The Nation's Longue Durée

Social Dimensions of Polishness (1988-2021)

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Chapter I

Introduction: Deliberations on National Identity and Polishness

1.1. "Such is Poland"

In 1989, Tadeusz Łepkowski published a volume bearing the meaningful title: *The Longue Durée of Polishness* (*Uparte trwanie polskości*). The book opened with the author's qualms about whether research and exploration into or the very subject of Polishness itself had not become anachronistic or even unbearable for many. He wrote that "Polishness is first and foremost a belonging – consciously, of course – to the Polish national community. Without an awareness … there is no Polishness …. And so it is less [important to be] Polish … than to feel Polish" (Łepkowski 1989, 11).

Fifteen years later, Krzysztof Kosela would write along the same lines on the basis of his own sociological research: "In Poland, the national identification is unmatched by others due to its personal significance and universality … Poles remember their Polishness, although they do not function in the company of non-Poles" (Koseła 2003, 134).

The above notwithstanding, we are prepared to enter the same river of doubts and misgivings, adding to it arguments drawn from our sociological research. Deliberation upon the sense, crux, and components of how persons who identify as Poles think about Polishness involves the principles underlying the existence of a social community. An element in any community is indubitably a belief that the people constituting that group are similar; even if the inclusion of outsiders is imaginable, it is

expected that such persons must meet certain conditions in order for incorporation to actually take place.

According to the eminent American sociologist, Edward Shils, "Nationality is a phenomenon fundamentally of collective self-consciousness… Nations have a social structure of individuals who are mutually aware of one another as fellow members of the nation" (Shils 1996, 93-94). This type of national feeling – i.e., nationality – is what creates a nation, yet, at the same time, it does not since national consciousness bears an individual dimension as well. The nation, aside from its references to the community, has its own structure which determines how the nation functions (Shils 1996, 9-10). A sense of a national distinctiveness is always expressed through one's awareness of belonging to a specific national community (Błuszkowski 2005, 123).

Closest to our thoughts on this topic is Maria Janion's assertion (in an interview) that

> The nation is created neither by itself alone or conferral by God (as some Romanticists imagined it), but is an interpersonal communicative construct, and thus an imagined political or social community. It is at this point that such disciplines as the history of ideas, the history of literature, the history of language, the history of art or the history of religion gain very key meaning in the set of imaginaries: those histories will be continuously forming that set, and ensuring that the idea of the nation is in constant development (Kurski 2020, 25).

The aim of this book is precisely to look at the social functioning of the conditions for belonging to the Polish nation (in other words, a sense of Polishness), and to examine their stability or shifts in Polish society over the last three decades. Taking into consideration our previous research studies (Nowicka 1990; Nowicka and Łodziński 2001) as well as the specialized literature on this topic, we do expect both continuity and change in their importance: our project has coincided with a period of fundamental political and geopolitical changes, rapid economic development, great freedom to travel, and, today, strident political clashes in Poland. As a well-known Polish political scientist writes,

> All great programs are now national in our country, although the nation is more divided than ever. Is a Pole a symbol of laziness or diligence? Tolerance or homophobia? Freedom or autocracy? Is the symbol of contemporary Poland Wałęsa or Kaczyński? Jacek or Jarosław Kurski? Kowalski or Czartoryski? Is the real Poland in Białystok or in Opole? In the Lublin countryside, in the salons of Warsaw or perhaps in the suburbs of Chicago? Can the role model for a Polish idol play for a German football team or write poems at Harvard? There is no simple answer to these questions, even if politicians like taking pictures of themselves against the background of the white and red flag while calling for national unity and filial obedience to the nation's chosen ones (Zielonka 2021).

The issue of national affiliation is also clearly gaining importance under the circumstances of 1) globalization understood in categories of cultural and ideological unification, and 2) the recently intensifying migration processes to and from Poland as well as globally. The attitude of Polish society to the presence of foreigners in its midst as well as the level of their inclusion and participation in the national community are important factors influencing the process by which outsider groups are integrated within the Polish framework. All this influences the autochthonous vision of Polish identity. The swelling influx of immigrants and their settlement in Poland educe transmutations in the sense of national self-identification – and this requires deeper reflection.

Moreover, inquiries into the social criteria for Polishness may facilitate identification of the nature of social bonds important to Polish society. Those social ties are rooted in various principles, which have been shaped differently due to historical events and the character of the historically-shaped, national community. Here, as in our previous works, we have striven to set aside sweeping (political as well as cultural-normative) projects for the nation.

Looking at the latest developments in contemporary studies (Brubaker 2004; Bonikowski 2016; Bonikowski and DiMaggio 2016, 952), we have aimed to shift the center of balance in our analysis in the direction of the nation viewed as a cognitive category that is not only social, but associated with diversified social and emotional beliefs regarding that

category. An objective of ours has been to demonstrate 1) how the meaning and significance assigned to specific criteria of belonging to the nation have changed over time, and 2) how those criteria vary within Polish society at the same time. In other words, we have tried to focus on "practical categories" for incorporation into the body of the Polish nation by scrutinizing the opinions of our respondents (in quantitative as well as qualitative research): what references did they make to which shared, cultural idioms, to what commonsense knowledge, to which legal and political procedures, and which personal, firsthand experiences have significantly influenced convictions about national identity (cf. Brubaker 2002, 185-186).

Thus, we undertake a problem quite risky. After all, delving into the content lurking in the minds of members of a national community about their own identity (i.e., what sociological aspects can be unveiled in the way Poles define themselves?) can incur accusations of nationalist or even chauvinistic inclinations. In anticipation of such qualms, we wish to emphasize that this research is driven solely by cognitive motives found at the wellspring of classical sociology; such motives are also the cornerstones of cultural anthropology in which field each and every cultural difference as well as the preservation of such distinctiveness is understood as a resource for human development (Nowicka 2001).

Within our own society, we express often our belonging to broader categories and communities than those anchored exclusively in a sense of national separateness; aware of suspicions that such research promotes national chauvinism, we openly cast doubts upon campaigns at home directed at developing the national consciousness. Meanwhile, the European Union is, nonetheless, a collection of nation states, and membership in the EU can be withdrawn only through a national referendum. We have just witnessed the emergence of national self-centeredness in the battle for COVID-19 vaccines (Drouhot et al. 2020). The USA – which cannot be oblivious to the multinational origin of its own citizenry – creates its own symbols, and children in public schools pledge allegiance to the American flag in a manner likened to prayers in denominational

schools. It is worth recalling here a remark by Michael Billig (2008) that studies of national convictions (or nationalism) usually focuses on other countries and societies, and almost never to our own country because in the latter the above-mentioned terms tend to be replaced by others such as patriotism or loyalty.

The very term "Polishness" (*polskość*) is, linguistically, a noun abstracted from an adjective by appending "ness" (*ość*). It is similar in structure to words in the Polish language such as *radość* (joy), *miłość* (love), and *solidarność* (solidarity) and can denote both phenomena on a collective or an individual scale. Herein the adjective "Polish" (*polski*, *polska*, *polskie*) will be employed, not to mention the necessary use of the personal nouns indicating individual Polish citizens (*Polak*, *Polka*). Although "Polishness" is treated as an important and generally understandable term, it lacks a distinction of the elements which comprise the phenomenon. At present, the word appears repeatedly in the media and in political contexts – often serving the exclusion from or denial of Polishness to certain individuals as well as entire groups (Chlebda 2017, 2-3).

Analysis of the structure of Polish thinking about Polishness is a topic not only interesting cognitively, but also important socially. Among other things, such research provides knowledge facilitating mutual understanding among diverse groups of people. Taking up this issue with Poland as a case study, we turn here to questions stemming from investigations into the phenomenon of social awareness, meaning analysis of our research problem from the perspective of human thinking. We are interested in social self-definitions (including changes in or denials thereof) with regards to nationality, as well as in the social circumstances that influence such decisions. It is important to remember that human beings exhibit great diversity in their structures of thinking, and, perhaps even more meaningfully, in their emotional responses as well. Therefore, self-definition in national terms is, in the intellect, linked to both worldview tenets and one's self-concept rooted in certain views and emotions (Radkiewicz 2019, 87-102).

A question about the nature of socially recognized criteria for belonging to a nation constitutes not only one of the primary dilemmas in deliberations on nations and nationalism, but is also of practical significance. Often posed is the question as to whether each individual is free to choose his or her own ethnic (national) identity as it suits him or her: can a person optionally select the national community to which he or she wishes to belong and actually be a legitimate member? What is and what could be the most important argument in such a discussion? Would it be a sensed psychological connection to the nation, awareness of one's heritage through parents, grandparents or earlier ancestors, the possession of a given country's citizenship, knowledge of the mother tongue, and/or something else?

Often considered is that a person who identifies with a given nation should not only agree to the importance of the above-mentioned requisites, but should also accept the cultivation of shared cultural codes characteristic of this nation (e.g., symbols, traditions, rituals, norms, and behavior); critical, too, are the ways national emotions are experienced and how respect for its values is expressed (Karkowska 2019, 1). In many countries around the world the potential right to choose one's national identity is, nevertheless, usually determined by legal and political principles (i.e., the conditions for obtaining citizenship) or by historical circumstances related to permanent, unresolved political conflicts – such as in Northern Ireland[1] or Cyprus as *The Island of Three Homelands* (Orchowski 2021).

For the authors of this monograph, inquiries into the subject of Polishness have been a consistent subject of research for over three decades. The line of research has logically followed Barth's (2004) thinking about ethnic boundaries and divides into "us" and "them" categories.

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[1] In a 2020 survey in Northern Ireland regarding the possibility of a reunification with the Republic, questions were also asked about the national identity of the inhabitants. Among the respondents, 35% described themselves as Irish, 34% as British, 23% considered themselves Northern Irish", and 9% was unable to define themselves or did not answer (Gadzała 2020).

Naturally, a distinction between "us and them" or the "we" group versus the "they" group can be founded on a number of different criteria: political beliefs, professional competences, religious confession, worldview, interests or fascinations. Still, ethnicity and nationality constitute significant criteria. At times, for instance, religious or ideological divisions intersect with ethnic ones, becoming the singular most important axis for distinction between "our people" and "strangers," and defining who can be described as part of the "we" group and who will be "they." Observations of European and other societies in the world show that such blanket terms as "Polishness" and "Frenchness" or "Buryatness" and "Udmurtness" are real: they play out at the level of an individual psyche as well as in social life where understandings of various levels of the "we" and "they" categories demarcate (albeit sometimes fluidly, shakily or questionably) the boundaries of the group. Man as most definitely a social animal finds it impossible to think without society; this leads to a search for a community of individual belonging. This seeking out of one's community – herein lies the obviousness (if not to say, naturalness) of a parallel search for a group to which one belongs (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2013, 46-48).

Yet another motif should be identified which inspires an academic curiosity and concentration on issues of national (ethnic) identity. This pertains to an axiological aspect concerning protection of cultural diversity and attentiveness to those differences which both divide us, but thereby (paradoxically) unite us as people. The multiculturalism of societies today – perceived and highly appreciated by numerous social scientists (Sadowski 2019) – corresponds exactly to the real coexistence of culturally different groups. Cultural pluralism is defined as congenial and tolerant coexistence of culturally different communities which together form a single society. The construction of this type of society appears to be the aim of modern civilization – accepting integration and a kind of adaptation without insisting upon cultural assimilation and homogenization. In fact, an entire academic discipline – social anthropol-

ogy – has been built around the issue of cultural diversity. Social scientists of contemporary forms of ethnic and national distinctions and divides take advantage of this field's body of knowledge and experience, combining the methodological and theoretical achievements of both disciplines – sociology and social anthropology. In Polish sociological tradition, dominant in the research done on national identity are elements focused on consciousness. In this respect, we feel ourselves to be continuators of this national, sociological and anthropological tradition.

1.2. Theoretical cornerstones for analyses of national identity and belonging

On the one hand, the concept of national belonging (identity) is connected with the universality of the concept of national divisions. These divides are not natural and not necessarily linked to "national" institutions and political structures, but are more often created – as exemplified by the USA, Canada, or postcolonial multinational states such as India (Budyta-Budzyńska 2010, 102-103). On the other hand, a nation may be characterized by a "stubborn" durée despite the lack or temporary loss of sovereign statehood; there are, too, ethnonational groups which have never created their own political structures. The latter build their collective identity on a sense of shared historical events and cultural ties, especially those anchored in a common language (e.g., the Balkan Vlachs/Aromanians, Udmurts, Karelians, Koryaks, etc., none of whom strive for political independence). Despite the diverse range of geographical and cultural circumstances of the aforementioned groups, this multitude of examples of "stateless nations" provides knowledge about the variety of ways national identity is constructed. In this context, particularly interesting and heuristically loaded is observation of precisely small, stateless nations who are demanding recognition of existence in international fora (cf. Nowicka 2000; Hroch 2003).

Herein we set aside discussions with the classic theorists of sociology and the nation who advocate the view that nationalism creates nations and not the other way around (cf. Gellner 1991). Also left behind will be historical topics and descriptions of how national consciousness is aroused and developed. We have no doubts that those who claim that "Polishness is socially constructed" (Szacki 2000) are correct, but the mechanisms of that process of construction are not the focus of our discussion – although certain reflections on them will be presented in the summary of this volume. From the beginning of the 1980s in international sociology, though in Polish sociology for a longer time (Kurczewska 1979; Burszta, Nowak, Wawrucha eds. 2012), there have been heated disputes and cogitations on the validity of the ideas of constructivism and essentialism in debates on national identity and its core. Indubitably, both concepts have contributed to an understanding of 1) the choices faced by the individual, and 2) the external factors affecting those choices. In our discussions and analyses, however, we distance ourselves from the theoretical and ideological disputes, concentrating primarily on empirical and sociological studies of the national identity of Poles, in line with a postulate recently proffered by Joanna Kurczewska (2019, 590).

The very meaning of the concept of "nation" and the value ascribed to it has evolved in the social sciences, but it continues to be the subject of lively (both academic and public) discussion. On the one hand, this entails intense social and mass media discourse in specific countries about national identities. This was evidenced, for example, in the reading of select essays from a volume edited by Joanna Kurczewska and Zdzisław Mach (2019) and devoted to European countries closer to Poland. The debates described therein included discourse about Britishness in connection with the opening ceremony of the 2012 London Olympics (Galent 2019); the galvanization of rightwing movements in Germany (especially the Alternative for Germany, *AfD*), the shifting public discourse there with regards to transitioning from being a role model

of "European post-nationality," and discussions about the need for a national identity (Cichocki 2019); and, in France, with respect to policies of citizenship and for the integration of foreigners from the perspective of maintaining the boundaries of the state and the French national community (Skowrońska 2019).

However, the reason for the currently heightened interest in research into the nation is the rising popularity of rightwing and populist ideologies and movements. That phenomenon raises the issue of the role of the national majority which brandishes its interests, rights, and will at the expense of the minority (Brubaker 2020, 60). Michel Wieviorka points to the entangled phenomena of increased national feelings (nationalism) and racism as consequences of the processes of "de-structuring" and disappointment with modernity). Manifestations of this include the changing context in which Western societies function, the globalization of the economy, the weakening of the welfare state, and the collapse of public industrial sectors. There is a mounting discussion on the subjects of liberalization, the state, and multiethnicity because the negative effects of the ensuing social changes concern "our" people, "our" country, and "our" way of life (Wieviorka 2011, 73-92). Underscored are the processes of "individualization," the emergence of attitudes and policies of ressentiment, references to the "community," and negative attitudes towards ethnonational minorities. The very concepts of "nation" and "ethnic majority" are intertwined: the ethnic consciousness of the "majority" is often "hidden" and "silent," but easily mobilized, and, in fact, the concept of "ethnic minority" correlates with the character and form of the ethnic majority (Wieviorka 2011, 187-188).

In light of an analysis by Florian Bieber,

> There is no clear global trend that would suggest a rise of nationalism, but instead, there has been a rise of nationalist politics in some countries, either expressed by the rise of new parties, the electoral success of nationalist candidates or the shift of public discourse of established parties. This trend is neither uniform nor universal. However, this does not signal that there is no reason for concern…. The structural causes of nationalism are deeply engrained and not easily

> changed. The global economic crisis has been one contributing factor to the rise of nationalism in countries where particular groups feel disadvantaged and fear or experience a loss of status (Bieber 2018, 537).

Moreover, as Zdzisław Mach wrote, all these phenomena suggest the need for in-depth reflection on "the boundaries of the national community and its cultural capacity, that is, how homogeneous a national cultural community should be, or how pluralistic can it be before it loses its historical and social sense" (Mach 2019, 558).

The relevant literature calls attention to the fact that "new" nationalism seeks to distinguish itself from the "old" nationalism. The latter, dating from the 19th century, focused on sovereignty of the masses, whereas the former, contemporary nationalism focuses on the cultural self-determination of the nation. It can be – though not necessarily – oriented towards the formation of a separate nation-state, while the "nations" themselves remain autonomous of the state. Contemporary nationalism need not be associated with the elites; it is more a mass movement, more often a reaction against global elites. For these reasons, the newer form of nationalism is more "reactive" than active, is of more a cultural than political nature, and is more concentrated on a defense of its culture and preservation of the cultural community's distinctiveness as the "essence of the nation" rather than on building or defending a state (Wieviorka 2011, 85-89).

In the book at hand, we will refer to theories of the nation (and nationalism) as well as important concepts and ideas that arose therefrom, such as primordialism, constructivism or essentialism (cf. Jaskułowski 2009, 143-318; Budyta-Budzyńska 2010, 23-28). None of this, however, changes the fact that, regardless of how views on national identity are classified, this is a phenomenon playing out at the level of consciousness, in "thinking"; it is only analysis of this "thinking" that leads to unveiling notions that constituents have about the "real" criteria for membership in their nation. A good example is the work of Michał Łuczewski dealing with the process by which inhabitants of the village of Żmiąca (in southern Poland) "Polonized"; he analyzed this in terms

of primordialization in the process of which a national feeling becomes obvious, natural, and is recognized "morally" as it is associated with loyalty to one's own national and culturally uniform group with its clearly marked borders of national belonging (Łuczewski 2012, 32-33). Therefore, in our analyses here, we draw attention to individual and practical aspects of national identity – aspects related to the experiencing, maintaining, and making of nationalism something real in the everyday life of our respondents (Killias 2004, 21-34).

In an important article on sociological studies of the nation, Jerzy Szacki illustrated the significant evolution of sociology's interests from questions like "since when and how does a nation exist" to an interest in the nation as a category of social practices – that is, in which behaviors and spheres of social life are national values and attachment to those values made manifest? While skeptical about the feasibility of a "sociology of the nation" as a specialization in the social sciences, Szacki pointed out that more recently, questions such as "what is a nation" are progressively being abandoned in favor of analyzing the phenomena associated with the nation – how the nation "operates" and affects people (Szacki 2004a, 13). Most important, in his opinion, is to delve into the following three foci with respect to the functioning of the "idea" of the nation in social practice: 1) national ideas (i.e., nationalism, national ideology), 2) institutions accompanying the nation (i.e., the nation as a nation-state), and 3) social attitudes regarding the nation (i.e., national identities, ways of national belonging). In this volume, we will refer primarily to third of these levels of great interest to sociology.

National identity – which we use interchangeably with the term national belonging – is understood and interpreted in various ways in both sociological and culture studies literature (cf. Budyta-Budzyńska 2010, 91-108; Ścigaj 2012, 137-168; Brzeziński 2019, 573-583). Colloquially, the word "identity" (*tożsamość*) in Polish stems from "being the same," an "identicality" with others, but also means awareness of oneself, one's traits, and distinctiveness; the word also refers to facts,

features, and personal data which permit the distinguishment, recognition, and identification of a person. The concept of national identity is, most generally, defined as a psychological sense of belonging to a select national community as confirmed by 1) legal criteria (such as citizenship); 2) familiarity with the national culture, especially usage of a common language as the basic means of communication with other members of the nation; 3) awareness of a distinct history; 4) an emotional connection with the territory which is the "natural" environment of national life; 5) observance of the national customs; and sometimes also 6) adherence to the same confession of faith. A sense of national identity is connected to a sense of belonging to the nation. In a legal sense this pertains to human beings, bears the nature of an individual human right, and is linked with an identification with the national community (Sobczak 2018, 173).

From the perspective of various theoretical backgrounds and empirical foundations, the role of "national identity" is emphasized as a guide for classification in social life (Eriksen 2010; Smolarkiewicz 2019, 537-542). We argue here that this identity serves in the ethnic (national) classifications of people, introducing a kind of order in the social world. Such classifications provide cognitive maps with reference to one's place in the human world as well as the place of socially important Others therein. The maps themselves are of a relational nature because they are often correlated with external references, such as foreign pressure and domination.

Also taken into consideration should be biographical variations in the shape of an identity over the course of an individual life trajectory. Identities are biographically and historically flexible, negotiated on many levels of social life (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 14-21). Entire societies are also subject to such transformations, accompanying general civilizational and political fluctuations. And yet, for most people, national identity lends a feeling of stability and continuity: it enables an individual's integration into society (situating the person in a specific national

society as well as the globalized world), protects against social alienation, and, as a consequence, contributes to the upholding of cohesion and the sustaining of identity for a given society and/or nation-state.

National (ethnic) identities have both an internal, private as well as public dimension (Eriksen 2010). On the one hand, these identities mean being the same as others, just like "us folk"; on the other hand, they can mean being an Other amidst a surrounding milieu. For our purposes, we distinguish two aspects of this sense of national (here meaning Polish) belonging: the internal, self-definition alongside the external definition by those outside the group. The identity demarcated by the group itself is the "internal" one that is a self-confirmed assertion, whereas the identity demarcated by the surrounding social environment is the external, attributed assignment. Sometimes characteristics assigned by others can contribute to the formation of an identity; individuals may also be forced to choose a particular ethnic identity, even if it is not the preferred one.

Here we make reference to an view expressed by Antonina Kłoskowska who defines national identity as the collective self-knowledge of a group – both with regards to its acts of self-definition and to the creation of its self-image. Thus, she distinguishes, in line with our perspective, the role played by different conceptions of the national group, constructed from both the inside and outside (Kłoskowska 1996). It should be noted that national identities today are no longer seen as solely internal, private, and static; they are increasingly public, transmutable, and negotiated (Eriksen 2010). To an increasing degree, they comprise, too, the subject of decisions by individuals themselves – decisions consisting of either conscious participation or refusal to participate in a specific construct of the national community (Smolarkiewicz 2019, 544).

Distinguishing the two points of view on the structure of the national community introduces some order to analysis of the principles underlying how the community takes shape. This differentiation only seems to be based on a binary, "subjective" versus "objective" image of identity,

because, in fact, both the group's own self-definition in a national category as well as society's external definition of the group are made on the same plane of consciousness, i.e., the subjective. This will always comprise an image in the mind's eye of someone; the sole factor altering the image is through whose eyes we look at the group. This framework delimits the degree to which ways of perceiving one's own culture and the extent of its standardization can be unified. It is this that allows us to speak of a "weak" (unclear) or "strong" (clear) ethnonational identity, and to examine its crises, regressions, or breakdowns at the individual and social levels (Brubaker and Cooper 2000, 10-14).

