpret national values, update and argue with them. Thus, they engage in activities that try to persuade a young person to think about the sense of own identity in the context of nation<sup>20</sup>.

National memory, i.e. the awareness of common past, as emphasized by John Paul II, plays a key role in national identity<sup>21</sup>. Its elements can be found in e.g. cities, architecture and historical memorabilia. The memory reflects in national symbols of state (national colours, coat of arms, anthem) as well as the region (city coat of arms).

Zofia Budrewicz claims that Polish teaching nowadays, by referring to the principles of regional cultural education, must strengthen “the role of literary canon as the medium of cultural memory”<sup>22</sup>. Formation of culture of remembrance takes place through e.g. hermeneutic reading of culture as places of remembrance. Cultural landscape, monuments, shrines, cemeteries as elements of heritage give local and national culture meaning in building up the identity of young generations. Local history could be interesting if the teacher inspires students to discover and get to know historical facts related to the history of the country or region or suggests independent research regarding facts from the life of local characters such as people related with the school (patrons), or researching the history of names of streets and places.

### Project in national and regional education

In my opinion, **project method** should play the key part in the work of a Polish teacher. It joins and consciously consolidates the knowledge of Polish language as well as history and social studies. According to Mirosław Szymański, the point of such a teaching method is that “a team of students starts, plans and engages in a particular activity by themselves and also evaluates the implementation of the task (...). It is best if the source of the project is everyday world and not abstract science. The starting point is some kind of problematic situation, intention, taking up some initiative, setting a goal. Consequently, a widely understood project is an achievement itself”<sup>23</sup>.

The topics of projects should go together with the interests of students and should be connected with issues they can relate to:

This is Poland.

The whole Poland is so beautiful.

Self-portrait of Poles.

Creating tradition.

History. Tradition, Identity.

Regional heritage – roots of universal values.

You praise foreign...

Regionalism and multiculturalism.

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<sup>20</sup> It is seen in programmes and coursebooks for teaching Polish in secondary school. Cf I. Morawska, M. Latoch-Zielińska, *Wartości narodowe w edukacji polonistycznej gimnazjalistów*, [in:] *Przeobrażenia w kulturze i edukacji na przełomie XX i XXI wieku*, ed. M. Karwatowska, A. Siwiec, Chełm 2010, pp. 257-270.

<sup>21</sup> Jan Paweł II, *Pamięć i tożsamość*, Kraków 2005

<sup>22</sup> Z. Budrewicz, *Pamięć i kultura w edukacji polonistycznej...*, pp. 29.

<sup>23</sup> M. S. Szymański, *O metodzie projektów. Z historii, teorii i praktyki pewnej metody kształcenia*, Warszawa 2010, pp. 61.

Traditional craft vs. the present.

Tastes and smells. Culinary traditions of the region<sup>24</sup>.

Due to carefully considered and planned projects, modern interpretation of works from the canon, which respects creative reading and is open to individuality of a reading act, allows to shape subjective relationships and discover value of tradition. Even such a well-known literary work as *Pan Tadeusz*, which is problematic for young readers, directs the focus of researchers-participants of the project not only on Soplicowo, its inhabitants, features of native nature, history and customs. By reading Mickiewicz's work, the students can make references to their own local tradition. Old Polish hospitality, customs of nobles or descriptions of dishes are the issues which inspire to e.g. doing research on regional cuisine of a small homeland<sup>25</sup>.

As part of their projects, the students are encouraged to search for literary traces in the nearest neighbourhood, organize literary journey around Poland following the places related to the biography of a writer, places present in literature, places important for literature (e.g. museums, bookshops, literary salons, cafes, cabarets).

The project provides unlimited opportunities and inspires as the authors of guidebooks for teachers suggest to take up various activities. These could be e.g. preparing albums with photos, posters or collages, preparing a book or a bulletin, creating a model, making a film or a sound recording, theatre play or a staging, organizing scientific conference, exhibition, competition, festival, happening, preparing a multimedia presentation<sup>26</sup>. Albums, multimedia presentations, photo and movie coverages allow to think about the way the students see their "small" and "large" homeland, their countrymen and their own patriotism. Discovering tradition takes place by reading works that have similar topics and refer to one another and to various items of culture such as films, painting, music. By creating problem situations, the teacher encourages factual discussion about modern attitudes and problems connected with Polishness. Ewelina Strawa-Kęsek emphasizes that "students who do projects can meet people of various cultures, religious and ethnic minorities. They have the opportunity to get to know the history of a particular place where those people live, see the historical places (cemeteries, churches, monuments) which are a visible sign of multicultural past of their small homeland"<sup>27</sup>. Historical, national and local identity is built up by taking part in educational projects based on educational games.