It is worthwhile calling attention to the existence and employment of varied, possible criteria for national belonging (identity) in social life (Synak 1998, 39-54). In first order, there are the conditions of a subjective nature, looking as if from within: a declared counting oneself in a group and self-identification with it; expressions of an individual, personal sense of belonging and being "identical" to other members of the national group; and an emotional bond with one's national community of reference. In such an approach, national identity very often comprises a "metaphor" for ethnic kinship with other members of that group. Another condition is an awareness of being different from others and the perception of these differences by those others – perceived differences becoming "social facts."

Among the conditions of an objective nature – meaning those components of national (ethnic) identity that are beyond the individual's will – most frequently listed are a person's country of birth which provides a "natal" identity, albeit often recognized formally. However, nationality at birth can be not the birthplace of the individual, but rather of the parents, grandparents, or even great-grandparents; this can also entail the ancestral place of origin. Not rarely associated with this is a "typically" ethnic (sur)name. Other factors in this category can be a

period of residency in a given place or – also an objective criteria – DNA tests.[2]

Another set of criteria for national belonging makes reference to behavioral phenomena manifested in the conduct of individuals. These include the fluent use of the mother tongue (one's ethnolect), participation in the ethnic culture, membership in ethnic organizations, etc. Further on the list are an ethnic attitude (i.e., conjoining self-identification with ethnicity attitudes), ethnic behavior (conduct manifesting itself in certain patterns), and an ethnic bond with the community.

Indeed, the way in which an individual, in specific instances, defines or at least declares his or her national identity certainly depends on many biographical factors, both long-term and situational. These concern explicit social situations and/or intercultural contacts with their lifetime consequences. It should also be remembered that a fundamental, required feature of any identity is the fact that an identity is an individual's image of him or herself. An identity's existence cannot be assumed on the basis of some "objective" features discerned by an external observer – however closely such features might be related to that identity. Furthermore, an assertion can be made that, if an identity is wholly irrelevant to the population in question, then the identity is not present in that population.

To make things clear, added here should be that analysis of ethnic group identities are especially difficult if the group inhabits a national or cultural (historical) borderlands. On such territories the subjective (internal) identity of a group or individual is not always consistent with what the surrounding milieu perceives. A problem can then appear in

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[2] Found in an important article on the ethnic identity of Kashubians (a regional minority in northwestern Poland) is the following statement: "An appropriate set of genes inherited over generations affects the specific type of behavior displayed by members of a given group and/or the presence of specific personality or temperamental traits. A research study conducted by Marcin Woźniak from the Department of Molecular and Forensic Genetics of the Nicholas Copernicus University Medical School in Bydgoszcz … did not confirm the hypothesis that Kashubians possess a characteristic genotype" (Mazurek 2014: 134).

strictly and strongly defining one's ethnic identity. This can be especially difficult psychologically due to the presence of intersecting, complex identities; the individual finds him or herself "betwixt and between." Similar dilemmas involve the second and subsequent generations of migrants: the challenge of adapting to and acquiring the identity of the host society is matched by a desire to maintain ethnic or national distinctiveness or to create a mixed identity (Biernath 2008, 196-199).

From the perspective of maintaining Polishness, the question arises whether – in order to be a Pole – it suffices to have, for example, two parents of solely Polish nationality, to speak Polish fluently, and to know and demonstrate an attitude of respect for Polish history, culture, and customs. Or are there additional requirements? The aforementioned conditions become acutely palpable under emigration circumstances when adherence to one's mother tongue, home customs, cultural knowledge, and historical memory becomes a specifically personal challenge, both culturally and nationally. As Anna Gawlewicz emphasizes, "the experience of international mobility creates the likelihood of disruption and negotiation of various aspects of national identity and belonging" (Gawlewicz 2015, 199-200).[3] Not to be overlooked, too, are political border shifts, so frequent over the course of history in Central Eastern Europe. More than once, this has cut off a part of the national community, rendering it a minority group under the rule of another state. On the one hand, the minority group members hold the citizenship of the new homeland, while, on the other hand, cultivating their old national identity. One such case is the Polish national minority in today's Lithuania (Kurcz 2005, 221-255).

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[3] Regarding the specific problems of maintaining Polish national identity in the Polish diaspora, see Popielarczyk-Pałęga 2018.

1.3. Social and legal aspects of Polishness

The concept of national identity which we adopt here is related more closely to the historical approach to national consciousness – an approach with a marked, enduring presence in the humanities in Poland throughout the 20th century, tethered to the various and variable aspects of Polishness as defined in the 19th century. The book at hand will examine select fragments and – inasmuch as possible – the whole of Polish society. We studied the thinking of individual human beings, because we are convinced that this is the only path to deciphering the ways of thinking of people who are simultaneously human individualities as well as members of different social groups and categories. Their feelings of closeness and affinity with others vary; overall, the network of social "kinships" and "affinities" creates a multi-level, multi-component identity – activated in different situations and periods of life –for each individual.

We open our deliberations regarding Polishness – in all its diversity and temporal-spatial variability – with reference to the texts of Tadeusz Łepkowski. Looking from the point of view of social anthropology, we note the unique value in a historian's somewhat different interest in human cultural diversity and way of dealing with this topic. Łepkowski warned against two extremes in such research: 1) perception limited to diversity, and 2) stubborn insistence on the ideological thesis of historical invariability. Indeed, as a historian, he was aware of the social changeability and diversity of Polishness. Such thinking is likely an exceptionally accurate lead for a contemporary sociologist who aims to capture at least a few of the important components of rapidly changing Polish culture, the social structure of contemporary Polish society, and the vast range of possible life experiences (including contacts with other societies, nations, and countries) as a result of the enormous growth in international migration and tourist contacts. Paradoxically, an interest

in the current, sweeping processes underway within Polishness leads to the words of a historian, penned several decades ago.

In the first sentences of his final book, Tadeusz Łepkowski pointed out two distinct types of value systems in which an understanding of Polishness is entangled. These are, on the one hand, "struggle, sacrifice, faith, patriotism, romanticism," and, on the other, "realism, independence" (Łepkowski 1989). The historian continues that many of the old ways of looking at Polishness have survived to the end of the 20th century, likely due to the geopolitical situation of Poland. In accord with this reasoning, the same reactions are based upon the same situations. On one side are ideas of modernization and secularism; on the other side are traditionalism accompanied by Catholicism. The distinctions and commentary made by a historian over 30 years ago are still largely au courant. This is evident in the consciousness of the young Polish intelligentsia with its diversified views on Polishness, the Polish nation, patriotism, inclusivity in the Polish nation (i.e., criteria for admission), and individual exodus (more or less conscious) from Polishness. Łepkowski eagerly identifies a naiveté in the techno-civilizational understanding of progress; he sees "internationalistic nationalism" with its gain (not loss) of capital – the cultural diversity of many national and non-national societies (Łepkowski 1989, 9-10).

While maintaining a high level of abstraction, we distinguish two levels which can be investigated in the application of the concept of "Polishness":

1) The Polishness of an individual which can be considered from the standpoint of self-definition or from the standpoint of an exterior definition by either a person who (also) considers him or herself to be a Pole or a person who is not a Pole by any standard (someone with a different national affiliation); and

2) Polishness understood symbolically as a set of contents the sum of which constitute a universe of knowledge and, above all, values.

In the first case, someone can say of him or herself that he or she is a Pole or someone else can agree with or question such an assessment. In the second case, the matter concerns such issues as national dignity, respect for national symbols (e.g., the flag, anthem, emblem, and national remembrance sites such as monuments, memorial sites, commemorative plaques, etc.). In this latter sense, too, Polishness expressed symbolically is also reflected in individual emotions such as, for example, a heightened sensitivity and desire to protect Poland's "good name" – in other words, the Polish nation, its history and culture. Such a sense of duty also involves economic patriotism encouraged via wide-ranging campaigns such as "Poland Now" (*Teraz Polska*) or on receipts from the *Biedronka* supermarket chain which inform customers about the amount they paid for products of Polish origin.

With reference to the first level noted above, it is worth looking at the results of the population census conducted in Poland in 2011 which asked about national and ethnic identifications and languages used at home. The definition adopted in this census stipulated that "nationality (national or ethnic affiliation) is a declarative (based on a subjective feeling), individual trait of each person, expressing his emotional (sentimental), cultural or genealogical relationship (due to parental ancestry) with a specific nation." (GUS 2015: 19). The methodological comments by the Central Statistical Office (*Główny Urząd Statystyczny*) indicate that identification was open, allowing the census participant to express an individual understanding of the concept of nationality. This has served our research project as an interesting measure of the intersubjective view.[4]

In light of census results from 2011, those declaring a Polish national identification (participants could choose a maximum of two) comprised a total of nearly 37,394,000 people (accounting for 97.1% of the total population of Poland); roughly 1,468,000 people (3.8%) declared a non-

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[4] Likewise, the latest, 2021 census applied an almost identical description for this self-declaration.

Polish nationality. Scholars examining the outcome of that census report also point to an increased sense of ethnic identification among regional communities in Poland, even if this was, in the majority of instances, accompanied by a simultaneous declaration of Polish national identity. After the Polish ethnonational identification, the most popular were Silesian and Kashubian declarations (GUS 2015, 30). From the linguistic perspective, the vast majority of the general population stated usage of Polish at home. Polish as a mother tongue was declared by a total of over 37,815,000 people (98.2% of the total population); only slightly less a majority – 37,043,000 (96.2%) – uses Polish as the sole language in the home. People using a language other than Polish in family contacts accounted for over 948,000 (2.46%); respondents most often stated a second language was used interchangeably with Polish, that is 772,000 (2%) (GUS 2015, 69).

Noteworthy, too, is that the term "Polishness" has appeared in Polish law in addition to various other terms, such as "Polish nationality," "Polish descent," or "belonging to the Polish nation." Attempts to legally define these other terms continue to stir controversy. Hence questions arise as to whether the above-mentioned terms vary in content, or can their meaning be considered similar or even the same?

With regards to the Constitution of the Republic of Poland, adopted in 1997, the Preamble describes Poles as follows: "We, the Polish Nation – all citizens of the Republic, Both those who believe in God as the source of truth, justice, good and beauty, As well as those not sharing such faith but respecting those universal values as arising from other sources." At the same time, it further states that current Polish citizens are "Bound in community with our compatriots dispersed throughout the world."[5] Legal literature emphasizes that the nation is not defined in ethnic terms, but rather in civic-political as well as philosophical-social ones; the nation, therefore, cannot be reduced to merely persons of Polish

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[5] See official English translation, https://www.sejm.gov.pl/prawo/konst/angielski/kon1.htm (accessed 10.12.21).

nationality (Sobczak 2018, 167). At the same time, the Constitution recognizes the existence of national and ethnic minorities, assuring their Polish citizenship (pursuant to Article 35). These minorities are guaranteed the freedom to maintain their own language, preserve their customs, develop their own culture, establish their own educational, cultural and religious institutions which serve their identity, and participate in the resolution of matters related to their cultural identity.

In the last fifteen years, an important document for many is the official Card of the Pole (*Karta Polaka*). This is a legal document confirming affiliation to the Polish nation for persons who do not yet hold Polish citizenship or have permission to settle on Polish territory, but declare their belonging to the Polish nation and meet certain conditions. This document and status were established by a special act in September 2007. In accord with the legal regulations, an individual demonstrates a bond to Polishness through at least basic fluency in the Polish language, as well as knowledge and cultivation of Polish traditions and customs. In the presence of an official (e.g., consul, voivode, or other designated person), the candidate submits a written declaration of belonging to the Polish nation. Evidence to this effect can be documentation that at least one parent or grandparent, or at least two great-grandparents were of Polish nationality, or testimony from an authorized Polish or Polish community organization confirming direct involvement in activities on behalf of the Polish language and culture or the national minority for at least the last three years. Also to be submitted is a declaration that the individual (or a [great-]grandparent) was not repatriated from Polish territory under the repatriation agreements of 1944-1957.

In the decade since the adoption of this act, over 320,000 *Karty Polaka* have been issued, confirming that the holder is a member of the Polish nation. Initially focused on the former Soviet Bloc countries, in 2019, the geographic reach of the act and the privilege of obtaining this document was extended worldwide. Among other things, holders of the card are exempt from the obligation to apply for a work permit, can open

and conduct business activities on the same terms as Polish citizens, study at all levels of education, engage in academic research as well as R&D, avail themselves of emergency healthcare services, and enjoy railroad discounts (37%) on all trains for journeys within Poland.

1.4. Hypotheses and research methodology

In our publication, we present the results of our survey conducted in 2018 along with comparisons to results from 1988 and 1998; presented, too, will be the findings of two sets of qualitative interviews (from the beginning of 2020 and 2021). In the previous editions of our *Poles and Others* longitudinal research project, we limited ourselves to an extensive, quantitative survey. Three decades after the initial one, as part of the *Poles and Others – 30 years on* project, we also refer to the results of a few qualitative studies that focused on aspects of how Polishness is understood. These entailed face-to-face interviews carried out among various milieux in Polish society: groups differing in age, worldview, and region. This methodology provided a wide range of in-depth information, permitting deeper analysis of the phenomenon.

We begin with assumptions that the two research approaches (quantitative and qualitative) do coordinate, even if methodologically different. Despite the fact that their outcomes cannot (for many purposes) be used for comparison, they do complement one another perfectly, creating a multilateral and insightful image of Polish social reality. Data analysis based on survey results incurs its own difficulties and provides different information from data analysis of the interview transcripts. In general, the original *Poles and Others* research involved innovative construction of the survey, posing nearly identical, comprehensive questions about the principles by which an individual is included in the group known as Poles. This subsequent third edition meant that nearly all questions remained faithful to those in previous editions of the survey,

enabling detailed comparisons to be made between outcomes from 1988, 1998, and 2018 (nearly three years ago at time of this writing).

1.4.1. Methodological problems in longitudinal research

Here it is important to clearly emphasize that our research did not concern so much the potency of the national identity of contemporary Poles, but rather the internal structure of that identity. Examining the results of the survey, certain complexes can be inferred from how research participants – coming from different demographic categories and demonstrating different attitudes towards those ethnically (and/or physically) "alien" – weigh their responses, choosing on a scale of specific criteria provided in the questionnaire. Something that emerged from the outcomes of our research is the creation of a typology of attitudes or beliefs about various aspects of Polishness – about belonging to a specific national community and the envisioned responsibilities or ideals associated with Polishness. The types do sometimes intermingle in a complex construct, but, overall, they express what we would label a worldview. In the research project we undertook, it will not be possible to delve into all the complications; out of necessity, we will limit ourselves to analysis of both the very terse as well as the more drawn-out statements made by respondents.

When studying this type of social phenomena, especially crucial is proper preparation of the research apparatus and application of appropriate methodology for collection of empirical data. In practice, this means addressing the challenges of formulating the questions posed of the interlocutors. Key is the level of detail, clarity, or simplicity in the phrasing so as to facilitate interpretation of the answers obtained – i.e., determining what it is that we have learned about the issues of interest to us. We endeavor to explore the symbolic – even in the simplest of signs of the "imagined community." Concurrently, we examine the issues of this imagined community on a behavioral level. As part of the

methodology of quantitative and qualitative research, we strove to build up our ability to read between the lines of statements made as well as from the behavior of the individual.

Naturally, it would be of great interest to analyze the phenomenon in the context of a specific social (interpersonal) situation – a respondent's biography, concept of him or herself, and relationship to other, reasonable groups of belonging (or loyalty), as well as political views and professed worldview. But our objective is completely different. The research we conducted is purely empirical, because our purpose was to uncover the content of Polishness as it functions in the thinking of Poles. In our analysis, we relied both on data from surveys (in which questions are primarily closed) as well as on data from qualitative work (lengthy in-person interviews). The latter, as it turned out, often confirmed (spontaneously) the findings from the quantitative research. In general, the questions posed during of our interlocutors during the interviews could be quite problematic and sometimes abstract. Interviewees did not comment that they had thought about Polishness at all, that they had been discussing this topic with someone earlier, or that they themselves thought about it personally. During interviews, respondents were asked about matters new to them, hence statements made were usually not automatic, but were associated with a moment of reflection in which to formulate an answer best reflecting their views. In response to the question about the criteria decisive in recognizing a person as a Pole, we obtained more than a mere supplement to knowledge gained from the surveys.

Conducting comparative analyses over a longer timespan – especially 30 years during which profound social and political changes were occurring – leads of necessity to challenges of a methodological nature. The ideal situation would be the retention of many permanent, stable elements in the description of the society being investigated; after many years it would be possible to approach the comparison with the canon of a single difference (i.e., a temporal one). In the case of social sciences research, this is certainly not a real possibility; moreover, in the case of

research repeated three times in a 30 year period during which revolutionary changes were taking place not only in Poland, but around the world, too, assessments must be comprehensive and complex, investigating sets of interdependent variables.

Indeed, the most important methodological issue in the process of interpreting the results of a longitudinal research study pertains to the comparability of data obtained after long intervals. In this case, troubles are multiplied by the overall transformation of Polish society as of 1989 (one year after we undertook our first survey). Quandaries were already evident when we were writing our book, *On the threshold of the open world* (*U progu otwartego świata*, 2001) – at a moment when only ten years separated the two studies under comparison. We wrote then, based on the 1998 survey results, that "among the processes of far-reaching and sudden changes in Poland, we do discover areas that are surprisingly stable and spheres of life that one might call "stiff." Among these is precisely the meaning and shape of national identity" (Nowicka and Łodziński 2001, 51). After two more decades have passed, equally abundant in international and national changes, we again ask ourselves about 1) the criteria applied in the construction and shape of contemporary Polish national identity; and 2) the trends and tendencies in transformations happening over the last 30 years, i.e., a period longer than a single generation.

All three surveys, to which we will refer comparatively, used a questionnaire nearly identical in content and structure which – in order to facilitate comparability – was kept (inasmuch as possible) intact. Certain elements of the three questionnaires have not changed at all. This concerns, too, the wording of questions about Polishness, answers to which interested us the most in the current analysis. However, certain, minor changes to the questionnaire proved necessary as early as 1998, and, after another two decades, we were forced to introduce many additional, essential changes. This chiefly concerned the respondent's demographic data; these final questions in the questionnaire allow us to situate a respondent in the social structure. Thus, these queries in the

last, 2018 installment differed significantly from those posed in 1988 due to the numerous social, institutional, and structural changes in Polish society. Among the changes impinging on this data were transformations in the educational system at all levels and in the structure of employment on the new labor market. Therefore, questions concerning age, gender, and place of residence remained unchanged, whereas questions concerning education, employment, profession, and the economic situation of the respondent did change.

From a demographic perspective, considering the three decades separating the first and third surveys, Polish society today is composed of different individuals: a significant percentage of persons from 1988 has already died, while a large group is entering or has entered adulthood – including the ages covered by our survey (i.e., 16 and over). In 1988, the youngest respondents had been born in the early 1970s, and the oldest ones at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Consequently, the youngest respondents in 2018 (and in the qualitative study from 2020) were born in 2002, while the oldest were born just prior to the outbreak of WWII. Such temporal-historical differences affect the cohorts from subsequent editions of the study (1988, 1998, and 2018 as well as the 2020-2021 qualitative studies); the individual, personal experiences of entire sections of the populations we surveyed differ significantly with each decade. It would be exceptionally meaningful to compare the views of the oldest cohort from each of the three surveys, as well as of the youngest. The opinions of the youngest generation of Poles today would be particularly interesting since its life experiences diverge much from those of previous generations and the scope of information to which the youngest has access is much greater than that in earlier generations.

As a case in point, we present only the most striking variances that appeared in the questions and categorizations with regards to the education of respondents. One of the radical, significant shifts which needed to be reflected in a demographic question concerned the structure of the education system and levels of education. The oldest persons participating in the most recent, 2018 survey were graduates of a seven

grade elementary school, but the random sample also encompassed those who dealt with an eight grade elementary school, as well as those who, after a six year elementary school, completed a compulsory three year middle school, finishing with a three year secondary school. At the tertiary level, alongside those who completed the previously universal, five year university program, are those who have only partially completed such a program, falling under the category of "incomplete tertiary." However, there are also persons who completed a bachelor's degree after three years and then did or did not complete an additional, two year master's degree program. The resultant categorization of a respondent's level of education does not coincide between the studies from 1988 and 2018, even if comparative objectives would require it.

At this point in our analysis – and this despite changes in the demographic data requests – substantial problems arose in comparisons. The question arises: should we place in a single category those who completed the seven year school with those who completed the eight year elementary school? Next, should we add into the same category those individuals who only finished the sixth and final grade of elementary school as well as those who, in addition to the six grades, completed three years of middle school? Are the compulsory years in school more important, or the level of education (primary, middle, and/or secondary) more important in conducting a comparison? The two year difference in the length of compulsory education (seven versus nine years), and the divisions (until recently) of grades 1-6 (elementary) plus grades 7-9 (secondary) in the current system are problematic. This raises doubts as to the feasibility of a comparison; this raises disturbing questions on the part of the scholar who has focused on a comparative analysis and must now refer to considerations of a higher level of complexity.

A second type of change influencing and limiting the comparability of the three surveys involves changes in the social context taken as a whole – the overwhelming scale of economic, political, and institutional transformations over the 30 years in question. When looking from the

perspective of the three decades separating the first edition of the survey from the last one, all the above-signaled shifts were also accompanied by political ones. These include Poland's accession into the NATO military alliance in 1999, and, some five years later, into the structures of the European Union on 1 May 2004. Gradually, various EU states opened their labor markets to immigrants from Poland which, as a consequence, led to emigration from Poland on a massive scale to various countries of Western Europe. This meant not only temporary or pendular migrations for economic reasons, but also to a permanent outflow of people from Poland and permanent emigration. Migration itself provided a large part of Polish society with encounters with the cultural and physical differences of people with whom Poles now had the opportunity to come into contact at work and in daily life. Thanks to the possibility of tourism and travel, still more Poles gained a lot of knowledge about various Others.

As a consequence, profound changes took place in discourse: vocabulary, ways of speaking, and cognitive categories changed. Well-known terminology took on different meaning: some words acquired a negative connotation, others, quite the opposite, acquired a positive connotation. On the one hand, an accent is placed on awareness of Poland's integration with the European Union; on the other hand, it is emphasized that the assumption of power – after the presidential and parliamentary elections in 2015 – by a rightwing party has meant polarization of Polish society. Shifts in society have been advanced by emphasizing principles such as "the supremacy of the national community over the individual, the supreme role of the state and the family in society, attachment to religious faith and the Roman Catholic Church, the active role of the state in the economy, and the key role of nation states with respect to institutions of the European Union" (Ruszkowski, Przestalski and Maranowski 2020, 8-10).

It should also be noted that, in the 30 years that have passed since the first study, the demographic structure of Polish society has changed

meaningfully. Some demographic cohorts have passed the age of life expectancy, some have drifted away as a result of emigration (the study included only persons living in Poland), and a considerable percentage of the individuals surveyed in 2018 are persons too young to even remember 1988, the year in which the first survey was carried out. Demographic changes led to an increase in the number of the elderly and a decrease in the number of those who belong to the youngest categories of the population under study. A natural turnover of the generations has occurred.

Over the period since the first survey in 1988 – in addition to Poland's fundamental systemic, institutional, and economic transformations – there have also been major changes in awareness within Polish society. The scope of awareness regarding knowledge of and reflection upon the place of Poland in the world, its successes and failures, and so on has significantly expanded. Therefore, the three moments in which we conducted our research projects signify divergent political situations inside the country, but also divergent situations in migration processes underway – in the spheres of both emigration and immigration. The last decade has also brought Polish public opinion into contact with the course and consequences of the migration crisis in Europe – including the phenomena of terrorism and conflicts, including religious ones. There is no doubt that all these factors have influenced the shaping of the attitudes of Poles towards each other and towards their national identity.

1.4.2. Social criteria for Polishness (Questionnaire)

In comparative research within a national group, concentrated on a specific, institutionalized state, the construct of national belonging is concentrated on phenomena concerning beliefs, views, feelings, etc. The members of the nation are united by 1) an imagined community (Anderson 1991), 2) a conviction about a community of origin of the members

of the nation, 3) customs and habits, 4) psychological features some-times as well, and (most often) 5) a strong bond with a specific territory that is perceived as the homeland, the motherland (Ossowski 1967). However – even among those who consider themselves members of the nation and are perceived as such by others – complete agreement is missing on precisely this component of belonging to the nation.[6]

In setting our research hypotheses, we relied (without being aware of it at the time of our research in 1988 and 1998) on the "public opin-ion" model of national identity distinguished in Zbigniew Bokszański's classification.[7] This model was based on an individualizing interpreta-tion of national identity with reference to "empirical research, knowledge, as well as the attitudes and opinions of individual members of a national community regarding this very community" (Bokszański 2005, 130). Identity itself is understood as a set of "beliefs, attitudes, and emotions which are shaped in the consciousness of members of the national community in connection with a sense of ties to the nation and with their experience of participating in a national group. These are be-liefs, attitudes, and emotions subject, to a significant extent, to pro-cesses of conformization or uniformization" (Bokszański 2005, 133; cf. Kurczewska 2019, 610-611). From such a perspective, the results ob-tained by us regarding the weight of specific criteria would constitute an empirical synthesis of individual recommendations, forming a kind of social matrix of belonging to the Polish nation. However, disputes concerning an understanding of the nation itself and the paths of its origin and formation were not a focal point in our case; instead, we tried to focus on a description of the real, social dimensions of how the Polish national community functions in the form of declared criteria of na-tional belonging (identification) (Ścigaj 2012, 388).

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[6] From what we know, the first survey research in Poland on the subject of the Polish national identity was conducted by Jerzy Szacki on a random sample of the urban population in 1966 (Szacki 1969: 5, 56-57).

[7] This Polish sociologist also identified the objectivist, uncovered, and constructed models of identity (Bokszański 2005: 114-135; see Ścigaj 387-407).

The core question in this research project – the first one in our questionnaire – pertained to the social criteria of Polishness. It read as follows: "If we were to recognize someone as a Pole, what, in your opinion, would be important and what would be less important?" This question was posed while presenting the respondent with a list of ten features functioning as criteria of Polishness; respondents were to assess the weight of the criterium by choosing an option: "very important," "rather important," "rather unimportant," "completely unimportant," and "hard to say." As we gained these answers, we tried to determine what normative criteria of national belonging operate at the level of the colloquial social consciousness of Poles.[8]

In compiling the lists created by our respondents, we initially referred to the thinking of the eminent historian, Tadeusz Łepkowski who – first in a brief essay on Polishness (Łepkowski 1987), and then in the form of a thin volume published at the end of the 1980s – wrote about Polishness seen both collectively (as an "ensemble") and fragmented (as "sectors") "divided into specific threads of the national bond" (Łepkowski 1989, 18-21; cf. Nowicka 1990, 55-63).[9] Referring to the latter, "national threads" approach, we projected the following conditions of Polishness: 1) psychological (i.e., self-inclusion in the Polish nation), 2) political and civic (possessing Polish citizenship), 3) territorial (being born and permanently living in Poland), 4) ancestral descent (having at least one of parent of Polish nationality), 5) cultural (knowledge of the Polish language, history, and culture, adherence to Polish customs, and professing Roman Catholicism), and 6) special devotion to the country

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[8] For a review of questions regarding Polish national identity posed in Polish surveys, see Ścigaj 2012: 393-394).

[9] It is worth recalling here that a discussion about the concepts behind our research project and the moment in which we first began coincided with an extremely interesting and important (at the time) questionnaire entitled "What is Polishness?". That questionnaire was conducted among members of the Polish intelligentsia by the editors of *Znak*, a secular Roman Catholic monthly. The findings were published at the cusp of 1987 and 1988 (*Znak* 1987 No. 11-12 and *Znak* 1988 No. 3); for a history of that questionnaire and the subsequent debates, see *Znak* 2011 No. 11 (678).

(service on Poland's behalf).[10] Let us briefly discuss these criteria and their possible social meanings.

The criterion of national self-identification (in other words, self-assignment, national self-categorization, etc.) is of a psychological and subjective nature. This depends solely on the individual him or herself and remains separate from citizenship(s) and signifies a state of consciousness and identification with a given nation or ethnic group. Self-identification is treated as the primary principle for being a member of a specific nation. It is not state institutions that impose and determine the nationality (ethnicity) of a specific person, but rather that person's conscious decision about his or her ties with Poland and identification with Polishness. This always remains a matter of individual choice – something strongly emphasized in international documents dealing with protection of human rights and national minorities (Janusz 2011). Self-identification also means that an individual can choose a composite ethnic identity. The right to freely identify oneself nationally may be questioned only in the rarest and most limited cases. One such exemption is, for example, denial of national self-identification if this right was utilized in order to gain benefits or privileges for the individual; such a stance is found in European documents on the protection of minority rights (cf. *The Framework Convention* 2016, 8-10).

Additionally, according to the most authoritative Polish dictionary (*Słownik Języka Polskiego*), nationality means precisely the nation and "belonging to a given nation; also: a sense of this belonging." A similar definition was also provided in the guidelines for the 2021 national census of population and housing: nationality (national or ethnic affiliation), not to be confused with citizenship, is "a declarative, based on subjective feelings, individual characteristic of every human being, expressing his emotional, cultural or ancestral bonds with a specific nation or ethnic community" (GUS 2021, 33-34).

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[10] For other classification criteria and elements of a national bond, see Smith 2009a and Smith 2009b.

We treated the criterion of holding Polish citizenship as a manifestation and confirmation of political-state affiliation. In the case of Poland's history, formal citizenship could accrue deeper cultural content associated with the struggles to build and preserve the Polish nation-state. The legal institution of citizenship itself remains something separate from a feeling of nationality (Raciborski 2011). The fundamental, legal way of acquiring Polish citizenship is based primarily on *ius sanguinis*, meaning that it is usually acquired by birth to at least one parent who is a Polish citizen (Article 14; *Ustawa z dnia 2 kwietnia 2009 r. o obywatelstwie* 2020). Still, *ius soli*, as the second fundamental principle for acquiring citizenship, is treated as supplementary and applies to a situation whereby a child is born on the territory of Poland to parents who are unknown or whose citizenship is unknown. Pursuant to Polish law, persons possessing documented Polish citizenship are solely Polish citizens. A Polish citizen holding additional citizenship(s) cannot invoke any rights or privileges arising therefrom before the Polish authorities. This criterion is important (as already signaled in the discussion of self-identification) because selecting it on the list emphasizes a political-administrative vision of a bond with the nation, distinct from an individual's sense of belonging. On the one hand, an awareness remains that the primary form of gaining citizenship is through biological origin, but, on the other hand, the political criterion opens the possibility for citizenship to be acquired by persons not born Polish (i.e., foreigners) (Pudzianowska 2013). The Polish political system recognizes the existence of groups known as national and ethnic minorities within the Polish state and civic community. Members of these minorities are legal citizens of the Republic of Poland, exactly the same as members of the community of the dominant Polish nationality. Yet another issue that requires reflection and specific decisions is exactly citizenship granted to foreigners residing in Poland.

The criterion of Polish language fluency is viewed not only as an innate ability to communicate socially with other people in Poland, but as also a fundamental core value framing national identity (Smolicz 1990).

The creation and functioning of a language community not only facilitates efficient interpersonal communication, but it also facilitates the creation of a singular national culture. It has also been very strongly emphasized in the Preamble to the *Act on the Polish language* (*Ustawa o języku polskim* 1999) that the Polish language is a canonic element of national identity and a cultural wealth. Polish is also the official language of the state as reflected in Art. 27 of the Polish Constitution. Naturally, we are very aware of the fact that identifying a national community with a single language may be imprecise. There are, for instance, languages (such as English) that are spoken by members of different nations; there are also national communities (such as Switzerland or Belgium) in which many languages are officially recognized. Nonetheless, with regards to Poland, the "one language – one nation" approach does seem amply justified (Błuszkowski 2005, 127).

Cultural criteria – that is, knowledge of Polish history and culture, as well as observance of Polish customs – are of a "collective self-knowledge" type and possess the power of longue durée. As manner of cultural capital, these criteria enforce certain systems of values and their hierarchies of importance; they also enforce detailed patterns of behavior in specific social situations as essential for being a member of a given national community. Here this includes, on the one hand, knowledge of the history of Poland as a nation and a state, and, on the other hand, knowledge of its key cultural resources, such as symbols and norms of behavior functioning in our social life. Scholars describing Polish national identity call special attention to the role of historical, national knowledge as an element binding Poles together. This especially entails knowledge of the experiences of 19th century partitions and of the enemy occupations during the two World Wars; these periods in Polish history have intensified the cultivation of a distinct identity in the face of a danger that political sovereignty will be lost. Noticed as of late is a shift in the functions attributed to historical knowledge in Poland: no longer a "teacher of life," history begins to be treated as an element of mass culture and a factor shaping collective identity (cf.

Raport "Niepodległa" 2016, 5-7).[11] However, knowledge and observance of the rules of Polish customs shift attention to the unique ways that behavior and communication are embodied in the language, kinship relations, attitudes towards public institutions, as well as in ways of religion and art are experienced. All in all, these criteria comprise a sort of behavioral conditions to be met for participation in the Polish national community. In other words, this produces a specifically Polish code of meanings and actions that shape a collective space of motivation and emotions – a collective space that achieves the status of an objective, national reality (Geertz 1992).

The criterion of having at least one parent of Polish nationality is a decisive element in belonging to the Polish nation. This is expressed both in the colloquial and legal term of "Polish origin" (*pochodzenie polskie*). This is reflected, too, in the aforementioned *ius sanguinis* principle as the primary basis for recognizing innate Polish citizenship. An individual automatically inherits the nationality of the parent(s) holding Polish citizenship without recourse to any special legal procedure. In the first two decades of the 21st century, this criterion has been augmented in order to facilitate citizenship for Poles living in the diaspora (described earlier herein). As a reminder, this applies to 1) the Act on Repatriation of 2010, which refers to a person of Polish origin understood as someone who self-declares Polish nationality and who has at least one parent or grandparent or two great-grandparents of Polish nationality (Article 5.1); and 2) the *Karta Polaka* which, aside from other conditions, replicates the Act on Repatriation condition that the applicant prove Polish nationality or prove that at least one parent or grandparent or two great-grandparents were of Polish nationality (Article 2). Yet hidden within the biological kinship are many issues related to relationships of culture and loyalty. By emphasizing biological, bloodlines

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[11] For a critical look into the history of Poland as taught in schools from a national perspective, see Burszt and others 2019.

ancestry, attention is drawn to the endurance of the nation as a consequence of successive generations of Poles, from "whom the living present-day ones are descended" (Łepkowski 1989, 19). Additionally, the use of the phrase "a flesh-and-blood Pole" in one of the quoted interviews – even if it is a colloquial turn of phrase – inexorably includes an element from which, in lengthier explanations, our respondents (as might be expected) avoid. That phrase refers less to some notion of a "true Pole," and more to an "unquestionable Pole" – i.e., as the phrase suggests, a Pole who is biologically rooted in the society. Further, however, psychological elements dominate in ideas thinking about Polishness: free will, an intention, or a desire to enter the national community in the case of a foreigner.

The territorial criteria – that is, being born in and permanently residing on the territory of Poland – refer to an awareness of a nation's connection with its native lands, even if the borders have changed throughout history. On the one hand, this is a clear reference to *ius soli*, but, on the other hand, this is only a social and cultural matter. Living in Poland, daily contacts with other Poles, and familiarity with current political affairs can be meaningful in the very understanding of Polishness and national affiliation. Moreover, there is awareness of the existence of a vast and prominent Polish diaspora, i.e., people who recognize themselves as Polish, but residing outside Poland's territory (Kwiatkowski 2018, 15).

The criterion of Roman Catholicism has been treated here as a cultural condition. It drew our attention to the fact of a tradition that is expressed in the term "Catholic Pole" (*Polak-katolik*) (Łepkowski 1989, 20), as well as the still relatively high level of religiosity in Polish society, in which the Roman Catholic faith and its relationship to Poland play a central role in the national identity (Koseła 2003, 15). From a historical perspective, Roman Catholicism has become a fixed element in the traditional understanding of national identity, and even its core value (Domagała 2018, 273-274). Hence, a question arises as to the role ascribed to this criterion in shaping Polishness as the society faces far-

reaching transformations connected with modernization, mobility, and quite open borders – all of which have an impact on the gradual secularization of Polish society. Recent studies on this topic indicate, on the one hand, a very high percentage of people continuing to declare themselves as believers (91% in 2020), and, on the other hand, a significant diversification of practices related to this religiosity alongside a rising percentage of individuals (especially young people) who define themselves as non-believers (in our study, this percentage was 4%). Taking under consideration a CBOS public opinion report summarizing the changes in religiosity over the first two decades of the 21st century, we can say that the vast majority of Polish society continues to believe, although the percentage of attitudes more "indifferent" towards confession and practice of religion is increasing within that majority (CBOS 2020a, 1).

The final criterion is more meritocratic and pertains to persons who have contributed special services on behalf of Poland. It was specially introduced, because from our history we know quite numerous cases of people distinguished for Poland and of maintaining Polishness (in various forms, such as heroic deed during military operations, political decisions made that had a significant impact on the fate of Poland, or the preparation of important works cultural for Polish culture), which, despite their different national identity and citizenship, were politically recognized and socially treated as members of the Polish national community. It had a special relationship with the Polish patriotic ethos in the period of striving for independence. Every person who fought for her independence in history was treated as a good Pole. This criterion is to a large extent discretionary, as it expresses the respect that the surveyed Poles have for such a person and his deeds. In their opinion, through their special merits for Polishness, such a person manifested his attachment to the Polish national community, which should be awarded with recognition as a Pole (Nowicka 1990, 66-67).

The common denominator linking all the criteria discussed above is a sense of being bound with the Polish nation based (to one degree or

another) upon biological origin, territory, culture and traditions, the Polish language, Roman Catholicism, Polish citizenship, and, finally, on special service on behalf of Poland and Polishness. In the eyes of our respondents, Polishness understood thusly was a matter of their individual readings which could carry a different range of meaning for different people and inconsistently influence convictions about the weight of specific criteria being associated with the Polish national group. All the criteria for Polishness[12] mentioned herein are significant determinants of national consciousness and identification. Taken together they allude to the concept of national identity, which is an internally complex whole structuring a community defined as "nation" (Nowicka 1990, 56).

1.4.3. Qualitative research

In addition to the random sample survey conducted at the beginning of June 2018 (in which we posed the questions discussed in the previous section regarding the socially functioning shape of Polishness as a concept), we also conducted extensive qualitative research at the turn of 2019 and 2020. As a result, we gathered 82 interviews with young adults and working people, aged 27 to 40 (most often, between 30 and 40), who were from large urban centers (mainly Warsaw), and who had some level of higher education; these factors meant that the respondents possessed relatively high cultural capital in Polish society. Additionally, in 2021, we carried out 14 supplementary, comparative interviews with individuals who were at least one generation older than the initial set (aged 45 to 76), also from urban centers, but with higher or secondary education. Our research covered people residing in Poland at the time of the interview, although respondents had had various degrees of experience with emigration (their own or among family and friends)

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[12] We synonymously refer to this also as "a sense of Polishness"; see Nowicka, Łodziński 2001: 50-72.

and different types of contact with foreigners (in Poland and/or abroad).

The interviewees were differentiated in terms of basic social structure measures; a level of reflectivity among them was not always to be expected as little in their own lives prompted a change or reconsideration of their own self-definition in national categories.

In the course of both the quantitative and qualitative research in this project, we aimed fundamentally to investigate the same aspects of the phenomenon of national identity, keeping in mind that interpretations of the data would necessarily refer to different markers. The object of our qualitative research was the psychological and normative level of the phenomenon. During the freeform, partially structured interviews – i.e., loosely controlled, personal conversations between the researcher and the respondent – we gained information about a level that is influenced by many factors that are normative and/or shaped by individual character. It is necessary to disregard and set aside the latter, but the element of self-presentation vis-à-vis a member of the same culture must be taken into account when interpreting statements made during the interviews; when the interviewer and interviewee are from the same cultural milieu, one can assume that their thinking is guided by an identical or similar system of values. Therefore, it is especially important when inconsistencies and contradictions arise in an interview.

The layer to which we refer as the psychological-normative one has a complex structure. Its first component – the most difficult for a researcher to access – comprises the normative standards actually practiced, i.e., individual beliefs. Another stratum here – which surfaces in statements that seemingly express personal opinions – is knowledge (not necessarily accurate) about what is required socially. In other words, how does the interviewee imagine what is a perceived common norm – how one should act, think, and sense what should be acceptable and what is not. Delving into this layer of the cultural pattern, we reach the degree of acceptance of a norm which is likely not perceived as something external due to its full internalization. The second important component of the psychological-normative sphere of cultural phenomena

is cognizance of what is currently happening in society. This involves both knowledge (derived from everyday observation) about certain behaviors and how they will be assessed as well as awareness of views disseminated in society and their aptness. Coming into play here is also an awareness of the existence of a binding standard of views, convictions, preferences, or, more precisely, a belief in the existence of a community of such standards. This situation is best conveyed by the phrases "that's how it should be" (*tak wypada*) and "it's in good taste" (*jest to w dobrym tonie*).

Thus, on the one hand, we access an interiorized system of values and the spectrum of beliefs considered obligatory. On the other hand, we access the personal thinking of the respondent. It should be emphasized that those interviewed were well-educated and already working, therefore possessing a strong sense of higher social status and considerable knowledge of the world in comparison with other social groups. The scope of their reflections on the construction of Polishness is substantial. Our interviewees were partners in discussion during the interviews; they usually did not limit themselves to simple answers, but considered our questions from many angles.

The very concept of Polishness triggers several problems with definitions, although there is no doubt that statements made by our interlocutors permit describing it as crucial to Polish identity. Polishness turned out to be, in the opinion of the interviewees, a certain essence, core, or sense in feeling that one is Polish. Consisting mostly of strong emotions – with pride and patriotic love in the foreground – it can be understood in many different ways. Polishness is multidimensional, highly complex, varied, but certainly also inseparable from perception of oneself as a person of Polish nationality. Polishness is connected with the past and with ancestry; it is composed of previous generations as well as something passed on to children today. Such a description of it could mean that Polish identity is something exclusive, available only to those who descend from it and who have Polish roots.

Using qualitative research methods – especially in person, conversational interviews – is important in the case of this delicate issue. The sense of Polishness is not a topic of everyday discourse; only a longer dialog, without an emphasis on quick, to the point, and explicit responses (more the case with in-depth interviews) permits probing into the structure of beliefs and still deeper thoughts of the respondents. It should be added that investigations regarding this general issue were described as generally difficult by the respondents themselves. As mentioned above, this concerns topics treated as extremely obvious, not discussed in daily life, and even subconscious or absent in colloquial thinking. During these conversations, when asking about the criteria for recognizing a person as a Pole, we compelled the respondent to touch on the abstract; we also asked the respondent to consider very specific and rare situations, obliging him or her to consider something not brought to mind on a daily basis. More than once, our preliminary assumptions were confirmed that this subject matter is definitely not the subject of normal chats over tea or discussions over a family dinner.

Moreover, as is usually the case during partially structured interviews, the researcher did not demand full, comprehensive, unmistakable, and detailed answers, thanks to which statements were spontaneous, only provoked by subsequent questions such as whether a person can have a dual national identity, can someone be both a Pole and a Spaniard, can Polishness be somehow lost, regained or acquired. It turned out that answers to more exacting queries are more difficult such as whether a Pole can have two nationalities at the same time, he or she can lose a Polish national identity under certain conditions, or someone who is not a Pole can become one.

The interview guide did include a few sensitive and thus problematic questions about whether one can be a Pole to different degrees: is Polishness something gradated, can we speak of "good" and "bad" Poles, are there "better" and "worse" Poles, and can we speak of more or less "real" Poles? What exactly (for example, forgetting the mother tongue)

eliminates an individual from the national community? During these interviews, on the one hand, we wanted more spontaneous conversations, and, on the other hand, we wished to encourage our interlocutors to take into account a broad range of diverse, but specific cases.

The guide structuring the interviews was only sketched out. Each interview began with the most general questions, prompting natural reflection. In the first part we also asked general-sounding questions such as "what makes a Pole a Pole," "what makes a person Polish," "what makes you a Pole," or "what is the most important thing in recognizing someone as a Pole?" These questions were posed in various ways in the different interviews, and usually followed by a conversational exchange between the researcher and respondent. The questions aimed to activate the interviewee's imagination in the area of interest to us, and to provoke reflection, updating earlier thinking on these topics. Many an interlocutor, in a natural, initial retort, pronounced our queries to be thorny and complicated.

In the next part a question (or even a series of questions) was asked about the criteria for recognizing someone as a Pole. At this point, we applied the set of criteria used also in the three editions of the quantitative survey (1988, 1998, and 2018). Now our interlocutors were presented with these for consideration. A difference was that interviewees were asked to rank the criteria from the most to the least important. In the case of the quantitative survey, respondents were asked to label each of the formulated criteria somewhere between "very important" and "completely unimportant." Now interlocutors were to make an overall decision, treating each of the listed criteria as fitting in one place; one criterion would be the most important and one would be in last place.