### Historical game – the way of regional education

City games, which are becoming increasingly popular, are special kind of education in terms of cultural heritage. They treat the city as a board, involve practicing navigational skills, their participants move using a map in a similar way to counters and solve specially designed tasks during particular stages of the game. Agnieszka Kruszyńska underlines that a city game, due to its attractive form, allows to discover monuments and city history as well as its modern face. The game that refers to history is considered by teachers and students the method that facilitates gaining knowledge about a particular city, place and culture. It could be a great

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<sup>24</sup> Some of the topics of projects can be found in *Region. Tożsamość. Edukacja*, ed. J. Nikitorowicz, D. Misiejuk, M. Sobiecki, Białystok 2005, pp. 284-292. Many inspiring ideas for projects can be found in the book by Ewelina Strawa-Kęsek, *Metoda projektu w edukacji polonistycznej*, Kraków 2015.

<sup>25</sup> Cf *Smaki Kolbuszowszczyzny*, ed. J. Gul-Bogacz, J. Müller, Kolbuszowa 2014.

<sup>26</sup> A. Mikina. A. Zając, *Metoda projektu nie tylko w gimnazjum. Poradnik dla nauczycieli i dyrektorów szkół*, Warszawa 2012, pp. 28.

<sup>27</sup> Strawa-Kęsek, *Metoda projektu...*, pp. 93.

extension of history, Polish and social studies classes by teaching patriotism, culture and history. Thus, it is being used more often in cultural heritage education as it influences “shaping the sense of regional identity among young people and allows them to get in touch with their own cultural heritage, values and regional content”<sup>28</sup>.

An interesting game entitled “Kolbuszowa during occupation” was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> Sep 2016 in a small town in Podkarpackie voivodeship. The event was organized by J. M. Goslar Regional Association of Culture in Kolbuszowa together with Public Library in Kolbuszowa. The goal of the game was to get young people familiar with city history during WW II. Competing teams from secondary and high schools from Kolbuszowa had to pass eight points located throughout the city that referred to the period of Nazi occupation. The participants followed the events and characters that played a significant role in the history of the region: September 1939 in Kolbuszowa, Battle of Kolbuszowa, Jan Bytnar “Rudy”, the priest Antoni Dunajewski, The Assassination of Włodzimierz Halicki, Ghetto in Kolbuszowa, Righteous Among the Nations, Operation “Storm” in 1944. The teams received source materials at each point and their task was to answer the questions from the game cards. The team which answered the most questions and finished the game the fastest won. Apart from knowledge and the ability to acquire information quickly, the victory depended also on the strategy each team followed, i.e. to choose the right order of visiting particular points on the map<sup>29</sup>.

### National and regional tradition vs. the issue of multiculturalism

Polish education introduces multiculturalism<sup>30</sup>, opens itself for the hierarchy of values, civilization achievements of other people and their cultures. Reading works of literature, taking note of cultural symbols, signs of traditions and conflicts of values leads to experiencing the world and self<sup>31</sup>. It constitutes the development of personal, national, regional identity, also in relation to the Other, his cultural and religious diversity. The need of belonging to a national and local community and the attachment to historical and cultural tradition should not be perceived as the obstacle of dialog and multicultural understanding. They are the foundation for intercultural education, which Iwona Morawska defines as “system education activities directed on preparation of a young person to function in the conditions where cultures collide and overlap, shape the understanding of differences that can occur in the local area of culture (as its subculture), as well as the ones that refer to the communities that are far away in terms of distance, mentality and religion”<sup>32</sup>.

The choice of reading material such as personal documents (biographies, letters, parts of autobiographies) is of great importance in Polish teaching as the students not only gain

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<sup>28</sup> A. Kruszyńska, *Gra miejska – animacyjna forma edukacji na rzecz dziedzictwa kulturowego*, [in:] *Dziedzictwo kulturowe. Historia. Dziedzictwo regionalne. Muzyka, literatura, sztuka i media*, ed. K. Ratajczak, Poznań 2015, pp. 81. See *Ślady przeszłości – gry terenowe po Warszawie*, ed. M. Hajdukiewicz, Z. Naruszewicz, Z. Szopowska, Warszawa 2008.