The following section raised the issue of the possibility of a foreigner becoming a Pole. Here, too, we had a series of conditions – also found in the survey – that could enable someone to become a Pole. As in the case of the criteria for recognizing someone as a Pole, the interviewee was presented a card listing conditions that a foreigner might meet so as to

recognize him or her as a Pole; again the interviewee was to rank elements on the list from the most to the least important. There were also questions about the possibility of recognizing a Person of Color as a Pole, as well as about the Polishness of a child adopted internationally by a Polish couple. The final issue addressed in the guide involved the possible loss, renunciation or departure from Polish identity. To be kept in mind is that the knowledge gained from the quantitative survey concerned frequency and the demographic distribution of individual choices placed in the list of five fixed answer options. However, during the interview, we had access to a different type of research data – that is, the individual thought process triggered by an explicit question. Therefore, the results of the quantitative survey and the qualitative interviews complement and augment each other, although their results should not be treated as strictly comparable.

1.5. The framework

Overall, this volume will successively present the results of the June 2018 quantitative survey and comparison with the previous two editions, conducted in 1988 and 1998. Submitted next will be the results of the qualitative research – the partially structured, in-depth interviews from 2019-2021. Above all, it will be the findings of the qualitative interviews which will be the focus of subsequent chapters. Analyzed especially will be those criteria of Polishness which were most strongly emphasized by our respondents; investigated, too, will be the least important criteria, those sometimes understood poorly and functioning weakly. Finally, we will take under consideration the answers to our questions of the possibility of abandoning or moving away from Polishness. The work at hand will close with a conclusion followed by the Bibliography and an Appendix. We extend our gratitude and appreciation to the reviewers and publishers of this volume.

Chapter II

To be a Pole: The Evolution of the Social Criteria for Polishness (1988, 1998, 2018)

2.1. Introductory remarks

In this section of our book, we undertake analysis of the criteria of Polishness as weighted by Poles responding to the survey conducted in June 2018. We will compare decisions about what is more and what is less important with the results from the previous 1988 and 1998 editions of this survey, demonstrating both the robustness of certain of our respondents' assessments of these criteria, as well as changes and evolutions in the evaluations. Further on, we will deal with the conditions for recognizing a foreigner as a Pole, and then with emerging social models of Polishness accompanying an openness towards Others (foreigners). It should be emphasized that the data analyzed herein is drawn from our research project which provided us with aggregated data on the collective beliefs and attitudes of representatives of Polish society vis-à-vis specific conditions that a representative sample of people perceived as necessary in recognizing a given person as a Pole.

The core survey question regarding the social criteria for Polishness was as follows: "If we were to recognize someone as a Pole, what, in your opinion, would be important and what would be less important?" The question was presented before respondents along with a list of ten features functioning as criteria for Polishness. Those features included Polish citizenship, permanent residence in Poland, Roman Catholicism, being born in Poland, familiarity with Polish culture and history, Polish

language fluency, having at least one parent of Polish nationality, service on behalf of Poland, observance of Polish customs, and a sense that one is Polish.

These criteria communicate various aspects of the national bond, aspects which can be arranged on a scale demonstrating the assigned versus the achieved, the traditional versus the modern, or what is independent versus dependent upon the will of a specific individual. For this reason, it is not easy to describe and interpret the just-mentioned criteria within a single, uniform framework of social ties or of a model of the nation. This task is made all the more difficult by the fact that social implementation of these criteria always depends on the actions of specific individuals under specific socio-historical circumstances (Nowicka 1990, 60-63).

In other studies, based upon the same list of criteria, various ways of grouping have been proposed (cf. Karkowska 2019). Thus it has been suggested that profession of Roman Catholicism be treated as the manifestation of a distinctly religious bond, whereas possession of Polish citizenship and/or service to the country be treated as a civic bond. From this approach, we drew the following six sets of criteria concerned ties to Poland: national, blood, territorial, cultural, religious, and civic self-identification (Błuszkowski 2005, 125-128; cf. Pierzchała 2011, 159-160; Ścigaj 2012, 393-395).

In one of the most recent approaches to this issue, a division was proposed, clearly contrasting criteria which delineate national belonging of an ethnonational nature versus those of a political and civic nature (Wysocki 2020, 195-198). The former category includes such criteria as Polish language fluency, familiarity with Polish history and culture, observance of Polish customs, having a parent of Polish nationality, permanent residence in Poland, and professing the Catholic faith. In the latter category were the criteria of feeling that one is a Pole, possession of Polish citizenship, permanent residence in Poland, and that one has provided special service to the country.

In our analyses, we will use the divide which we have applied before – the substantial versus the conventional – based on a distinction introduced by Stanisław Ossowski (1966, 145-153) with reference to two models of social ties (cf. Nowicka 1990, 61-63). The first model relates to predestined ties, based on the principle of biological kinship (belief in common descent) as well as traits acquired independent of individual will. The second is based on rules of a cultural convention which is gaining in importance in the contemporary world. In fact, Ossowski clearly underscored in his text that the factors of a substantial nature in the first model lose importance in the situation of progressive modernity – at a time when "living conditions differ, when the human psyche, human love and aspirations are differentiated" (Ossowski 1966, 227).

On the one hand, the criteria of a substantial nature here include, above all, the condition of being born to at least one parent of Polish nationality on Polish territory. On the other hand, the criteria of a conventional nature include, in first order, an individual's self-identification as a Pole, fluency in the language, knowledge of Polish culture and history, observance of Polish customs, and serving the homeland; all these depend first and foremost on the willingness and behavior of the individual.

Indeed, recognizing oneself as a Pole is a strictly individual matter. Yet it does (and this needs to be emphasized) interact with and act upon other criteria of Polishness. Such things as being a Roman Catholic, living in Poland, and holding a Polish passport are of a cultural – thus also conventional and institutional – nature; certain things are transmitted culturally by being raised and being acculturated by a unique national environs. Various, however, are the possible configurations: one can live permanently in Poland, have a passport in the drawer, and still abandon Roman Catholicism.

Nevertheless, many of the criteria which we describe here as conventional and cultural take on substantial aspects over time, in the course of social life. This is manifested in, for example, reference to Polish as the "mother tongue" (*język ojczysty*, *język rodzimy*), or to the Catholic

faith as the generations-old traditional religion in Poland (*wiara przodków*), or to an obligation to observe Polish customs. For all the above reasons, we keep in mind that the two models of criteria cannot be strictly divided.

Additionally, the meaning of these criteria and their role in delineating Polish national belonging can be affected by the fact that our respondents belong to different sociodemographic categories and hold different political views. Over a longer period, other impetuses for transmutation in the Polish national identity can be generational turnover as well as important national or civilizational shifts, such as the move to democracy and capitalism in Poland as of 1989 and the country's subsequent accession into NATO in 1999 and the EU in 2004 (Jasińska-Kania 2002; Ścigaj 2012, 98-99). We will return more than once to the quandaries raised by various clustering of the criteria for Polishness.

2.2. Social criteria for Polishness in 2018

In June of 2018, the quantitative survey respondents assessed the significance of the criteria for Polishness in the manner presented below (Table 2.1). A quantitative ranking was created by totaling all the "very" or "rather important" responses, though it should be noted that the most decisively indicated criterion was possession of Polish citizenship.

In Table 2.1 it is evident that three criteria were selected almost universally (over 90% of those surveyed): Polish language fluency, a feeling that one is Polish, and Polish citizenship. Somewhat fewer respondents (although still an overwhelming 85%+ majority) selected criteria that are strictly cultural (familiarity with the history, culture, and customs), while 80% pointed to the substantial type, meaning biological descent as well as permanent residence in Poland. Over 70% of those surveyed drew attention to the criterion of being born in the country, over half (53%) chose Roman Catholicism, and 40% centered on special service for Poland.

Table 2.1 Social criteria of Polishness, 2018 (%)

"If we were to recognize someone as a Pole, then, in your opinion, what is important and what is less important?"	Total (Very important + Rather important)	Very im-portant	Rather im-portant	Rather unim-portant	Completely unim-portant	Total (Rather unim-portant + Completely unim-portant)	Diffi-cult to say
Polish language fluency	**93**	54	39	5	1	**6**	1
A sense of being a Pole	**92**	51	41	5	1	**6**	1
Polish citizenship	**92**	55	37	6	1	**7**	1
Knowledge of Polish history and culture	**88**	38	50	8	2	**10**	1
Observance of Polish customs	**85**	37	48	12	2	**14**	1
At least one parent of Polish nationality	**81**	42	39	13	5	**18**	1
Permanent residence in Poland	**80**	43	37	17	2	**19**	1
Being born in Poland	**71**	35	36	20	8	**28**	2
Roman Catholicism	**53**	22	31	28	16	**44**	3
Special service on behalf of Poland	**42**	16	26	36	18	**54**	4

Source: Authors' own research and data analysis.

The negative selection (totaling rather unimportant and completely un-important) was in opposition to the hierarchy of positive assessments. The first three criteria listed above were negated merely by every fif-teenth respondent (about 6-7%), whereas the cultural criteria were ne-gated by roughly every tenth respondent (10-14%). The strongest cri-tique, by nearly every fifth respondent (18-19%), was expressed against the genealogical criterion (at least one parent of Polish nationality) and permanent residency in Poland; next on the list were criteria pertaining

to Poland as a birthplace (28%), Roman Catholicism as the religion (44%), and over half (54%) were against recognition of service performed on behalf of Poland.

The criteria for Polishness presented to the respondents were almost perfectly grasped by them as only about 1% of those surveyed claimed that it was hard to say. Solely the last two criteria on the list drew a slightly larger (3-4%) population alleging that it would be difficult to say. Similar results have been recorded in the course of other surveys on similar topics (including a few mentioned in the text). This permits drawing a conclusion that this list continues to be comprehensive and valid, and that a random sample of Poles has very clear ideas about these topics.

Looking at the results in Table 2.1 – from the perspective of those choosing "very important" alone – the ordering of the criteria and traits is similar to that found when adding the "very" and "rather important" together. But a few key differences are evident. The most popular criterion was that of holding Polish citizenship and of Polish language fluency: over half of the respondents, 55% and 54% respectively; a close third place was taken by an individual feeling of Polishness (51%). Further down in the hierarchy is the territorial criterion (43%) and the biological one (42%). It is only later that the cultural (familiarity with the culture and observance of customs) and being born in Poland criteria are selected (38%, 37%, and 35% respectively). The Catholic faith was noted by every fifth respondent (22%), and service to the country by every sixth respondent (16%).

Our results with regards to positive responses in Table 2.1 reflect the outcome of a survey using the same set of questions, but conducted in November 2018 (four months after our survey) by Kantar, a private data analysis and consulting service. In the later survey, over 90% chose language fluency and a sense of being Polish (92% and 91% respectively); a bit lower percentage pointed to knowledge of the history and culture (88%); Polish citizenship and Polish customs followed close behind (87% each), while a parent of Polish nationality was very important for

84%. For three quarters of the Polish population it was important that a person who is seen as Polish live permanently (75%) and be born in the country (74%). Selected more rarely, albeit to a slightly greater degree than in our study, was service to the country (60%) and Roman Catholicism (58%).

Also confirming our findings were similar percentages found in the course of the 2017 edition of the European Values Study. Survey respondents replied then that a "real" Pole is a person who, above all, takes advantage of Polish culture, speaks Polish, and respects Polish institutions and laws; these characteristics were marked as "very" or "rather important" by over 94% of the participants. Lower down were Polish descent (87.7%) and birth in Poland (78.8%). Professing the Catholic faith was indicated by the relatively smallest group of respondents (39.4%) (Mandes 2019, 140-141). In another survey – in 2015 by the polling service, CBOS – similar were the strong emphases on self-identification and citizenship; the most rarely selected were Roman Catholicism and speaking Polish (CBOS 2015, 6-7).[13]

Overall, the findings of our 2018 quantitative survey testify to the fact that decidedly more significant in a societal assessment of belonging to the Polish nation are the following criteria: language, self-identification, and the institutional holding of Polish citizenship. These three were most frequently selected in a positive light and relatively rarely selected in a negative light. At the same time, it is worth accenting that the surveyed Poles also assigned great significance to cultural, genealogical, and territorial criteria.

The least weight was placed on the religious criterion as well as the meritocratic service criterion, both of which evoked criticism by nearly every other respondent. The majority of the criteria included

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[13] In this last case, however, it needs to be noted that the CBOS results were on a completely different basis than ours. The question was "What, in your opinion, is necessary for recognition of someone as a Pole?" But respondents were instructed to choose only the two most important criteria from the list (CBOS 2015: 6-7).

on the list was equally meaningful (chosen by at least half the random sample), with the exception of service on behalf of Poland.

Evident in the results of the survey data are the presence and concomitance (to varying degrees) of criteria that are more conventional or substantial, ascribed or acquired, dependent or independent, and ethnocultural or political-civic. The high extent to which these co-appear could be testimony to different social imaginaries of the principles upon which the Polish national community should be built (Wysocki 2020, 200).

The importance and frequency of perception of these criteria for being a member of a nation is (again, to varying degrees) dependent upon sociodemographic variables as well as the declared religiosity[14] and political views[15] of those surveyed. At this point, we examine the criteria in order of a positive weighting on Table 2.1, simultaneously analyzing their social determinants. Underlined from the start, however, is that the differences in choices when correlated demographically were, in many cases, less significant and within the range of statistical error.

We begin with the criterion of Polish language fluency. We assumed that it concerned the meaning of a possession of skills in using this language, but also highlighted its unique historical and cultural value in maintaining Polish national identity. This criterion was chosen by 93% of those surveyed with 54% judging it as very important. This universal social acceptance of this criterion testifies to

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[14] Declared religiosity was calculated on the basis of the following question and possible responses: "What is your stance towards faith?" – believing and regularly practicing; believing and irregularly practicing; believing, but not practicing; nonbelieving. In June 2018, the results were respectively 27%, 42%, 18%, and 4%.

[15] Analysis of political views was based upon choice of a specific political party. The question was: "For the candidate of which party or coalition would you vote in elections?" The results (party name and leader at the time) were: *Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* (PiS; J. Kaczyński) – 20%; *Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej* (SLD; W. Czarzasty) – 3%; *Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe* (PSL; W. Kosiniak-Kamysz) – 2%; *Platforma Obywatelska* (PO; G. Schetyna) – 12%; *Wolność* (J. Korwin-Mikke) – 1%; *Nowoczesna* (K. Lubnauer) – 2%; *Kukiz'15* (P. Kukiz) – 5%, *Partia Razem* (A. Zandberg) – 2%; unlisted party – 1%; no party – 0%.

the conventional-cultural cornerstones of national bonds. The language was historically meaningful in the preservation of the Polish ethnic group when it was a political minority (especially in the long 19th century), and is captured in a phrase "fatherland – the Polish language" (*ojczyzna-polszczyzna*" (cf. Miodunka 2011, 180-182). A spotlighting of this criterion on the list was only to a slight degree determined by sociodemographic factors although those most likely to point to it were self-employed (94%) and students (95%).

Similar was the case with national self-identification which also attained a high ranking. It was selected by 92% of the respondents with 51% considering it very important. Its role was seen as relatively stronger among women (93%) and respondents over 65 (94%). Yet here political views were very significant in this choice. Inasmuch as the voters of the strongest political parties (PiS, PO, and SLD) supported this criterion between 94-89%, in the case of PSL, the percentage fell to 78%.

Aside from the two criteria discussed above, almost equally popular (92%) was the criterion of possessing Polish citizenship as an indicator of national belonging; 55% perceived it to be the first and foremost condition of Polishness. Having citizenship is associated with a family living on the territory of the country – usually permanently, though this can be more fluid considering possibilities for spatial mobility and legal migration. This criterion was supported the most by persons declaring themselves to be nonbelievers (98%), though relatively less among the leftwing SLD voters (79%). Such popularity of citizenship as a marker could attest a dominant vision of Polishness built upon institutional and conventional-cultural visions of the national community.

Assessment of the criterion of familiarity with Polish history and culture meant, in our opinion, not only a formal knowledge of basic facts and personalities as well as of the culture. This could suggest something more, such as acceptance of these facts and a more active engagement in Polish affairs today. In the 2018 survey, this criterion

emerged in fourth place on the list of all the positively assessed. Among the cultural criteria, this was below that of language, but above the observance of Polish customs and the profession of Roman Catholicism. Nonetheless, if we were to count only rankings of very important, then this criterion would fall to sixth place, superseded by biological origin and permanent residence. This criterion was least likely to be selected by the youngest respondents, aged 16-24 (83%) and the oldest who were over 65 (86%); it was also less popular among those with an elementary education (83%), believers who are nonpracticing (86%), and the electorate of *Razem* (82%). It was relatively strongest among nonbelievers (98%) and followers of PiS or PSL (93% and 94% respectively).

The criterion of observation of Polish customs was the next cultural condition for perceiving someone as a Pole. We felt this expressed an interactive-behavioral level of Polishness. In 2018, it attained a rather high fifth place among all of the criteria of Polishness: it was selected by 85%, with 37% of the respondents seeing it as very important. It was relatively more significant for persons who were private farmers (92%). Its popularity also rose with age: inasmuch as it was important for 83% of the youngest cohort, the oldest one reached 88%. Interestingly, it was the opposite case with education: it was more likely to be selected by persons with an elementary education (86%), than by persons with a tertiary education (82%). It was least popular among nonbelievers (65%), while other categories of religiosity oscillated between 85% to 88%. This criterion was the most important for the electorate of the conservative PiS and *Kukiz'15* (92% in both instances), and relatively in the lowest position for SLD voters (79%).

Having at least one parent of Polish nationality was in a high sixth place among the criteria for Polishness: it was seen as generally important by 81%, and very important for 42% of those surveyed. Such results testify to the fact that a consciousness of biological continuity is treated as a meaningful condition for affirming membership in the

Polish national community. It won the most approval from persons of an elementary education level (83%), pensioners (90% and 85% respectively), the believing and practicing Roman Catholics (83%), and the voters of PSL (89%) and PiS (87%). Polish parentage was relatively more rarely indicated by those with a tertiary education (78%), declaring themselves as nonbelievers (70%), as well as those voting for SLD (72%) and *Razem* (59%).

Permanent residence in Poland as a criterion for Polishness was indicated by over three quarters of the respondents (80%); among those 43% saw this as very important. We treated this condition as signaling a bond with the national territory as well as an emotion that creates a territorial community of the nation. This was supported relatively the strongest by the eldest (83%) and those with an elementary education (85%); it was approved to a lesser extent by the youngest (79%), persons with a tertiary education (72%), and people stating that they were nonbelievers (65%). In the case of this criterion, political views did not affect it much. The relatively insignificant, political and sociodemographic variations of this condition among those surveyed might point to a very strong feeling about an almost "organic" link to one's (home)land.

Being born in Poland itself was also treated as a sign of a territorial consciousness, but a criterion independent of an individual's will. This criterion was selected by over two thirds of the respondents (71%); over a third (35%) felt it was very important. This was more likely to be ranked higher by those believing and practicing (73%), with an elementary education (78%), and the retired (76%); it was less likely to be ranked higher by persons with a higher education (63%), the self-employed or businessowners (56% and 48%), and those describing themselves as nonbelievers (63%). This criterion is affected by political views: more strongly supported by PSL and PiS voters (83% and 82%), more rarely by SLD (59%) and *Razem* voters (53%).

We treated the criterion of confession of Roman Catholicism as a cultural aspect, although we do feel that it also remains strongly connected to the observance of Polish customs which were strongly accented by our respondents. The Roman Catholic Church in Poland was seen as supplementary to the cultural sphere, not necessarily connected with a strong religiosity or the spiritual sphere. This criterion was selected by over half the surveyed population (53%); one fifth (22%) perceived this as very important. This time sociodemographic variables and political views undeniably set respondents apart. Supporting it comparatively the most were the oldest cohort (62%), persons with an elementary education (60%), those running farms or retired (respectively 75% and 62%), those describing themselves as believing and practicing (64%), and those politically closer to PiS and PSL (69% and 61%). Relatively the least supportive of this criterion were the youngest (46%), persons with secondary (54%) or tertiary education (46%), the self-employed or businessowners (44% and 43%), those describing themselves as believing, but not practicing as well as the nonbelievers (45% and 15%), and representatives of the electorate of PO, SLD, and *Razem* (48%, 45%, and 24% respectively).

Of all the listed criteria for Polishness, the one chosen the least was that related to earning a place in the Polish nation through service on behalf of Poland. That criterion was picked only by 42% of the respondents with only 16% considering it very important. As might be recalled, we dealt with this as a sign of a traditional, patriotic national ethos – an ethos associated with Polishness treasured as a noble value whose very survival demands special effort and sacrifice. This criterion, too, was clearly divided along sociodemographic and political lines. It was indicated the most by the oldest (43%), those with an elementary education (45%), the believing and practicing (48%), and those closer politically to PiS (44%); it was rather less popular among the youngest respondents (36%), persons with a higher education (35%), the nonpracticing believers as well as the nonbelievers (36% and 30%), and the electorate of *Razem* (35%).

Summarizing the above, the top three most accepted criteria – identified as rather important or very important measures of Polishness – were knowledge of the Polish language, a self-identification, and Polish citizenship. All of these were picked out of the list quite universally, irrespective of sociodemographic traits. However, the cultural criteria (i.e., knowledge of the history and culture of Poland, observance of Polish customs) were more frequently selected by persons with an elementary education, those believing and practicing Roman Catholicism, and followers of rightwing parties. Similar was the case with the criteria of having a parent of Polish nationality, being born in Poland, and residing in Poland. In turn, the criterion of profession of the Roman Catholic faith was more frequently chosen by the oldest cohort (over 65); special service on behalf of Poland was selected more by believing and practicing Catholics.

Noteworthy is the influence political opinions have among the Poles who participated in the survey. Supporters of various political parties pointed to different national criteria to different degrees. The electorate of PiS – the rightwing party in power since 2015 – endowed most of the criteria with a higher magnitude; this was especially evident regarding cultural criteria (including observance of Catholicism and Polish customs), but also the genealogical origin. Things were quite the opposite among supporters of SLD, *Razem* and *Nowoczesna* – all parties on the left side of the spectrum. Voters for PO (center-left) tended to be situated along the midpoint of these choices.

Closing this part of the discussion, we also want to look at the 2018 data from a comparative perspective, taking advantage of the results of an international survey on the subject of criteria for national identity; in spring of 2016 the Pew Research Center (USA) conducted such a survey in 14 countries across the world (Stokes

2017).[16] This particular questionnaire asked about the meaning of four criteria of national identity: speaking in the native tongue of the given country, sharing customs and traditions in common, being born in the given country, and being a Christian. The question posed was worded as follows: "Some argue that the following conditions are important in order for someone to be considered truly a member of [nationality inserted here]. Others say they are not important. How important is each of the following conditions for you?" Participants in the research had to choose from among four possible responses: very important, rather important, rather unimportant, and completely unimportant.

Among the listed criteria, competency in speaking the national language was considered the most important condition for national identity. Furthermore, support for this was highest in all ten of the European countries. However, inasmuch as 67% of the Poles pointed to this as very important, among those living in the Netherlands, Great Britain, Hungary, and Germany the percentage oscillated between 84% to 79%. This criterion for national belonging was relatively the least favored by those surveyed in Canada and Italy (59% in each). It was generally more often indicated by older (over 50 years of age) respondents, as well as sympathizers of rightwing political groups (Stokes 2017, 9, 11, 26).

Yet the criterion related to customs and traditions (e.g., national holidays, ways of dressing, cuisine, etc.) was accepted to a more varied degree. It was very important for 56% of the surveyed Poles with higher values noted in Hungary and Greece (68% and 66%). Comparatively, it was selected the least by those from Sweden (26%), Germany (29%), and the Netherlands (37%). Observance of this condition for national identity was affected by respondent age and level

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[16] This research was done in April of 2016 with a sample including 14,514 respondents in 14 different countries. Ten of the countries were European (France, Greece, Spain, Holland, Germany, Poland, Sweden, Hungary, Italy, and the UK); the remaining countries were Australia, Japan, Canada, and the USA.

of education. Those over 50 were more likely to highlight this criterion than those between 18 and 34 years of age; those completing elementary or secondary education were more likely to highlight it than those with a higher education (Stokes 2017, 13, 15-16).

However, being born in a given country was not considered a very important criterion as the previous ones in order to call someone a "real" member of the national community. In Poland's case, 42% opted for this condition with higher values again reached in Hungary (52%) and Greece (50%), and lowest ones found in Sweden (8%) and Germany (13%). In other countries, recognition of this criterion varied: 50% in Japan, 13% in Australia, 21% in Canada, and 32% in the USA. Overall, however, it was more often seen as important by the lesser educated and those with more rightwing views (Stokes 2017, 3, 19).

The question on the survey also asked (with the exception of Japan) about religion – in the form of "Christianity," or, in Poland, Italy, and Spain, "Catholicism" – as something very important to national identity. Only in Greece did over half (54%) agree that this is a key component, whereas in Sweden a mere 7% of the respondents saw it as very important. Poland fell close to the median: this condition was considered critical among 34% of the respondents. Religion was especially important for the over-50 cohort as well as among sympathizers of the political right (Stokes 2017, 23-24).

Prevailing in the Pew Research Center results were elements analogous to those surveyed as part of our project. Dominant among respondents was an accent on conventional-cultural criteria such as native language fluency or traditions, culture, and customs. In contrast, neither the confession of Christianity (Roman Catholicism), nor the country of birth played a leading role. We can state, therefore, that the image emerging from the criteria for Polishness which our respondents chose corresponds with the broader, European social order drawing the boundaries between national communities, national belongings.

2.3. Evolution of the criteria for Polishness in 1988, 1998, and 2018

A logical next step is to compare our latest findings with those from previous editions (in 1988 and 1998) of this longitudinal research project. Taken into account for this evaluation were only the positive opinions (from very to rather important), in the order of importance in 1988. The findings are presented in the table below.

Table 2.2 Social criteria of Polishness in 1988, 1998, and 2018 (%)

"If we were to recognize someone as a Pole, then, in your opinion, what is important and what is less important?"	1988	1998	2018
A sense of being a Pole	95	95	92
Polish language fluency	91	94	93
Polish citizenship	82	84	92
At least one parent of Polish nationality	81	79	81
Knowledge of Polish history and culture	79	86	88
Observance of Polish customs	78	82	85
Permanent residence in Poland	66	70	80
Being born in Poland	63	63	71
Special service on behalf of Poland	51	53	42
Roman Catholicism	45	45	53

Source: Nowicka (ed.) 1990, 64; OBOP 2008, 4-5, 7; Nowicka, Łodziński 2018.

As is evident from the above, it was a psychological criterion for Polishness which was ranked highest after the first course of surveys in 1988: the feeling that one is Polish, a sense of Polishness was most important, followed by language fluency and official citizenship. Comparatively speaking, the least important seem to be service on

behalf of the country and profession of Catholicism. Moderately sup-ported by the respondents were conditions associated with Polish origin, familiarity with the history, culture, and customs, as well as being born here and living permanently on Polish territory.

In the second edition in 1998 significant differences were not manifest. The weighting of nearly all the criteria remained basically at the same level. Worth noting, however, is that the importance of a familiarity with Polish history and culture along with observance of Polish customs did increase (by 7% and 4% respectively). A dec-ade later, additional research done by OBOP in 2008 (not presented in Table 2.2 above) also reflected a similar image with only a de-crease in the strength of the criterion of being born in Poland (5%) and service for the country of Poland (8%).

The stability of outcomes was somewhat surprising to us since that two decade period was one of fundamental, systemic, geopolit-ical transformations in Poland. As OBOP wrote in the report of its survey, "the stability of the social criteria of Polishness over the longer 1988-2008 term is even more astonishing than in the shorter period between 1988-1998" (OBOP 2008, 7). This research illus-trated how deeply rooted in Polish consciousness the above-listed criteria and their social hierarchy are for a sense of Polishness.

That said, a comparison of the results up to 2008 with those we gained in 2018 bring interesting shifts to the light of day – although, despite everything, also demonstrating a permanence in the polarities on the scale of criteria. On the one hand, continuously at the top are the criteria of self-identification, Polish language fluency, and Polish citizenship; constantly at the bottom with the lowest rate of endorse-ment are the Catholic faith and service on behalf of the country.

On the other hand, we are dealing with meaningful shifts in the middle of the hierarchy. These especially pertain to the criterion of holding Polish citizenship: even if it was always high on the social hierarchy of Polishness, in 2018 indications of its importance in-

creased by 10% in comparison to 1998, moving it up to the 90th percentile. Also rising was the meaning of the cultural indicators, such as knowing Polish history and culture (up by 9% relative to 1998), following Polish customs (up by 7%), and the Catholic faith (up by 8%). Another criterion which rose clearly and similarly in 2018 was permanent residence in Poland (by a substantial 14%) and Poland as the country of birth (by 8%). Nonetheless, hovering at nearly an identical level (81%) is the genealogical aspect (at least one parent of Polish nationality), whereas significance of service for the country fell by 9%.

The decisive prevalence of such criteria as knowledge of the language, feeling that one is a Pole, and the holding of Polish citizenship vis-à-vis the lower popularity of such criteria as Catholicism and admirably serving the country can be testimony to the shaping of a model for a concept of the national community of Poles. With regards to service for the country and Polishness, a weakening of this criterion is visible. This is connected with changes in the traditional patriotic ethos and the aftermath of contemporary changes in civilization as well as Poland's opening up to the world. In the words of one scholar specializing in Polish national identity, "the past half century has been a period of peace for Poland which has, contributed to a diminution in the meaning of notions of independence in the structure of the national identity of Poles" (Błuszkowski 2005, 129). Perhaps the surveyed citizens feel that there is no need for dramatic sacrifice in service of the country when living permanently in Poland and participating in its development become steadily more meaningful. Indeed, this was already signaled in the first edition of our study (Nowicka 1990, 67).

The hierarchy of these social criteria over the course of thirty years (1988-2018) is characterized, on the one hand, by a fundamental stability. Again, unchangingly self-identification with Polishness, speaking Polish, and holding a Polish passport persist at the top of the list, while Catholic religiosity and serving one's country persist towards

the bottom. On the other hand, during this period, crucial changes have occurred within that hierarchy. Among other things, in 2018, nearly all the criteria (excepting service for the country) achieved higher support relative to 1998. Those criteria whose popularity increased the most were precisely those which had been in the middle on the scale – i.e., the cultural criteria (knowledge of the history and culture along with observance of customs), and territorial criteria (being born and residing permanently in the country) (cf. Wysocki 2020, 203). This observation becomes even more interesting when we acknowledge only the categorically positive – meaning only choices of "very important" as a response – as seen in Table 2.3.[17]

Table 2.3 Social criteria of Polishness in 1988, 1998, and 2018 (% of "very important" responses)

„If we were to recognize someone as a Pole, then, in your opinion, what is important and what is less important?"	1988	1998	2018
A sense of being a Pole	67	65	51
Polish language fluency	60	62	54
Polish citizenship	48	48	55
At least one parent of Polish nationality	37	36	42
Knowledge of Polish history and culture	34	42	38
Observance of Polish customs	29	32	37
Permanent residence in Poland	30	36	43
Being born in Poland	27	28	35
Special service on behalf of Poland	19	19	16
Roman Catholicism	19	20	22

Source: Nowicka (ed.) 1990, 64; Nowicka, Łodziński 2018.

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[17] Such a move was also made in the above-referenced OBOP research report (2008: 8-9).

Evident in Table 2.3 is, in first order, a relative decrease in the two dominant criteria – self-identification with Polishness and fluency in Polish. With regards to the former, between 1988 and 2018, the indicator fell a considerable 16%, but with regards to the latter the drop was much less – only 6%. The second item of interest is a 7% rise in the significance of Polish citizenship; other criteria also experienced an increase: at least one Polish parent (5%), familiarity with Polish history and culture (4%), adherence of Polish customs (8%), residing permanently in Poland (13%), being born in Poland (8%), and professing Roman Catholicism (3%). The third notable discernment is a slight fall noted in the criterion of service performed on behalf of Poland.

Some of these variations were already observable in the 2008 OBOP report with respect to the same question. From the viewpoint of a conclusive choice of "very important," this entailed a relative decrease in support for all the criteria. This especially pertained to language fluency (51%), Polish citizenship (34%), knowing the history and culture (31%), and living permanently in Poland (24%) (OBOP 2008, 8-9).

Our research in 2018 – even if it did not uncover radical transformations in the social hierarchy of criteria of Polishness – did point to great differences in categorical convictions in comparison with the previous editions of the same survey in 1988 and 1998. There was a significant rise in the percentages across all the criteria with the exception of the psychological and linguistic (which continue to rate high in the Polishness hierarchy) as well as the service to the country criterion (which remains low in the hierarchy). Gaining social recognition have been the cultural, genealogical-territorial, and the formal-legal criteria. It was in these categories that more responses of "very important" were noted; this suggests that the Poles participating in the survey have begun to ascribe greater importance to these aspects. Comparable is the situation with the criteria of fol-

lowing Polish customs which appeared to be decreasing in social significance like the cultural criterion of familiarity with Polish history and culture; here, too, the social meaning of these aspects of a national bond is on the rise.

A need to meet both these cultural measures (following customs and knowing history and culture) presumes not only an experiencing of one's national community as a real, political entity in the globalized world, but also of a struggle to preserve that nation's continuity. And this could be linked to the high position that the criterion regarding a Polish parent holds; this can be interpreted as a consciousness of the great emphasis placed on a transmission of nationality in the family. In fact, this would confirm earlier conclusions drawn from the first, 1988 edition of this research (Nowicka 1990, 92), as well as Tadeusz Łepkowski's emphasis on the meaning of ancestral descent – the community of blood relations – as an element which is still seen as crucial for maintenance of Polishness (Łepkowski 1989, 18-21).

Nonetheless, the significance of the criterion involving service and sacrifice for Poland (associated with a patriotic, battling ethos) has fallen. In contrast, our previous expectations that the territorial (birth and residence) criteria would weaken (Nowicka 1990, 102) were refuted by gains in social meaning. This might testify to a clear and strong need to credibly experience one's national identity within the boundaries of home, at home.

As for the religious (Roman Catholicism) criterion, absolutely the least weight has been placed upon it, despite the fact that in 2018 it was supported by more respondents in comparison with previous editions of the project. This also contradicts an opinion which foresaw a sustained slow decline in the meaning of precisely Roman Catholicism in the upholding of the Polish national community (cf. Karkowska 2019, 3-4).

In discussions of the 2008 research findings, OBOP underscored that "the social criteria of national belonging are shaped by long-term

historical processes. Moreover, these criteria are also one of the central elements of social identity in Poland – and hence their durability. The weakening strength of beliefs related to the criteria of belonging to the Polish nation (observed in the last decade) may constitute the first phase in a process of change in the pervasiveness of these beliefs" (OBOP 2008, 10). An analysis of the data gathered ten years later indicate not only a different direction, but also a concretization of the changes.

Nevertheless, regarding the criteria of Polishness which are of a more essentialist and crystallized nature, the data we have gathered illustrates that the percentage of persons for whom these hold a special place has risen. Such people concentrate on criteria whose social verification is visible – either in the form of holding a Polish passport, an appropriate familial genealogy, or cultural-territorial indicators of belonging to the Polish national community (cf. Karkowska 2019, 3). These kinds of criteria more strongly demarcate the boundaries of the Polish national community facing an open, fluid, and uniformizing global society. On the one hand, the globalization trend is characterized by freedom of mobility with its abundance of tourism, and, indeed, nearly every fourth, adult Pole (24%) took advantage of a trip abroad for leisure in 2018 (CBOS 2019, 9-11). It also affords the population chances for the experience of labor migration; one fifth (20%) of the survey respondents had worked abroad – a percentage identically confirmed by CBOS in 2018 (CBOS 2018, 1-2). Globalization also provides ever more personal knowledge about the world surrounding Poland.

On the other hand, travel outside the country has also led to contacts and meetings with representatives of other nations, cultures, religions, and races; not rarely, this forces a person to self-define him or herself in national categories as well as to reassess and reflect upon the national group with which one identifies (Wysocki 2019, 142). As Anna Gawlewicz (2015, 207) writes about the experiences of Polish migrants in Great Britain, "migration and encounters migrants have with a diverse society lead to negotiations of the 'national' and 'foreign,' and provide an opportunity to redefine the former."

Taking the above under consideration, the higher values for the criteria of Polishness noted in 2018 might mean that Polishness comprehended as a sense of one's national belonging has become a socially unequivocal and resounding aspect of Polish identity for the whole of society. This is not limited to Poland (Fukuyama 2019; Bonikowski, DiMaggio 2016, 952-953). This is a consequence of not only global social processes noted at the beginning of this volume. It appears that the migration crisis experiences of 2015-2016, associated with a contrived responsiveness to a threat by Others, could have also influenced the data we received from the 2018 survey (cf. Pasamonik and Markowska-Manista eds. 2017; Jaskułowski 2019). Something else that could have played a certain role is the currently (since 2015) governing party which has channeled its resources to rebuild and fortify the Polish national identity; the ongoing political debates have presented a chance to publicly discuss the shape and nature of that identity (Wysocki 2019, 135-137).

We are not certain if the model for national belonging postulated in the minds of Poles today is more of an ethnonational nature than a political-civic one (Wysocki 2019, 205). More likely we are dealing here with an awareness and pulling oneself together as a national community – a community of Poles in an open, constantly moving world characterized by (as contemporary Polish literature illustrates) a variety of influences and interdependencies (Czapliński 2016, 399-409). From such a perspective, Polishness remains a relatively fixed vanishing point. It is a cultural reference point as well as an identity criteria system which can deliver a feeling of stability. In specific social situations, its accents can shift, adapting to broader social, cultural, and geopolitical changes. For some of our respondents, a more emphatic underscoring of these criteria (particularly the cultural and genealogical) can even be a kind of cultural counter-reaction to the global cultural changes (Marody 2019, 172-183).

Overall, the Polish national belonging is characterized by stability with foundational criteria which remain intact to a great extent. Staying

in place at the top of the hierarchy – nearly unchanged since the beginnings of this longitudinal research project – are two categories: a sense that one simply is a Pole and a fluency in the Polish language. With respect to these criteria, over 90% of our survey respondents regularly emphasized these two. Prevailing in Polish society are criteria centered on individual will and self-affirmation as well as cultural elements (always in this order). Great emphasis is also placed on biological criteria of lineage expressed in a sense that this is a community of origin; the territorial and civic criteria are meaningful here, too. We will return to this issue at the end of this chapter.

We return once more to the evolution of the sociodemographic impact on the criteria of Polishness over the decades between 1988 and 2018.[18] In the 1988 findings, key criteria which distinguished respondents was education: the higher their education, the more rarely did they choose substantial (e.g., biological descent) criteria, and the more frequently did they choose conventional (e.g., cultural) criteria. Place of residence similarly influenced results: respondents living in densely populated, highly urbanized cities were less likely to choose substantial criteria. Meaningful in the analysis was also age: those over 60 years old more often than other age cohorts accented cultural criteria and living in Poland (Nowicka 1990, 64-102).

Comparable was the affect of these variables in 1998. An accent on the substantial and territorial criteria of Polishness decreased with an increase in education. In results from that second edition a slight correlation with political views was registered, but the specific political party affiliations declared by respondents served poorly and ambiguously in

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[18] A significant problem when comparing sociodemographic, religiosity, and political variables – especially in Poland over the course of politically and socially turbulent decades – is the vicissitude of these categories, the scales applied, and the emergence of new questions. The problems particularly affect social-professional status, political affiliations, the range of religiosity, and levels of education. A tracing of the respondents' personal data from the three editions of our research project would provide interesting insight not only into the changes in methodology, but also in the entire Polish society.

distinguishing their "views on the importance of individual components of the concept of Polishness" (Nowicka and Łodziński 2001, 68).

In like manner, this tendency was maintained in the latest, 2018 results. Again, playing the most important was the level of education of our respondents; as before, the higher the education, the lower the percentage of those choosing substantial criteria and the higher of those choosing the conventional-cultural and institutional.

However, something new that did surface was a strong influence of religiosity and political views on visions of Polishness. Those persons who declared themselves to be believing and systematically practicing and to be supporters of rightwing or center-right parties (PiS and PSL) relatively more often than others placed a stronger emphasis on all of the criteria of Polishness. Furthermore, they expressed to a greater degree support for the criterion of biological descent, observing Polish customs, and being Roman Catholic than the nonbelievers and supporters of leftwing and center-left parties. Those more leftwing in their political attitudes rated all the listed criteria for recognizing someone as a Pole comparatively less, but more frequently pointed to national citizenship and self-identification (cf. *Społeczne kryteria polskości* 2018, 8-10).

Similar correlations were also noticed in the previously cited survey by CBOS in 2015. Analysis of sociodemographic differences shows that, as usual, the more a respondent was educated the greater a highlighting of self-identification as a criterion. In turn, those persons more engaged in religious practices were also more likely to point to a connection between Polishness and Catholicism. Roman Catholicism as a fundamental criterion for being recognized as Polish was more frequently mentioned by respondents of rightwing political views and lesser educated (CBOS 2015, 7).

In our opinion, a respondent's declared affiliation on the map of religiosity and politics led to clearly delineated choices of a worldview – which consequently influenced his or her vision of the Polish national community. Yet, in the case of declared religiosity, we are dealing with social changes in the form of a greater selectivity and individualization

of faith and religious practice. Also taking place is an ideologization of religious attitudes which can also impact views with respect to the criteria for Polishness – particularly the etched in stone dyad of "Pole-Catholic" (Pawłowska 2015, 85-89).

The intense buildup of political disputes in Poland as of 2015 has led to a higher interest in politics itself, but also to its greater polarization. As CBOS has noted, the percentage of Poles who associate themselves with the right has reached its highest level in history, but, concurrently, there has been a rise in declarations of views on the left, especially among the youngest of those surveyed (CBOS 2021a, 9). That said, despite the perceptibility of these divides, they are not of a fundamental nature; their effect is more gradated, influencing the language in which the social reality is described (cf. Cześnik, Grabowska 2017, 36-37).

2.4. The foreigner as a Pole: The evolution of criteria for incorporation into Polishness (1988, 1998, and 2018)

An important factor in the process of integrating non-Poles is the attitude of Polish society to the presence of foreigners in its midst. Yet incorporation of individuals or groups from other countries into the national community depends on the openness (inclusivity) or closedness (exclusivity) of Polish society – which is also a critical dimension of national identity.

Reflections on this subject are no longer purely hypothetical (as they were under the limitations of the Soviet Bloc). Whereas interactions with Others were still more a theoretical issue while we were conducting our surveys in 1988 and 1998, today – with an influx of over two million foreigners to Poland (GUS 2020) – deliberations about the essence of Polishness have become crucial and take on a social thickness.

This meaningful change connected with immigration processes to Poland has taken place over the past 7-8 years (Górny, Kindler 2018).[19]

The gist of this problem makes itself known in discussions about the consequences of demographic changes in Poland. Among these is a continuous process, an aging society due to longer life expectancy and the emigration of the younger generation. That situation encourages and will continue to encourage a demand for immigrant labor, shifting Poland from a typical emigration society to an emigration-immigration one (Organiściak-Krzykowska 2018, 138–143). Testifying to this is that nearly half of our respondents (47%) declared personal acquaintance with at least one foreigner living in Poland; 51% replied that they do not know any such person while only 3% answered that it was hard to say.[20] This data confirms that immigrants in Poland are no longer a peripheral phenomenon; nearly every Pole today has met or will soon meet a non-Pole who is not a tourist, but has come to Poland for work or study.

The growing influx of immigrants and their settlement in a given country affects the sense of national identity which thus evolves, forcing further self-reflection. As the literature on this topic confirms, the concepts of national identity prevailing in a given country at a given time often turn out to be determinants of citizens' attitudes towards others; those concepts offer pointers on how to resolve dilemmas and how to shape attitudes towards immigration and immigrants themselves (Bonikowski, DiMaggio 2016; Lindstam, Mader, Schoen 2021). It is in facing the phenomenon of immigration into our society that we are forced to

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[19] The number of all non-Poles living in Poland in 2020 was 2,106,101 persons. The majority comprises 1,351,418 citizens of Ukraine (64.2%); the rest are citizens of Belarus (105,404); Germany (77,073); Moldavia (37,338); the Russian Federation (37,030); India (33,107); Georgia (27,917); Vietnam (27,386); Turkey (25,049); China (23,838); and other countries (360,541) (GUS 2020: 1).

[20] A CBOS survey from November 2019 revealed that 40% of the respondents confirmed knowing a foreigner in Poland. This represented a significant increase over 2016 when a survey showed that every third respondent knew such a person, or 1999 when every fourth respondent noted such an acquaintance (25%). Significantly rising, too, has been the percentage of respondents who boast friendship with a citizen of another country living permanently in Poland; such relationships are typical of city dwellers from large urban agglomerations, upper management professionals, or specialists with a university education (CBOS 2020a: 1-4).

make decisions about foreigners; it is at this point that we reflect upon who and under what conditions we can consider someone a member of our nation – including who should be allowed to settle permanently in our country and upon whom the status of a Polish citizen can be conferred (Pierzchała 2011).

2.4.1. Criteria for recognizing a foreigner as a Pole (1988, 1998, and 2018)

The analyses presented thus far have traced the evolution of emphases on different criteria of Polishness – that is, settling what criterion to what degree is decisive (in the opinion of our respondents) in stating that a Pole is a Pole. Acting as a control function with respect to the questions directly addressing our core topic were other parts of our questionnaire; one part aimed at determining the chances and principles for integrating a non-Pole (i.e., a foreigner, an Other) into the Polish community (Nowicka 1990, 57-58). The question was: "In your opinion, what conditions, would a foreigner need to meet in order to consider him or her as a Pole?" The intention here was to gauge the degree and nature of exclusivity in the national community.