<sup>29</sup> More information can be found here: <http://biblioteka.kolbuszowa.pl/index.php/aktualnosci/informacje/kolbuszowa/1359-gra-miejska-o-ii-wojnie-wiatowej.html>., Retrieved: 20.10.2016.

<sup>30</sup> Cf *Dialog kultur w edukacji*, ed. M. Karwatowska, B. Myrdzik, Lublin 2009; *Oswajanie inności w edukacji polonistycznej*, ed. E. Dunaj, B. Myrdzik, Lublin 2010; *Edukacja polonistyczna wobec Innego*, ed. A. Janus-Sitarz, Kraków 2014.

<sup>31</sup> See B. Myrdzik, *Zrozumieć siebie i świat: szkice i studia o edukacji polonistycznej*, Lublin 2006.

<sup>32</sup> I. Morawska, *Dialog kultur jako wyzwanie edukacyjne*, [in:] *Dialog kultur w edukacji*, ed. B. Myrdzik, M. Karwatowska, Lublin 2009, pp. 95.

knowledge about the characters but also develop their reading interests and shape their beliefs. They have the opportunity to meet someone else in person, experience their history which can consequently lead to reflection about the world of values.

In particular, we should focus on the analysis of regional literature which consolidates memory about historical figures that come from our own region. This allows to form attitudes related to the sense of identity and identification with the place of residence. I would use the example of memories of Janek Bytnar's mother, who is the character of the book *Stones for the Rampart* which depicts his childhood in Kolbuszowa<sup>33</sup>. Zdzisława Rechul – Bytnar recalls the image of the family street Nowe Miasto at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, she also describes distrust and animosities between Catholics and Jews, which constituted more than half of the population at that time<sup>34</sup>.

Showing multi-ethnic past of the city results in deepening the knowledge about the region. Teaching about multiculturalism and local history focuses attention on the presence of Jews in the city and their role in culture, economy and politics. All that seems to be valuable as it teaches respect, tolerance and allows to verify the views about foreigners. It also encourages to reflect on complex history and the present of Kolbuszowa.

A similar message can be found while analysing the city's coat of arms of the city on the Nile



Coat of Arms of the City of Kolbuszowa

The coat of arms consist of three elements: the cross, two hands in a shake and Star of David. The symbolism of it seems obvious: “the cross means Christian inhabitants of the city, the Star of David – the Israelis, and the two hands shaking – the reconciliation, agreement and cooperation for the common good”<sup>35</sup>. However, historians claim that the coat of arms relates to a so-called “Kolbuszowa agreement” from 1753, when the division of Ostrogski' ordination took place among the families of Tarnowscy, Tyszkiewiczze, Ostrogski and Zasławski. The heraldic signs in the coat of arms of the city symbolize families which divided the ordination: two hands in a shake and a Maltese cross - the symbol of brotherhood and solidarity, the six-

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<sup>33</sup> Z. J. Rechul-Bytnar, *Moja rodzinna ulica – kolbuszowskie Nowe Miasto w początkach obecnego stulecia*, “Rocznik Kolbuszowski”, no 5/2001.

<sup>34</sup> It refers to e.g. the infamous massacre that took place in Kolbuszowa on 6<sup>th</sup> May 1919 when angry peasants killed twelve Jews and robbed their shops and houses. See Z. J. Rechul-Bytnar, *Moja rodzinna ulica – kolbuszowskie Nowe Miasto...*, pp. 201-203.

<sup>35</sup> W. Helwin, W. Walat, *Herb miasta Kolbuszowa. Studium socjologiczno-historyczne*, Rzeszów 2009, pp. 94.



pointed star that can be seen in the coat of arms of the Tyszkiewicz and Tarnowski families (the owners of Kolbuszowa) - the sing of freedom and great deeds.

According to the opinion of Wiktoria Helwin and Wiesław Walata, the change of the coat of arms (e.g. introduction of the Star of David) confirmed by the local authorities in 2000 and its meaning is the expression of the legend which does not have a historical justification. As historians claim, "in case of Kolbuszowa, the city legend should not be the foundation of the city's image, but its history and historical symbols connected with it (...) the coat of arms accepted in 2000 is the product of its times, i.e. it got ingrained into the trend of postmodernism together with its features – chaos and ahistoricism"<sup>36</sup>.