Appearing here is a slightly different aspect of the national belonging we are analyzing. Respondents could express consent to incorporation of a person into the nation, but in their decisions differences could surface which would evidence key criteria of Polishness applying to Poles themselves and/or foreigners themselves. Simple discernment of variations could bring to light interesting changes in the thinking of our respondents about their own national identity.

In 2018, the most important criteria for recognizing a foreigner as a Pole were the assignment of Polish citizenship (pointed out by over two thirds of those surveyed), followed by permanent residence in Poland, a sense of Polishness, and language fluency (selected by over half those surveyed). Therefore, the most meaningful remains a political-institutional

condition. This expresses a societal belief that, if an individual has gained Polish citizenship, then he or she must have first met other key conditions: permanent residency (indirectly meaning a permanent bond with the Polish national community), feel a psychological unity with Poles, and fluently communicate with Poles in their national language.

A review of the results from all three editions – taking into account only positive evaluations – is shown in Table 2.4 below. In the hierarchy of conditions to be met were conventional cultural criteria such as knowledge of Polish history and culture as well as observance of Polish customs; over 40% of the respondents pointed to these two (47% and 44% respectively).

Table 2.4 Criteria for recognizing a foreigner as a Pole in 1988, 1998, and 2018 (%)

"In your opinion, what conditions, would a foreigner need to meet in order to consider him or her as a Pole?" "If we were to recognize someone as a Pole, then, in your opinion, what is important and what is less important?"	1988	1998	2018
Gain Polish citizenship	71	68	67
Feel Polish	67	64.5	53
Speak Polish well	54	50.4	51
Know Polish history and culture	49	47	47
Observe Polish customs	47	40.4	44
Reside permanently in Poland	41	44.7	53
Be a member of a Polish family	34	29.6	29
Be born in Poland	18	20.9	20
Perform special service on behalf of Poland	24	16.4	9
Accept Roman Catholicism	16	16.4	16
A foreigner can never be considered a Pole	11	5.6	11
Other	2	1.5	1

Source: Nowicka (ed.) 1990, 64; Nowicka, Łodziński 2001, 69; Nowicka, Łodziński 2018.

In 2018, the criterion of entering into a Polish family (signifying marriage and children with a Polish citizen) was chosen by nearly 30% of the respondents (29%), whereas being born in the country itself was chosen by only every fifth respondent (20%). Again, the latter is associated with *ius soli* while Polish citizenship is legally grounded in *ius sanguinis*. Roman Catholicism was even less popular (although fairly constant through all three editions), selected by only every sixth participant in the survey (16%). Worth noting is that meriting citizenship by special services on behalf of Poland fell to last place, chosen by only 9% (compared to 24% in 1988). Roughly one out of ten respondents (11%), however, felt that someone who is not Polish cannot ever become Polish.

Among the answers in the category of miscellaneous "Other" possibilities (1%), some specific conditions were proposed. These included "live in Poland for ten years," "if a person settles for a few, for a dozen or so years," "knows the Polish national anthem," "honest and unthreatening," or "if a person is not sly and malicious, does not bother anyone, and wants to live honestly – then let him live." All of these examples express a strong tie with Poland, observance of Polish society's cultural tenets, and compliance with the general rules for social coexistence. Overall, this set of criteria is nearly identical to the general recommendations for recognizing an individual as a Pole – with the exception of the high placement of permanent residence in Poland. However, although that is a territorial criterion, it does imply an enduring bond with Poland and Polishness.

One can look at the hierarchy of criteria from the perspective of a specific situation of recognizing a foreigner as a member of the Polish national community. The potential candidate faces rather high demands since he or she must gain citizenship, speak the language, live permanently in Poland, and identify with Polishness. In the majority, those surveyed spoke out for just such a vision of the transformation of a foreigner into a Pole – a transformation connected primarily with active participation on various levels of life in the national community.

From the perspective of three decades, the period between 1988 and 2018 shoes, on the one hand, a rather surprising stability in the hierarchy of the most to the least important conditions for permitting a foreigner entrance into the Polish community. On the other hand, however, light is shed on a few characteristic shifts already known to us from the earlier descriptions of criteria of Polishness. The most important element remains obtaining Polish citizenship which was repeatedly emphasized by over two thirds of the respondents. In contrast, there is a clear fall in the meaning of the psychological criterion from 67% in 1988 to 53% (a difference of 14%) thirty years later.

This can be proof of an impact shaped by ever greater experiences of immigration to Poland and a need to introduce more demanding, institutional, and verifiable evidence for affiliation with Poland. This also points to a overriding conviction that there is acceptance of foreigners who do not plan on changing their (ethno)national identity. As persons who are closely sharing their lives with the whole of Polish society, they are considered as neighbors, coworkers, or members of the family. Testifying to such a line of thinking is, above all, the large increase (12%) of support for the criterion of residing permanently in Poland.

Throughout the period under analysis, cultural criteria (Polish language fluency, history and culture familiarity, observation of customs, and Roman Catholicism) remained at nearly the same level. In turn, the significance of service on behalf of Poland fell by 15%, while entering into a Polish family fell slightly by 5%. It should be noted that, in the case of a foreigner, society assesses differently the ways in which someone serves the country precisely because it can mean citizenship. In 2018, as in 1988, an identical percentage of respondents (11%) rejected the possibility of any foreigner being recognized as a Pole, though in 1998 that percentage was merely 5.6%.

Turning our attention to the conditions for allowing a non-Pole into the Polish national community over the course of three decades is interesting. It shows that Polish attitudes towards these criteria have gone fundamentally unchanged over this longer term – even if a few criteria

lost and others gained recognition. The outcome of our research also confirm that the dominant factors, decisive in the form of belonging to the Polish national community remain those which are the most rooted in the institutional and cultural (i.e., conventional) conditions. The accent continues to be on life in Poland.

Looking once more at the sociodemographic variations pertaining to recognition of some foreigner as a Pole in 2018, we see that they are very similar to the sociodemographic variables which influenced the general criteria for Polishness. The youngest respondents relatively more frequently than other criteria chose the condition of gaining Polish citizenship (71%) and being born on Polish territory; the oldest respondents emphasized becoming a member of a Polish family (29%) and professing the Catholic faith (23%).

People with a higher education more frequently than those at other education levels decided on citizenship (72%), living permanently in Poland (55%), connecting psychologically with Polishness (55%), speaking Polish (56%), and familiarity with Polish history and culture (53%); they were also the cohort that was the least likely to deny a foreigner the chance to be recognized as a Pole (4%).

Respondents with only an elementary education called attention to the greatest degree to the condition of accepting Catholicism (18%), like those declaring a secondary school education. Those with a primary school education more rarely focused on such criteria as Polish citizenship (63%) and living permanently in Poland (48%). They also supported the most the notion that a non-Pole cannot become a Pole (16%). Of some significance in the data was also the factor of religious faith and practice. Unsurprisingly, it affected the criterion of Roman Catholicism the most: nonbelievers supported this the least (8%), in contrast with those believing and practicing who supported it more strongly (23%).

The declared political attitudes of the respondents also impacted the criteria of Polishness which they chose. The PiS electorate more strongly supported, among others, the criterion related to Polish history and culture (55%), but similar to the electorates of *Kukiz'15* (57%) and PSL

(56%). PiS supporters also emphasized being born in Poland (27%) and the Catholic faith (23%) – and were most likely to reject the notion of a foreigner becoming a Pole (15%). Representatives of the leftwing *Nowoczesna* and *Razem* electorates most frequently opted for the criterion of citizenship (76% and 71%), which was chosen the least by sympathizers of SLD, associated with the former communist party (48%). Living permanently in Poland was chosen the most by *Nowoczesna* and PSL voters (68% and 67%), and the least by *Razem* (47%). The psychological bond with Polishness was rather more often selected by representatives of *Razem* (76%) and PSL (61%), and selected the least by supporters of PO (46%) and PiS (51%).

The criterion of following Polish customs was the one which most clearly unveiled differences between the electorates of the different political parties. Most strongly emphasizing this condition for Polishness were those opting for *Kukiz'15* (51%) and PiS (49%), and least strongly selecting this on the list were the electorates of *Razem* (29%) and SLD (38%). Not one of the respondents who supported *Razem* pointed to the criterion of faith, and earning Polishness through serving the country were supported the most by representatives of the leftwing parties, SLD (17%) and *Razem* (18%).

By way of delving deeper into the possibilities for a non-Pole to be recognized as a member of the Polish nation, we also looked into a biological difference – that is, foreigners who were also Persons of Color. To test this, we asked the question, "And if this pertained to a foreigner of a different skin color, would you recognize him or her as a Pole if all the other conditions you have selected were met?" Responses to this question in the three editions of the survey are presented in Table 2.5 below.

In 2018, just over two thirds of the respondents (68%) opted for recognizing a PoC foreigner as a Pole; the percentage was almost identical three decades earlier in 1988 (70%). The highest level of acceptance, however, was in 1998 when as much as 80% of those surveyed said yes. Similar was the case with negations. In 1988 and 2018, one fifth of the respondents were against inclusion of such an individual (even reaching

23% in 2018), while only every seventh respondent was against this in 1998 (13.6%). Answering this question did evoke some difficulties as manifested by the fact that one in ten chose "difficult to say" in 1988 and 2018; in 1998, however, it was practically one in twenty.

Table 2.5 Recognition of a foreigner of different skin color as a Pole in 1988, 1998, and 2018 (%)

"And if this pertained to a foreigner of a different skin color, would you recognize him or her as a Pole if all the other conditions you have selected were met?"	1988	1998	2018
Yes	70	80.6	68
No	18	13.6	23
Difficult to say	12	5.8	10

Source: Nowicka, Łodziński 2001, 99; Nowicka, Łodziński 2018.

In the 2018 third edition of the survey, those who supported inclusion of a PoC foreigner more were those with higher education (78%), declaring themselves nonbelievers (88%), and supporting PO and *Razem* (78% and 82%). Relatively less support was expressed by men (63%), the oldest cohort (58%), those with an elementary education (48%), and PiS voters (58%).

In Polish society there is a fixed category of people for whom racial differences (referenced in the survey by "foreigner of a different skin color") constitute a serious challenge. Despite an individual's meeting all the criteria perceived as crucial by these respondents, they will not accept this person as a Pole. Moreover, this level of rejection increased in 2018 when very nearly a quarter of those completing the survey disallowed a possibility of incorporation into the Polish national community. This might testify to a lack of openness in relation to more specific groups of foreigners despite an overwhelming overall tendency towards an openness, towards Others in Polish society (Grzymała-Kazłowska 2021, 249; Balogun 2020).

Yet we can look at the survey results from another perspective. Paradoxically, they could be expressing an opposite opinion – that is, a level of acceptance of life together in one country, in one society of people who look physically different from the majority. A tendency to divide immigrants according to physical features is confirmed by sociological research among the Arabian diaspora in Poland (Switat 2018). In addition, Krzysztof Jaskułowski (2020), among others, recently wrote about indicators of selective cultural racism present in Polish society, i.e., an emphasis on "white" skin when defining Polishness in selected social situations.

2.4.2. Criteria for recognizing a child of intermarriage as a Pole (1988, 1998, and 2018)

Yet another interesting aspect in analyses of the social conditions for Polishness from the perspective of ethno-racial difference is asking about the Polishness of mixed marriage offspring. Here we compare the outcome of the question "Can one recognize as a Pole a child raised here of a Polish mother with …?" The query closed each time with references to different races and nations. The list in the three editions did vary somewhat, but six groups were mentioned each time: an Arab, Englishman, Chinese, African, German, and Jew. Respondents chose from "rather yes," "rather no," and "difficult to say."[21] The percentages of "rather yes" responses is presented in Table 2.6.

In our analyses of the data, we treated a tendency to recognize as Polish the child of an ethnically and/or racially mixed relationship as an indicator of little to no social distance. It should also be kept in mind that looking at a child rather softens than hardens ethnic distance. Furthermore, the

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[21] Worth noting here is that in 1998 the survey question was missing the phrase "raised here." On the one hand, this testified to an oversight on our part, but, on the other hand, led to an unintended methodological experiment. For more on this, see Nowicka and Łodziński 2001: 107-109.

phrase "raised here" suggested that the child attends school in Poland, knows the language, and is socialized in Polish customs. This wording also bore a sense of familiarity and directness.

Table 2.6 Criteria for recognizing a child of intermarriage as a Pole in 1988, 1998, and 2018 (%)

"Can one recognize as a Pole a child raised here of a Polish mother with …?"	1988	1998	2018
Englishman	80	81	81
German	78	81	79
Jew	72	75	73
African	72	71	70
Chinese	72	72	70
Arab	73.5	75	66

Source: Nowicka, Łodziński 2001, 108; Nowicka, Łodziński 2018.

A look at Table 2.6 shows stable acceptance of such a child over the timespan of our research. At least two thirds of those surveyed would accept such a child – albeit tending to more strongly accept children of relations with representatives of European countries. A key, perceptible difference is the 2018 decrease in acceptance of a child of a relationship with an Arab: 66% versus 73.5% in 1988 and 75% in 1998. This is connected with a negative perception of representatives of Arabic nations stemming from the migration crisis and terrorist attacks. For comparison, in a recent edition of an annual CBOS survey, only 10% expressed sympathy towards persons of Arabic descent which antipathy was expressed by 62%, nearly two thirds (CBOS 2021b, 4-5).

Regarding the respondents in 2018, women rather more than men accepted the Polishness of a child from a mixed relationship, regardless of the nationality or race represented by the partner. For instance, in the case of an Arabian, the child would be recognized as a Pole by 70% of the women, but only 62% of the men surveyed. An attitude similar to

the women was expressed by persons with a tertiary education. Those more negative and rejecting such situations were the oldest participants in our study. Interestingly, the effects of religiosity and political sympathies (so key in analysis of other results) were varied and vague here.

2.5. Types of Polish national identity

Recalling from our analyses described earlier, the opening of our questionnaire asked respondents to mark ten different conditions which a given person should fulfill in order to be considered a Pole. At the same time, the third question asked for a marking of ten conditions which a foreigner would need to fulfill in order to incorporate him or her into the category of "Pole."

In both situations, we observed many correlations between specific criteria marked under these two questions. Hence we undertook to simplify the responses, narrowing them down to fewer abstract factors the content of which separated out respondent reactions. Applied thereto was factor analysis. It turned out that, in the case of the questions about the general criteria for Polishness, two distinct factors were crucial. The first will be labeled "connective" (cultural-institutional), while the second will be labeled "traditional" (ethnoreligious). Our findings are presented in Table 2.7 below.

The first analysis combined the following criteria: language fluency, a sense of being Polish, citizenship, knowledge of history and culture, and observance of Polish customs. The level of links between them was very high: the correlation coefficients range from 0.801 to 0.602. The second factor analysis combined the following: service on behalf of Poland, Roman Catholicism, and being born in Poland. Here, too, the correlation coefficients were likewise high, ranging from 0.807 to 0.682.

Table 2.7 Results of factor analysis of questions on the criteria of Polishness

Criteria of Polishness	Factor 1: Connective	Factor 2: Traditional
Polish language fluency	0.801	0.125
A sense of being a Pole	0.735	0.140
Polish citizenship	0.679	0. 140
Knowledge of Polish history and culture	0.658	0.277
Observance of Polish customs	0.602	0.352
At least one parent of Polish nationality	0.514	0.490
Permanent residence in Poland	0.423	0.470
Being born in Poland	0.389	0.682
Roman Catholicism	0.208	0.768
Special service on behalf of Poland	0.018	0.807

Source: Authors' own research and data analysis. Factors distinguished by principal component analysis. Factor rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. The percentage of variance explained after rotation by factor 1 is 30.76% and by factor 2 is 24.23%.

The criterion of having at least one parent of Polish nationality was present in both factors at almost the same level (0.514 by factor 1, 0.490 by factor 2). Similar was the case with living permanently in Poland (0.423 by factor 1, 0.470 by factor 2). The extracted factors, however, linked poorly with the fundamental sociodemographic variables: neither one correlated with gender and only slight was the link to age (only factor 2 yielded a correlation of 0.07 with a significance level of p=0.05). Furthermore, from the previously mentioned 2017 European Values Study section on the traits of a "real" Pole, factor analysis allowed us to again extract two types of identity. One was the ethnoreligious which accented being Catholic, born in Poland, and being of Polish origin; the second was cultural (the dominant tendency) which accented Polish language and culture with respect for the institutions and laws of the Polish state (Mandes 2019, 143).

It can be said that, by 2018, in comparison with the results from twenty years earlier, a palpable crystallization of social patterns of national identity had taken place. On the one hand, this concentrates on the institutional and cultural (conventional) criteria for belonging to the Polish nation. On the other hand, this centers on criteria of being born in Poland, traditionalism in the form of the Catholic faith, and sacrifice for the homeland. The Polish national identity in the 21st century (as noted before) has undergone deep social as well as individual reflection. Likely those reflections have led to more decisive choices and connections made among the criteria by our respondents.

A factor analysis regarding the conditions which a non-Pole must meet in order to be considered a Pole was performed on the basis of the data collected in 2018. It disclosed the existence of four key factors shown in Table 2.8.

The analysis confirmed the presence of four factors, four patterns of belonging to the Polish nation. The first, labeled the "cultural Pole," connects the criteria of observing Polish customs, familiarity with the history and culture, a feeling of being Polish, and speaking in the language. The factor loading in answers to these questions ranged from 0.698 to 0.559. The second – "integrative" – factor linked together the condition of living permanently in Poland, holding citizenship, and answers gathered from the "Other" category. The factor loading in the responses here ranged from 0.606 to 0.507. The third factor, labeled "loyal-traditionalism," grouped together Roman Catholicism and service on behalf of Poland. The factor loading in answers to these questions ranged from 0.739 to 0.681. Finally, the fourth, *ius soli* factor combined the criteria of being born in Poland with entering into a Polish family. The factor loading in this case ranged from 0.799 to 0.412.

Table 2.8 Results of factor analysis of questions on the criteria for recognizing a foreigner as a Pole in 2018

Criteria	Factor 1: The cultural Pole	Factor 2: Integrative	Factor 3: Loyal-traditionalism	Factor 4: *Ius soli*
Observe Polish customs	**0.698**	0.068	0.055	0.082
Know Polish history and culture	**0.695**	0.065	0.188	0.001
Feel Polish	**0.617**	0.238	0.027	-0.071
Speak Polish well	**0.559**	0. 302	0.021	0.053
Gain Polish citizenship	0.351	**0.597**	-0.023	0.118
Reside permanently in Poland	0.122	**0.606**	0.032	0.177
Accept Roman Catholicism	0.108	0.069	**0.739**	-0.204
Be a member of a Polish family	0.093	0.257	0.366	**0.413**
Perform special service on behalf of Poland	0.064	-0.063	**0.681**	0.258
Be born in Poland	-0.066	0.207	0.007	**0.799**
A foreigner can never be considered a Pole	- 0.401	-0.656	-0.053	-0.090
Other	-0.377	0.507	0.085	-0.450

Source: Authors' own research and data analysis. Factors distinguished by principal component analysis. Factor rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. The percentage of variance explained after rotation by factor 1 is 17.78%, factor 2 is 14.05%, factor 3 is 9.96%, and factor 4 is 9.89%.

A look at the factors hereby distinguished reveals, on the one hand, the significance of the social meaning of immigration to Poland and the challenges thus created – among them, by what ways Others are to be recognized as compatriots (Łodziński, Nowicka 2021). On the other hand, we also noticed a spectrum of varied reactions to the idea of accepting and including foreigners into Poland. This might suggest the occurrence of contradictory expectations regarding the integration of non-Poles. It might suggest, too, the existence of problems associated with a gradual withdrawal from a cultural conception of Polishness, moving towards a more pluralistic transmutation.

2.6. Summary

The national consciousness of Poles bears – rather unsurprisingly – a decisively Polonocentric nature. The results of our research demonstrate not only a relative stability in the hierarchy of selected criteria of Polishness, but – when compared to the results of surveys conducted in other European countries – point to the uniqueness of the Polish national identity.

A study conducted in 2016-2018 (dates close to our third edition) as part of the European Social Survey (ESS) revealed that Polish respondents were categorically more likely than Europeans in general to declare strong emotional bonds with their country. On a scale from 0 to 10 (i.e., from a complete lack to the strongest feelings of an emotional connection), the average intensity declared was 8.29 with a median of 9. Indeed, the highest value of 10 was chosen by 39.4% of the survey participants from Poland; 9 was chosen by 14.9% and 8 by 17.8%, whereas the lowest values of 0 and 1 were singled out by less than 1% (Andrejuk 2020, 58-59).

Additionally, this feeling was strongly related to a satisfaction with the economic situation in the country than with a positive evaluation of the functioning of democracy in Poland – similar to the cases of Czech Republic, Germany, Great Britain, Ireland, Norway, Slovenia, and Hungary (Andrejuk 2020, 64-65). Comparative ESS data from other countries indicates weaker emotional ties between the respondents and their home country. For instance, the highest rating of 10 was selected by 20.4% of the Fins, 26.9% of the French, and 19.7% of the Germans (Karkowska 2019, 3-4).

Yet the intense emotional bond Polish respondents felt with Poland did not undermine their feeling ever stronger ties to Europe as a whole. It also did not hamper their perceptions of themselves as sharing with other Europeans the same values assessed as positive (Jasińska-Kania and Marody 2002). On the basis of the ESS survey, we do see that, over time, the Polish respondents do not abandon the values they declare are

crucial for their national identity. But with increasing frequency they perceive themselves as bearers of beliefs and values analogous to those expressed by the inhabitants of Western Europe (Wysocki 2017; Konieczna-Sałamatin and Sawicka 2019, 163-164).

Worth adding here, too, is that the results we obtained corroborate a cautious readiness to accept foreigners as Poles. The dominant factors critical to belonging to the Polish national community remain, above all, the gaining of Polish citizenship, competence in speaking the Polish language, and living permanently in Poland. Such a qualified openness towards immigrants is confirmed, too, by the results of a diagnosis of migration conducted among the inhabitants of Warsaw (Dudkiewicz, Majewski eds. 2017) as well as research on the subject of multicultural coexistence (Górny, Toruńczyk-Ruiz, Winiarska eds. 2018).

By way of recapitulating the discussion thus far, we wish to emphasize that the survey research into national identity as part of the *Poles and Others* series afforded us a chance to ask Poles about notions they share in common. Specifically and most importantly here, we asked about the criteria which, in their opinion, shape a normative vision of Polish national belonging, or, more broadly, shape their national self-definition of Polish society today.

Realizing these research studies over the past three decades has made it possible to call attention to the social context of the longue durée and evolution of the conditions for Polishness. The data and analyses presented here illustrate that, inasmuch as the criteria of the national identity remain stable, over the longer perspective of time, their meaning and role in defining that identity can undergo changes. This likely stems from the broad, general global processes of civilization as well as from events taking place within the national community itself.

In light of all the editions of our research project, the Polish national affiliation is anchored in institutional-civic (citizenship) criteria as well as the conventional-cultural (the cultural community) criteria based on self-identification, language, history, culture, and customs. The two sets

of criteria create a whole; after all, the civic criterion is also of a conventional nature. The positioning of the above-mentioned conditions at the top of the list of indicators for Polishness is validated by the fact that Poles point them out as very important and by the sum total of positive responses.

At the same time, being a descendant of a Polish parent – an indicator of a substantiality in the national bond – is a factor also located high on the list of criteria. Its presence can be explained by the historical fate of the Polish nation: its defensive struggles for geographical territory, political sovereignty, and cultural survival as well as a national consciousness shaped by statelessness (Łepkowski 1989, 18-19; Nowicka 1990, 106-107). The exclusiveness in this substantiality is, nevertheless, offset by a rather high level of openness and readiness among Poles to accept foreigners into the national community.

The sense of Polishness maintained across thirty years can thus be described as a durability of its primary principles of belonging. One could even say (as Bourdieu might) that this feeling has, for a long time, comprised a kind of "national doxy." It is a collection of colloquially accepted, stable ways of thinking and appraising the nature of belonging to the Polish national community. That said, the past three decades have entailed a joggling of the map and the place of Poland in the world (Czapliński 2016) – the map upon which the respondents situated their national affiliation and its criteria. The vision of the national community which emerged from this part of our study is now something more than (to refer to Antonina Kłoskowska) a broad, complex community of symbolic communication; it now takes the shape of a unwavering universe of content and values tailored to a given nation (Szpociński 2011).[22] It is also a political state community, maintaining itself through

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[22] As Antonina Kłoskowska wrote (1996: 24), a nation (in contrast with a state) is "a social collective of a cultural community nature. Such a description can serve as its briefest, precursory definition."

citizenship as well as common ground on which both successes and defeats are experienced. Thus this is a vision more sociological and institutional, rather than simply cultural.

Here we will look from the perspective of an extended period of time, with reference to research done by Jerzy Szacki in the mid-1960s. On the basis of the data he collected, Szacki felt that there is a tendency towards "an image of the nation taking shape in the colloquial consciousness as a community of territory, language, state authority, historical events, and the national consciousness. Then again, the association of nation with race and religion is disappearing. It is also relatively rare that unanimity is ascribed to a nation" (Szacki 1969, 25). This scholar underlined, too, the role of education for Poles: the higher the level completed, the more the respondents perceived the nation as a community of historical experiences and national consciousness; the lower the level, the more it is perceived as a religious community (Szacki 1969, 27, 56).

Inasmuch as our research project basically confirms the direction of the changes, it is worth calling attention to the great meaning that the factor of biological continuity has (especially evocative in 1988 and 2018). Most of our respondents pointed to biological kinship (an awareness of biological ties) with the Polish nation as a key component of Polishness. From this perspective, national bonds would be constructed on substantive foundations. This could suggest such a vision of the Polish nation which perceives the collective as a type of contemporary "tribe" with one difference: it does not comprise an unbending barrier against considering a foreigner or the child of a interethnic relationship a Pole (Nowicka 1990, 96).

From a similar viewpoint we can compare the findings of our study to the assessments of Łepkowski who drew attention to the leading role that cultural-consciousness and territorial factors play, surpassing the political-institutional criteria (Łepkowski 1989, 18-21; 60-62). Our findings (especially the latest) show that both the political contents of the national identity and the remaining cultural elements in Polish society place very high.

Closing this part of our treatise, we recall and affirm a forecast in the review of our first edition in this series: the evolution of Polish national bonds will move toward "a conventional model, turning the Polish nation into more of a community that is 'among others'" (Nowicka 1990, 107). That model of being "among other nations" today entails something else. This is no longer much of an effort to take off, gain full independence, and emphasize a patriotic ethos of sacrifice and devotion. Instead this entails acting in such a way as to find oneself in a world of nation sates that are equal peers, living one's national identity in the global world is something quite natural and ordinary. This should be a cherished state achieved in life that is associated with everyday life, with an accent on life here and now, and with an upholding of one's individuality and national identity.

The feeling of Polishness itself and the system of its criteria continue to be a multidimensional puzzle; taken altogether, they can decide about the "to be or not to be" of an identity in the eyes of Polish society. We can firmly attest to the fact that the Poles we surveyed were aware of the boundaries and the principles which determine (a feeling of) Polishness.

At this point it also appears (and will become clearer in subsequent sections of this volume) that often the same elements comprising national identity are understood in different and sometimes even contradictory ways. This only confirms the variegation in the Polish national community and the conflicts within. Affecting the divides can be – aside from the typical sociodemographic factors (gender and gender roles, age and generational differences) – political views, attitudes towards religious faith, and, prominently, education levels. Further into the book at hand we will shed more light on this with the outcomes of our qualitative research conducted among persons with a tertiary education.

Chapter III

A Sense of Polishness as a Foundation for Polish National Identity: Qualitative Research Findings

3.1. Introductory remarks

As we have written earlier in this volume, by concurrently undertaking two methodologically different types of research, we were aware that the data stemming from the quantitative survey and the data stemming from qualitative in-depth interviews will not provide information on exactly the same subject. Instead this would constitute mutually complementary knowledge on the patterns of convictions and thinking about the shape of the Polish national identity.

In this chapter we concentrate on what the qualitative research brought us pertaining to the very idea of Polishness. A freeform, lightly structured interview bears informative potential because it moves the interviewee to reflectively peer (from various perspectives) into the issue under discussion. This provides an extended spectrum of connotations regarding the topic of interest; at the same time, if coerces interviewees to get into a rare self-reflection regarding their own (ethno)national identity, its essence as well as its component parts. The interviews varied in timespan, from about 30 minutes to over an hour. The interviewee would most often develop his or her replies, guided by his or her personal life experiences, well-known events, and the experiences of friends and family.

This chapter will be organized as follows. First we will call attention to issues connected with qualitative studies of Polishness. Next, we will present the contents regarding a sense of Polishness that were revealed

in the interviews (with self-identification as a cornerstone of national identity). Finally, we will touch on the emotional aspects that accompany a national identification as well as on new, alternative (as our interviewees saw it) ways of capturing their Polishness.

3.2. Qualitative research into Polishness among Poles with a higher education

Our interviewees were persons living in Poland and raised as Poles. The fact of their national belonging generally fell into the sphere of things obvious and unmistakable; this required no declaration, confirmation, or consideration. In our analyses, we cannot overlook, however, situations in life in which an internalized or externalized declaration of Polishness is necessary or at least expected (by someone outside the group).

Therefore the questions which we posed in our study – both quantitatively as well as qualitatively – rarely appeared in the daily thinking of our respondents. This meant that only during the survey or interview itself is the mind of the person opened up to considering national identity. As our preliminary results show, most of the participants in our project did not have many reasons to conduct this type of conversation. They had been raised on Polish lands, by Polish parents, associated themselves with Polishness, spoke Polish, had a Polish passport, observed national holidays, customs, and rituals, etc. We can assume that this helped shape a feeling of inevitability in perceptions of their own identity; it also led to the modest scope of their introspection on the subject of Polishness.

At the same time, however, the lifestyle of our interviewees is connected with touristic, sometimes economic travel abroad. A consequence is that they had international friends and acquaintances, members of the family living outside Poland, as well as personal experience with multiculturality. An intensifying receptivity to international contacts is

an especially key element in the lives of the well-educated respondents in their 30s.

Going beyond a culturally homogenous society, intellectually as well as physically, facilitates the discernment of both similarities in the culturally diverse world and divides into "us" versus "them" (e.g., Others, foreigners) categories. This, in turn, helps in the straightening out thoughts on Polishness and one's personal identity; direct, personal or indirect, transmitted experiences influence the shaping of a concept of one's national distinction (Gawlewicz 2015, 202-207).

When raising issues that are not the topic of everyday discourse, we meet with various degrees of awareness of a respondent's own views (or even their insufficiency or lack). As might be expected, it would be in the course of an interview that, for the first time, a Pole would consider the sense of asking and the substance of the matter. After a moment of consideration, interviewees would reach the conclusion that a sense of Polishness is, indeed, shaped biographically to some degree – as well as specific moves in official policy.

Sociological literature provides us examples of different situations which require an interest in one's own Polishness and in making identity choices. Anna Gawlewicz wrote about the identity issues of Polish emigrants to the United Kingdom (Gawlewicz 2015; Gawlewicz 2016). There have also been research projects pertaining to the shaping of national identity in different places beyond Poland's eastern border (Nowicka 2000; Nowicka 2004; Nowicka 2006). There was also been a study by Grażyna Szymańska-Matusiewicz (2019) on subsequent generations of Vietnamese migrants and the shaping of their emigree life in Poland.

This body of research has yielded certain general observations. Among other things, it is clear that Poles living abroad find it easier to speak about Polishness since they themselves have had to face the issue. After all, they personally found themselves in a situation in which a decision about one's own national identity was required. This pertains to both those Poles who found themselves outside their homeland due to changes in state boundaries (like in Lithuania, Belarus or

Ukraine), or due to volitional emigration to Western Europe or other continents.

Furthermore, equally interesting and informative can be data with regards to foreigners who have lived for a long period or even since birth in Poland who are led to make identity decisions. Naturally, such individuals will have thought more about and will have more to say on this topic than someone who has never needed to a declare their own nationality. It is the person who has lived outside his or her homeland that being, for instance, a Pole is a more crucial matter, hence leading to more pensiveness.

Strong convictions, feelings, and declarations are associated with a clear-cut choice in national belonging. This phenomenon is especially evident in the case of Poles living on the territory of another country – for instance, since birth in bordering countries or since emigrating to the UK, France, Canada, Brazil, etc. Outside Poland, a Pole is a member of a local ethnic minority or an immigrant and can be placed in the situation where a declaration (discomforting or difficult at times) is exacted. In such cases Polishness must be defined and accented; it requires reflection and a decision rooted in beliefs underpinned emotionally. In our project we concentrated on Polish inhabitants of Poland who (generally) did not personally have an occasion or need to resolve identity dilemmas. This is the reason why they displayed a great sense of certainty and little spontaneous reflection in comparison with Polish nationals living outside the homeland.

Again, Polishness for a Pole in Poland is obvious and needs no discussion. This is the reason why some of our interviewees reacted with surprise or even shock at the question delving into the sense of Polishness. The content of retorts underlining the obviousness of Polishness signals that it is the rare individual who contemplates his or her own Polishness or that of another Pole. In addition to this intricacy, we (albeit very rarely) met with an ideological resistance on the part of respondents who would

stress that, for them, our queries are completely unimportant, insignificant, and incomprehensible. Nonetheless, this type of answer is also taken into account in upcoming chapters.

We are aware (and our study findings confirmed this) that a consequence of various aspects of globalization is that cosmopolitan attitudes also appear. These include references to notions such as "citizen of the world," "citizen of Europe" or "intellectual tourist"; such persons feel equally at east anywhere, approaching others with the same social distance, and treating human beings solely on the basis of their personal characteristics. Still, there are individuals with a blurry, indistinct, and unspecified national identity; this matter is, fundamentally, of little to no importance for them.

At times, the obviousness of national belonging discussed above runs parallel to a growing significant of territorially condensed localities; this regionality is based on such spatial concepts as the ethnographic or historical region, a city (or its specific neighborhood, or a housing estate), and a village. Among more reflective individuals, this takes on the form of a layered identity from the broadest to the narrowest community – from the nation, to the city, to the neighborhood. The distinct layers of such an identity gain in magnitude in various social situations. A separate matter (which we will set aside here), however, is the place that national identity holds in the holistic identity of an individual.

Our deliberate selection of the categories of respondents whom we would interview in our qualitative research resulted – in our opinion – in meeting with respondents possessing significant cultural competencies. Our interlocutors, after their initial surprise upon hearing the questions, showed great reflection. Nevertheless, it was most often only upon the initiative of the researcher that they analyzed various, but very specific situations in life that could affect the shaping of a person's Polishness. As a consequence of the interviewer's interventions, the respondents considered their Polishness in light of our proposed list of the criteria for belonging to the national category of Poles.

3.3. A sense of Polishness (national self-definition) as the basis for national identity

In order to grasp the structure of thinking about Polishness and the form of the national identity of Poles which functions in social life, an advisable place to start is analysis of expressions oft-repeated by our interlocutors. Per the prepared guide, at the beginning of each interview we posed more general questions, loosely asking about what constitutes Polishness and what makes a Pole a Pole. Usually only after a longer conversation focused on these two issues did we present respondents with a sheet of paper listing the criteria for Polishness used in the survey. This time, however, we asked respondents to comparatively arrange the criteria from the highest to the lowest level of importance, not to assess the importance of each separately on a five-point scale.

A criterion found on the list in both the quantitative and qualitative research was "a sense of being a Pole." Yet in response to the two universal, opening questions, we spontaneously received answers that disclosed the credence of this criterion, albeit expressed in various ways. Certain words and associations were recurrent. How key this element is in the psychological bond also made itself known during the interviews when other questions were asked, such as whether it is possible to stop being a Pole, can a foreigner become a Pole, and can a child adopted from abroad by a Polish couple become a Pole.

It is worth noting again that the interviews at the turn of 2019 and 2020 were conducted solely with persons with a tertiary education who were young, but working adults. These individuals were more contemplative, in an already stabilized period of their lives, and had enough experience behind them. Of interest here are their reflections on Poland, Polishness, as well as how much they equate themselves with Polishness and all the connotations and emotions associated with these concepts.

3.3.1. Polishness as a feeling of being a Pole

A young woman conversed with the researcher who pushed somewhat provocatively (**R** represents the researcher, **I** – the interviewee):

> **R** – And is a sense of Polishness still necessary to us today when there is a real cultural mix at times?

> **I** – I think that a feeling of belonging to our nationality is very dear to us [11].

Throughout the interview, this woman especially referred to emotions, behavior, and convictions which, taken together, are described as banal nationalism (Billig 2008) in the social sciences.

> [An example] of this can be sports competitions in which we specifically support the team or players from our country. As Poles, we feel proud when someone from Poland wins a competition or receives an award, as it was last year with Olga Tokarczuk [11].

She next added:

> In sports competitions, fans especially show the countries they come from by means of flags, symbols or colors. After a victory, we sing the national anthem together. I think that precisely this is showing the Polishness which we need, because it permits the distinguishing of specific groups of people all over the world [11].[23]

Themes raised in the responses above surfaced time and time again in interviews, despite great differences between them. It is interesting that – in reply to our first question about the components of Polishness – our respondents often began by stating that their answer might be very individualized since different people will phrase this differently. That expressed caveat means that, even among people very unambiguously

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[23] In order to preserve the anonymity of our interlocutors, all interviews have been coded. Numbers and letters in square brackets provide the code we have assigned to specific participants in the research project.

defining Polishness, their characterizations do not create any strict pattern. It is clear that the interviewees felt that there are many ways of being Polish, many ways of describing their national identity.

As Polishness is an abstract concept, it needed to be "brought down to earth" in the field, made real by our interviewees. Essentially, it bears psychological connotations, relates to specific feelings and beliefs of an individual, and concerns a personal attitude towards this concept. When, during an interview, the researcher attempted to clarify the sense of these questions, certain phrases or even questions appeared, often not directly answering our questions. For instance: "What kind of Pole would that be who doesn't feel like a Pole?" Or it would be emphasized that it is obvious that a Pole would feel Polish. What interlocutors understood Polishness (or the essence of being a Pole) to be always triggered associations with specific feelings and convictions that one is indeed a Pole. Still, we should mention that this could entail a dispassionate statement about a family, culture, tradition, and language into which the respondent was born, or a strong, passionately emphasized relationship with specific values, symbols, contents, and objects linked with Polishness.

Testifying to the importance of the emotional element in feeling Polish is the response of a woman in a managerial position: "Polishness... in my opinion, composing Polishness is what one feels" [6]. In other conversations, Polishness was defined equally concisely: "If I feel Polish, that's sufficient enough for me to be Polish" [41]. Or "Well, probably that I feel Polish" [14]. These terse enunciations could serve as a motto for this subsection of our volume. We probed further to get to the content of what a female interviewee understood by this feeling – what exactly does she feel, what is she describing? The woman stated outright, "It seems to me that what makes up Polishness is above all a kind of feeling that, for instance, when you're away from Poland for a long time, then when you come back, you feel at home. Yes, that, for me, is definitely a sort of an indicator of Polishness" [17]. Mentioned by this respondent here is something that surfaced often in our interviews – the

concept of home. Poland is seen as the family home (or even the family itself); it is described as familial, associated with childhood memories and family relationships, but also connected to the country or nation.

Another woman pointed to the fullness and resonance in the concept of Polishness: "One person will feel that Polishness is all our history. And he will be right. Another will feel that Polishness consists of our religion. And he, too, will be right. I think that what makes Polishness is what a given person feels" [6]. When the researcher delved deeper – asking "What is Polishness for you?" – the reply was: "For me, Polishness is my memories. The fact that I was raised on Polish land, that this is where I played. That this is where I learned Polish culture, what my grandmother told me. And also that I was happy after the Poles won in the World Cup, that I cried after the death of John Paul II" [6]. Further into the interview, that same person expanded her answer, underlining that many differences dividing people – worldview, opinions, religion, or physical features – are not crucial in the case of a national identity understood this way: "It seems to me that it is most important to feel Polish, be proud of that, and love Poland. I don't think that some external factors such as appearance or religious preferences make a Pole a Pole. I want to believe and, overall, do believe that if we say of ourselves, 'Pole,' then it's because we love this country and feel Polish" [6].

In another interview, in a lengthier answer, a 30-year-old woman raised a few key motifs right from the start: "In my opinion, the mere fact that someone feels Polish makes him or her so. Because there is probably such an internal desire to be a Pole – a feeling that you are part of a group, in this case Poles, that we feel a bond with Poland and with its inhabitants. It seems to me that if someone feels happy here – that is, in Poland – and proud of it... It's this feeling that makes it important to us that others also know that we are a Pole" [21]. Further into the conversation, fundamental criteria for recognizing someone as Polish appeared as this woman filled in the majority of cultural and genealogical principles for Polishness. Considering her opening with a person's

self-identification as Polish, all the rest of the criteria follow as a logical consequence.

We also met with the explanation that "to be a Pole" does not signify a simple, pure declaration without much content. Vital in such a declaration is the emotional content contained therein: the sense of a bond with the group and the country. Decisive in the fact that someone is a Pole is, therefore, a feeling that one is participating in a specific collective which, as a consequence, determines a concrete understanding of Polishness.

In other interviews, this same message was offered more concisely. Determining Polishness is "if someone really feels himself to be genuinely bound with Poland and if some emotions are behind that" [10]. Yet another descriptor was used as the most important condition for being a Pole: identity. Further into an interview, this could be understood as the primacy of feeling that one is a Pole – something to which another interviewee [13] pointed without hesitation as the most important among the ten proposed criteria.

Among interviews which we conducted with the primary cohort of younger interviewees, we met with more of an emphasis on a more holistic cultural competence as well as different forms of loyalty with regards to the Polish culture and state: "So he identifies with this culture, promotes it even, if able to do something with this culture ... and, for instance, in contact with somebody, he'll always emphasize that, when speaking with somebody, with such a foreigner, for instance, he'll emphasize this Polishness, [saying] that 'I'm a Pole' and he'll, as if, defend this Poland, this culture" [MC].

Still other themes, especially strongly colored by emotions, appeared in interviews. A 30-year-old man, for example, provided a very distinct, univocal answer to the question, what makes a Pole a Pole. He responded thoughtfully, using lofty phrases: "An attachment to the country, an attachment to the culture, patriotism more or less broadly understood, love for the homeland, of course. Perhaps I wouldn't see political issues here, but an attachment to history, knowledge of at least some of the

more important things" [7]. Incipient in his words is an association with something found in the concept of patriotism or love of the fatherland. There is also the repetition of the word "attachment" to the country, culture, and history.

One of our other interlocutors described himself as a patriot, stressing that he likes Poland and Polish culture; here is his "family and home" and the Polish national anthem "is an exceptionally beautiful hymn" [15]. Subsequently, in the ranking of proposed criteria, he firmly and consistently asserted that the most important thing for Polishness is a sense of being Polish. Central is also "respect for our country": "We should honor our country and accept its principles" [15]. This man also pointed to the real benefits stemming from the possession of one's own country and national belonging.

Another thing highlighted was a different indication of a person's link to Polishness and to Poland in particular. In this case it is associated with a sense of security and familiarity (understood multidimensionally): "That I do not have to feel trapped or discriminated against, that I am in my country and feel free" [8]. This is an aspect which triggers thinking about familiarity and feeling at home – understood not in terms of the exclusivity of Polish society, but as a cultural sanctuary for people raised in that particular community.

Analyzing the answers to the first two questions of our interview guide (directly related to the criteria and principles for the functioning of Polishness), we also come across statements that focus not on the emotional sphere, but precisely on objectified things. A 27-year-old graduate of Iberian studies situates the emotional community that she saw as part of Polishness: "By Polishness I mean everything that is connected with Poland and Poles. Starting from the history, through the culture, customs, and conduct passed down from generation to generation, but also the emotions and habits we have" [11].

The idea of community surfaces here again, but this time clearly based on the supraconscious cultural, historical, and psychological fea-

tures of the community referred to as Poles – and thus possessing con-crete, unambiguous, supraconscious foundations. In this type of view, emotions alone do not suffice; there must be linguistic competence as well as knowledge of the customs, history, and culture in all its aspects.

In certain interviews, most often in those with respondents of the older generation, the sense of belonging to the nation took on a more penetrating emotional content: to be a Pole and be recognized as a Pole, one must be proud of one's Polishness. A feeling of pride that one be-longs to this community renders this belonging, in a sense, sacred.

A 76-year-old man, a former military officer, defined Polishness in the first sentence of the interview, listing further conditions. Among these were love of the homeland as well as a friendly attitude towards compatriots and helping them. Also mentioned were the slogan "God, honor, fatherland," but also "the legacy of our grandparents, great-grandparents, and parents who once fought for a nationality and free-dom for the Polish language" [JO]. To the supplementary question – "What makes you Polish?" – he also responded in an emotional and ex-alted way: "Well, the fact that I am a Pole – well, simply that I am very proud" [JO]. Unsurprisingly, he pointed further in to the great sacrifice made by the Polish military in the fight for freedom [JO]. An older woman (65 years of age) spoke in a similar tone: "I am a patriot. During any important national ceremonies, when I hear the anthem, I am moved, I am proud of the fact that I am a Pole" [AZ1].