The controversies regarding heraldic symbols that can be found in the coat of arms of the city of Kolbuszowa could inspire to cognitive activity and could encourage students to research such problems. The coat is the sign of community's identity and its symbolism results from historical and civilization conditions. Thus, the coat used properly for educational purposes can serve to deepen the way young people identify with their place of residence. Getting to know its origin, analysing its iconography creates a way in which the teacher can make young people interested in the history and culture of the region.

Wojciech Burszta talks about three levels of understanding multiculturalism. The first one refers to the fact of cultural diversity and the existence of separate ethnic and religious groups in a particular community. The second one relates to social awareness of norms and rules that approve of multiculturalism, while the third level follow ideological shape and its aim is to promote various forms of education for the purpose of multicultural dialogue<sup>37</sup>. The factors shaping multiculturalism include school, family home, region and the search for own self. Jerzy Nikitorowicz directs our attention to the significance of multicultural education and seeing Otherness as a value. According to the researcher, the Other can be seen not only as weak, submissive, with low self-esteem as well as misunderstood, disturbing, causing fear and threatening, which can cause hostility and aggressive behaviour. The flow of economic migrants, foreign students or refugees to Poland puts teachers in a difficult and demanding situation of searching for ways and forms of teaching that could prepare to discover and understand the Other. It results in the necessity for a dialogue about the values such as identity, personal security, tolerance and the duty to help the ones in need.

It is worth discussing the limits of tolerance and intolerance, the situations in which Otherness could turn out to be something interesting, stimulating, valuable and creative<sup>38</sup>. It is connected with shaping the attitudes based on respect, dialogue, tolerance and compromise, which seems to be difficult nowadays due to riots, aggressive behaviour of certain minorities, more common cases of lack of loyalty towards the country their came to, as shown by incidents in Western Europe in which refugees express support for terrorist organizations. We are an open and tolerant nation, curious of other cultures but people are usually afraid of the unknown, the new and the things that can threaten their well-being and safety of their country. We are afraid of religious and social conflicts. Not all the refugees are aggressive but they do not necessarily want to assimilate. It is essential to build universal values and respect someone's individuality at the same time.

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<sup>36</sup> W. Helwin, W. Walat, *Herb miasta Kolbuszowa...*, pp. 69.

<sup>37</sup> W.J. Burszta, *Od wielokulturowości do międzykulturowości z monokulturą w tle*, "Kultura Współczesna", no 2/2008, pp. 20-21.

<sup>38</sup> J. Nikitorowicz, *Próba określenia przedmiotu edukacji międzykulturowej*, [in:] *Region. Tożsamość. Edukacja...*, pp. 17.

### National and regional identity - the challenge for Polish education

National and regional identity, as a set of beliefs related to being part of a certain nation, region as well as values, attitudes resulting from them, constitutes the foundation for the identity of a man. It also consists of perception of history of one's nation, region, the vision of its past, present and future. Formation of national and regional identity seems to be particularly important in case of challenges of communication which is globalized and mediatized. In the period of globalization, progressing pluralism and multiculturalism, teaching Polish faces numerous possibilities and challenges. The most important are building up a conscious and permanent sense of national and regional identity in modern, young people, where the foundation is historical awareness and the emotional bond with national and socio-cultural community.

Thus, how to shape the sense of community in young people, which is based on the axiology of cultural and regional heritage? What knowledge resources, skills and attitudes that allow to understand the ingredients forming identity or help to look for it should be passed on as part of the Polish educational process? How could we fill in the space between globality and locality – between local patriotism and Europeanness? How to appeal to digital teenagers, how to make them reflect on this, make them act and take part in activities of various aspects of social, national and cultural life?

The proposals presented here as well as methodological considerations show that developing regional, national and above-national identity in modern school requires teachers to move away from following coursebooks in favour of implementing their own programme. It is related to a creative attitude and requires referring to the interests of young people and sometimes even to use pop culture<sup>39</sup>.

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<sup>39</sup> An example of this could be *popular science channel on YouTube Historia bez cenzury* (History Uncensored) that has about 300k subscribers and about 18 million views. It passes on historical knowledge in an attractive and unusual way, it is based not only on facts but also on anecdote. Its authors talk about things students will not hear at history classes using a specific language of the youth. The creators are the winners of Grand Video Awards (the first Polish competition for the best youtubers) in the category of "Popular science video" <https://www.youtube.com/user/HistoriaBezCenzuryMB>

See the book by W. Drewniak, *Historia bez cenzury*, Kraków 2016 that shows interesting lives of historical figures from Chrobry to Piłsudski.

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