3.3.2. Polishness as knowledge of the Polish language and cul-tural heritage

Thus we derived the remarks categorized the highest on a scale of emo-tionality towards Polishness, emphasizing either Polish culture or the history of Polish struggles for independence. The following response de-serves attention here:

> What constitutes Polishness? It is precisely this that we live in a given region of
> Europe, that we feel Polish inside, that we want to belong to this group, that we
> use the Polish language, and that we have a tradition, culture, government, and
> currency in common. Polishness is something you have in your heart, nothing will
> force you to feel Polish inside …. But most of all, it's that someone has to feel
> Polish. That is, it belongs to this particular group with its shared characteristics,
> holding to the same values [22].

One of our interlocutors noticed the intersecting of a few key elements: "I personally identify Polishness with language, culture, tradition, and a strong sense of belonging. I believe that a feeling of being distinct from other nations is also significant, because this allows us to identify ourselves with a given group, community or nation" [23]. This woman further described a community as a group connected by shared values: "I personally feel Polish and identify with the community of Poles. I do not, however, tolerate the behavior of a part of society which cultivates nationalism and sees an equal sign between that word and patriotism" [23]. Such a cutting off from various kinds of nationalism and groups preaching such views we did encounter in many interviews – even when respondents attached deep, if not central meaning to a sense of national community. In a different light, a young man tied identity to cultural characteristics: "I think that [it's] a sort of identification with culture, with language. …. It's also our sort of conviction and identification with this country, nation, simply with this place on earth" [36].

Significant is that before seeing the list our respondents would spontaneously name various components which they saw as constituting a sense of Polishness (e.g., culture, language, customs, etc.). Yet when asked to place our listed criteria in order from the most to the least important, they would instinctively and immediately stress that the most important is the feeling that one is a Pole.

A 30-year-old woman made an association to the problem of emigration – drawing a clear connection in her response between this problem and an attitude towards Polishness:

I think a bond is also important. It's enough to feel Polish, to get a feeling for our habits. …. As for people emigrating for money, that's not it. I think that the center of interest in life is the place where you not only have a job, but also friends and family. Not that you simply exist [there], but actually get something out of that place and feel it. I believe that people who live in a country for 30 years or so, who have children born there, feel more attached to that country than to the country where they [themselves] were born [28].

Answering in a similar vein was a 27-year-old woman: "Maybe it's not exactly just that you live in Poland, but that you identify with the Polish culture and tradition" [50]. This is where a subsequent aspect comes in, related to the sense of one's own Polishness as well as, concurrently, to one's attitude to the country as a whole: "[The fact] that I grew up here, because I speak Polish, and only in this country do I feel "super-good." Because, if I went abroad and had to speak another language, I wouldn't feel so comfortable. So here I feel at home; I'm not afraid to go any-where" [30].

Linking Polishness strictly with patriotism, but simultaneously with an openness towards other cultures, another young woman replied as follows:

For Polishness broadly understood, it seems to me that [you need] a patriotic attitude – truly patriotic, without calling it fascism and without extremes. Certainly love for the homeland, but not so xenophobic, because a culture that does not open up to other cultures is dying. A cultivation of your traditions and customs. Exploring to find whatever about [those] traditions and customs, about the etymology of all these concepts. Knowledge, knowledge of your language, such a good, correct usage of Polish. It seems to me that these are some basic things that make up Polishness [31].

When it came to the question of what makes a Pole a Pole, this same individual said,

The fact that I feel attached to my country, and it seems to me that a common trait linking Poles is also the fact that – despite the fact that very often, even through most of our history, we are divided culturally-religiously or worldview-politically – always when faced with danger, even very extreme divisions are set

aside in order to unite in facing a threat and to defend this homeland, and stand up for it, sacrificing one's health or life [31].

Another person put it this way: "As for Polishness, it's above all a feeling that one is that Pole, a really strong feeling. Even if it could waver, in the long run we continue to feel we are Poles" [18].

3.3.3. Polishness as a desire for individual self-definition in the globalizing world

Accenting a looser connection with Polishness, certain respondents got to the question of a choice in life as most important to a definition of a Pole: "In that case [someone] rather isn't, because he doesn't feel Polish, if he would rather live elsewhere, in some other country" [21]. But in considering a situation in which someone chooses another country to live in, this same man commented: "[Someone] doesn't feel, doesn't have that kind of Polish identity. If someone does not identify with Polish culture, tradition or homeland, then he excludes himself and doesn't identify with our nation. And then he's rather not a Pole since he says of himself that he doesn't feel Polish" [21].

Along similar lines ran another response, but this time with a somewhat pessimistic prognosis from the perspective of a longue durée for the national identity: "I think that it is important, but it seems that, in our times today, we feel Polish ever more rarely. Through globalization, we feel more like citizens of Europe or the world" [5]. Immediately following that comment, this interviewee added national identity is getting even less important for the younger generation: "Such complaining, parochialism, a bit of shame [associated with] where you come from. Young people are go-getters, they are being raised in times when you can go abroad with no problems, you can communicate easily abroad. They know languages and, in part, that's also good" [5].

Further into this interview, the following exchange took place with the researcher:

> **R** – And what does that mean for you?
>
> **I** – Being proud to be a Pole – maybe not necessarily, but not being ashamed of being a Pole. As for the mundane things, basic things, [there is] being sure to pay taxes, segregating garbage, maintaining [good] relations with neighbors. These are the basics.
>
> **R** – And what is such a main feature that you can say about yourself that you are Polish?
>
> **I** – The fact that I was born here, that I know the history, that I don't think about leaving here for good and being able to live somewhere else, even though I could. But I am attached to the fact that I live here and would like to start a family here. I'd like my children to be brought up here, but if they want to go abroad and live there, I won't be against that either; it will be their choice [5].

A 32-year-old PhD student also employed at a higher level white collar position, thinks a bit differently about this:

> Polishness is constituted of Poles. Their characteristics, stereotypes that are true or not about them, regardless. Polishness means all the behavior and knowledge of Poles on the subject of our history, politics, and whatever surrounds us. It's impossible to explicitly describe this. For some, Polishness will be going on the March of Independence and paying taxes; for others, spending time with family and nurturing family traditions [39].

With regards to the following question about what his own Polishness comprises, this same man said:

> Mine? I try to care for [this] country. Of course, I'm not saying that I am doing anything and everything. I go to elections, take care of my family, pay taxes, tell my children about the history of [our] country and family, and try to be good to others. This is my Polishness. In fact, if a Pole feels inside that he is a Pole, is proud of his origin and cares for [this] country and his near and dear, then he can call himself a Pole [39].

Furthermore, he added an opinion accenting the fortitude of Polishness: "When someone is abroad, he is still a Pole. That can't be so easily cast out of you. Unless someone really wants to stop being a Pole. Then he relinquishes Polish citizenship and it's done. If he doesn't do that, then either he doesn't want to stop being a Pole, or he couldn't care less who

he is" [39]. Worth noting is that this male ranked the feeling that one is Polish in first place on the list of criteria.

A running motif in the responses above – appearing as well in other interviews – is there is a necessity to be something specific. Only by being, for instance, a Pole can one be assured of a set place in the world. On the one hand, there is pride in possessing Polish nationality; on the other hand, any and all aspects of day-to-day behavior facilitate coexistence at the level of a local community. All of this – both the strong emotions and honest everyday life – constitute (from one perspective) the correct model of Polishness.

Another man, a 32-year-old working in an executive position, phrased this very clearly:

> When it comes to what makes a Pole a Pole, I think that, apart from knowledge of the history and culture, it seems to me that there is some attachment to Poland, to Polish tradition, to that which is Polish. Some kind of, let's call it, healthy patriotism – I think it's definitely essential that that should be present. And most importantly: an inner feeling that you are this Pole. If someone feels Polish, it'd likely be difficult to debate it with him [32].

This same person explained later what a contemporary, economic patriotism is for him:

> It seems to me that, well... If we want to be proud, for example, of the fact that we are Poles, for instance – and I'm not talking about some pride for show, but about a real, internal one – then, besides words, well then we must also move on to some deeds. That kind of active patriotism, let's call it, is perhaps the best deed: to simply do something good for this country [32].

In fact, this interlocutor did not point to specifically desired behavior, but from the entirety of the interview, we can conclude that this is not about militant action, but simply fulfillment of a citizen's daily duties. And ranking the list of criteria for Polishness on the list, without any hesitation he named the feeling that one is a Pole. "I think that absolutely the feeling of being Polish is absolutely the most important. Well, because if someone feels Polish, it means that he accepts this Polishness

in a certain sense. Well, if he describes himself that way inside, it would be hard to deny that he is a Pole" [32].

Comparable was the way a 34-year-old woman saw this issue:

> Origin, upbringing, and Polish culture broadly understood. I think it's more consciousness than a set of traits. In a legal sense, it's whether a person has Polish parents, but I think that it's not a matter of blood, just more of feeling. Because I know a lot of people who say they are Poles although they were neither born here, nor are their parents Polish. It's just that, for example, they settled here a dozen or so years ago, they have spent the most important moments of their lives here, and they say of themselves that they are already Poles, because what's important to them is the place where they live and which they consider to be their homeland [34].

In a response from a different interview, we find a summary of various emotions:

> For me it's precisely the fact that I am proud to be Polish that means that I am proud that I am from a country with great scientific accomplishments, in which there is a rich history and culture, where traditions are respected, and which stands out in some way. That is, it has its own specific things: customs, dialects, cuisine, and culture. For me, Poland is not some nondescript country. It is distinctive and I'm proud of the fact that we have *bigos* and Adam Małysz. That means that there are some things that distinguish us, and that when Robert Lewandowski scores, everyone knows that a Pole is scoring goals – that he is not only a player on a German soccer team [35].

Not unlike the majority, this interviewee also moved a sense of being a Pole into first place on our list of ten criteria.

Our interlocutors occasionally raised the issue of a temporal facet of the phenomenon under study. In one case, a young woman perceived a process by which an individual's Polish consciousness is built and group belonging becomes more important.

> I think this is something that comes with age. That when a person ceases to belong to a social group – e.g., the consequent youth subculture in schools, junior high school, secondary school, and then at university – then the person starts looking for places in which he or she could belong. So certainly this Polishness, and

> the fact that we share a right to choose in democratic elections, so this certainly unites [us] somehow. Or politics, right? These are characteristics shared in common, topics that can be discussed. And it seems to me that when we're young, then, because we do not take such an active part in the life of Poland and do not make such decisions in elections, we don't feel that we are Poles. That begins somewhere at a later age, and that is important to us then [42].

Recapitulating this section, certain aspects come to the fore, serving as the axes of the whole. These imponderabilia are treated as inalienable elements in thinking and speaking of Polishness. Our interlocutors unequivocally indicated that a Pole is someone who

1. Considers him or herself a Pole, feels Polish, accepts this as fact, and is even proud of this status; and
2. Knows the Polish language.

These two components of Polish national identity basically suffice for someone to be a Pole – to be recognized as a Pole and to perceive him or herself as a Pole. It seems that such a self-appraisal alongside the image held in the eyes of others who agree with that assessment is quite logical. Constructed around the "obviousnesses" are certain competencies such as knowledge of the history and culture of Poland, but also components that stem from daily practices such as familiarity with Polish (often religious) customs and rituals.

3.4. Pride and shame: Emotional dimensions of a sense of Polishness

Dominating in the responses through most of our interviews was a psychological theme associated with identity and emotions – even when this was directly raised only in a single word. Establishing what makes her a Pole, a young interviewee asserted "that I am not ashamed of [admitting to my Polishness]" [42]. Such phrasing is very noteworthy and speaks volumes both about the views of this particular woman and about

the entire spectrum found between extreme attitudes about one's own membership in the national community of Polish society.

In another interview, reference was made to specific examples: "Certain of my acquaintances, for instance, are ashamed to admit that they are from Poland and I completely can't understand that. Once, on vacation even, I noticed that a pair of Poles – when [non-Poles] were nearby, they spoke to each other in English. To me that was awfully absurd" [21]. Some respondents expressed very strong opinions about this:

> Above all, that Pole has to feel Polish, he or she has to feel this Polishness within, not be afraid to identify with Poland. Because it is also very often the case that we go somewhere abroad, meet a Pole – and that Pole at first doesn't introduce himself to us as a Pole, is a bit ashamed of his Polishness. It seems to me that this in some way makes that Pole stop being a Pole to some degree. Maybe not completely, but I, for example, would not be able to renounce Polishness so then this is certainly a feeling [17].

These statements point to the amplitude of attitudes swinging between megalomania (an exaggerated positive self-appraisal) and shame (an escape from or denial of one's national identity). Both extremes are similarly anchored psychologically; an inferiority complex will be compensated by expressions of excessive superiority in fields that cannot be measured materially. Psychologists broadly analyze the ways in which a national megalomania arises in relationships between Poles and other national groups, built often upon a sense of subordination with regards to others.

In Polish sociology this has been a subject raised perpetually (Bystroń 1924), and even considered recently from a psychoanalytical position (Chajbos 2019). Addressing a feeling of inferiority among Polish emigrants to Great Britain interestingly and sociologically has been Anna Gawlewicz (2020) who considers such emotions precisely in the context of the psychologically complex processes of migration. The more psychoanalytical studies, however, miss the essence and the source of a feeling of inferiority among members of a nation that is less economically prosperous and which is left behind in order to work, make a better

living, and often stay permanently amidst a society that is wealthier and technologically advanced. It would also be inaccurate to state that a "collective narcissism" is either the cause or (more likely) the effect of shame and inferiority (cf. Chajbos 2019). Moreover, the ripening of extreme emotions in a national self-appraisal is something that affects many nations – both large and small, both those who historically have more often been rulers as well as those who have more often been the ruled.

In the course of our interviewing, self-identification (taking on various forms) sometimes arose in the broader context of the cornerstones for and the essence of the national community. Here it was rooted in acceptance of the internal diversification of society:

> In my opinion, it's definitely knowledge of our history, tradition…. And some kind of feeling that you are from here, that this is my place on Earth to which I can always return. Oh, and joy in Polish successes, for example, in sports. That's also a kind of sign of Polishness: we cheer for "our guys" without really wondering why. In my opinion, these are just some of the many components in a sense of Polishness [18].

When asked exactly what makes a Pole a Pole, this same individual predictably replied "Likely the most important is to feel oneself [to be a Pole]" [18]. Deeper into the conversation, he introduced the emotional considerations on which we focus here:

> It seems to me that a Pole is a Pole because he loves his country, is proud of it, and cares about it. The rest of the stuff matters less – political views and religion aren't that important. The fact that I don't agree with the worldview of other people doesn't mean that I wouldn't call such a person a Pole. We should respect the opinions of others and not judge who is a better or worse Pole. Then we'll be able to talk about all of us as a unified whole – precisely that unity is very important [18].

This unity of which he spoke pertains to the national community, the whole of Polish society. In this case, the foundational cornerstones seem to be other, noncultural aspects such as loyalty to a political entity and functioning in a politically shaped world. Other words that communicate a similar notion (an answer to the question of what is most important

to recognize someone as a Pole) surfaced in another interview: "Something like respect for our culture and for our tradition – and I think that is the most important" [7]. Returning to the earlier respondent, his statements were sometimes more to the point: "When it comes to a feeling of unity, I think that we need to focus on what unites us and strengthen those things, and not just think about what divides" [18].

The concept of "patriotism" turned out to be very commanding, but, at the same time, required clarification. Respondents most often used descriptive terms such as "broadly understood" or "healthy" so as not to associate this with a nationalistic chauvinism. In fact our interlocutors consistently distanced themselves from any extremist, nationalist connotations of this concept. A 31-year-old graduate in geography stated directly: "Patriotism certainly, I associate [Polishness] with patriotism, with people for whom national identity is very important and so they speak of it openly. Polishness is a tremendous attachment to the fatherland" [19]. Setting the criteria in order, this woman decidedly placed a sense of being Polish at the top of the list. Yet another woman worded the crux of Polishness as follows: "In my opinion, this is simply a feeling of belonging to our culture, customs, history, etc. One can be born in Poland, but not feel Polish. Everything depends on what a given person feels" [20].

3.5. A sense of Polishness as a general concept of identity

In the minds of our respondents (likely including those from the quantitative survey), all the criteria for Polishness constitute a complex of traits and values that, only when taken together, form the multifaceted idea of Polishness. Often surfacing simultaneously in our conversations were both a deeply-held acceptance of Polish culture and customs, and an open assertion that diversity within the community here called "Poles" is natural, obvious, and even valuable.

More or less consciously, it is assumed that whoever is born, raised, and lives in Poland holds Polish citizenship. It is assumed that such a person has attended school in Poland, learned the language at home, in school, and in social life, has had contact with historical knowledge, literature, national symbols, and likely has at least one parent of Polish nationality. Thus there is no reason for such an individual not to feel Polish.

Not unknown (to us and our respondents), however, are cases of activists and intellectuals who were aware of their "foreignness" (at least on one side of the family), but became models of Polish patriotism. For instance, the artist Józef Czapski spoke explicitly of growing into Polishness in a home in which his mother was an Austrian who saw herself as Czech while his father was ambivalent about nationality: "After all, where would you find this 'pure blood?'" (Czapski 1987, 148). Exploring personal genealogies, the majority of Poles can find ancestors of other nationalities. Despite that, some non-Poles even become politically active nationalists, members of the National Democrats in the 19th and 20th centuries, and declared all their lives their Polish national belonging. This intricate mix of biographical, cultural, and emotional traits complicate attempts to break Polishness down to prime factors. Hence of special, heuristic interest to us were detailed descriptions of real cases – knowledge which is only anecdotal on the surface.

Our respondents – even while accenting a sense of being Polish as important – did not leave us with any doubts about the fact that one's free will is neither the only, nor a sufficient reason to consider someone a Pole. Associated with such an internally psychological and externally declared belonging are certain characteristics expressed in the criteria on our list. Thus we essentially obtain a compound (encompassing various cultural and biographical traits) whole from the responses to our queries. That construct is built upon an emotional rooting and a psychological bond with a group, culture, past, and country – always on the basis of individual choice.

For the purposes of this research project, it was unnecessary to delve into the details of a situation in which someone arbitrarily considers

him or herself a member of this or that nation.[24] Such phenomena are not so extraordinary and can involve not only national belonging, but also cases as trivial as a non-driver who logically cannot be considered a good motorist. Perhaps a unique exception would be a gender identity that is incongruent with external biological characteristics.

Hiding behind self-definition and emotional bonds with a national group are usually one or more of the components of national identity suggested in the survey or the interview guide. An ideological and worldview element hold key places in the definition of Polishness, but when considering topics encumbered by some degree of ideologization a certain thought comes to mind. Paradoxically, treating Polishness and membership in the Polish national community as something based on foundational criteria independent of the individual does more to de-ideologize the concept of Polishness; issues unconnected with an individual's free enter into the mix.

Being born and raised in Poland, a high level of fluency in Polish, and being descended from Polish parents guarantee an objectivized and unemotional assertion that one is a Pole. This is a simple fact that requires no further declarations. But the psychological criterion – a sense that one is Polish and declaring this – can be seen as subjective, volitional, and intentional. The language competency condition (which will be covered in the next chapter) is, nevertheless, autonomous of the will, choice, and psychological state of the individual – which means that it can be categorized as objective.

Reviewing the prolific replies of our respondents we can extract a few, distinctive motifs that dominate in the psychological determinations and conscious sources of Polishness:

1. A desire to be a Pole;
2. Identification with a specific group and sense of a bond with it;

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[24] One of the coauthors of this volume had a student of Polish-Serbian descent who, in all seriousness, claimed that he belonged to the Kiowa nation.

3. Experiencing contentment (happiness, satisfaction, a sense of pride, etc.) as a result of this belonging;
4. Pride in this belonging; and
5. Manifesting and expressing positive feelings towards Poland when in contact with persons of other nationalities.

The patterns of thinking about Polishness described heretofore reveal personal, deeply internalized attitudes and emotions. In the next sub-section we will present ways of thinking about being a Pole that are more ideologically anchored, entangled in social phenomena that are outside the individual, and act as motivation for behavior. This calls for broader conceptualization of concepts connected to this thinking.

3.6. Departure from national identity: Alternative perspectives on Polishness

In the statements made by our respondents, we also found expressions of a negative, indifferent or vague attitude towards the issue of national identity in general. This theme – a sort of dissociation from Polishness – emerged in a few interviews. A 27-year-old woman reflected: "Well, just knowing [things about Poland] doesn't mean you identify with it. For instance, it could be that someone stops feeling Polish due to what's happening currently in the country and in politics" [50]. Noteworthy is the motif of politics which she raised which signals a connection between, on the one hand, a declared Polishness and interest in national identity, and, on the other, a selected political order. When the political profile in Poland is incongruent with what a citizen has envisioned, then he or she might decide to abandon Polishness. However, other respondents cast aside all manner of political content and debate thus exposing an opinion that political divides are insignificant for the question of Polishness. Therefore, there was sometimes an outright cutting off of political topics, and sometimes quite the opposite. The concept of a diversity of views or even a

conflict of ideas in Polish society does not wipe away the fact that a nationwide Polish community exists.

Some of our respondents who accepted and emphasized their Polishness concurrently condemned positions associated with neglect of the national community. One woman pointed to a discernable lack of respect for one's own Polishness and a drawing away from one's Polish identity out of embarrassment.

In addition to a conclusive severance from a Polish national identity, there were also attitudes of indifference towards national belonging. A 35-year-old woman in a managerial position began her response quite unmistakably:

> You know, it's hard for me to express myself on the subject of Polishness, because I've never identified myself so much with Poland. I mean, don't get me wrong, I have nothing against Poland and Poles. It's just not something that occupies my life much, I have more important things on my mind. But to be completely honest, I feel more a citizen of the world than a Pole. I value people, not just the country where I live. So my approach is extremely liberal with regards to this matter [33].

Nonetheless, as did the majority when looking at the list, she did not hesitate to add, "So the feeling that you are Polish is, in my opinion, the most important issue" [33].

However, another woman was more pessimistic:

> Polishness consists of such a very conservative approach – national thinking… Catholic thinking – because, after all, we were brought up in such a model. But I don't know… these days Polishness is rather a dying word. Divisions have arisen due to the place in which our governmental politics is at… And we were once united, I don't know, by historical affairs in common. It might sound stupid, but, for example, [it was] wars or various other things, but now it's difficult to say today exactly what constitutes this Polishness, because everything has blurred [14].

A young man referred to the concept of Polishness even more negatively:

> To be honest, I currently associate Polishness with thievery, irresponsibility, lack of thinking in terms of the long run, and an inability to critically approach reality and think independently. …. I think this way because I've lived for over 30 years in a

> country where most decisions affecting general society are made by people who have only their own interests in mind, not the good of those who enabled them to end up in that very lucrative position – meaning all the rest [of society] [9].

It is worth recalling here that a similar skepticism, with expectations that the significance of national identity will fall, has already been noted earlier in the social reflections.

This duality of stances – engagement in Polishness versus rejection of Polishness – has already been described in sociological and historical analyses. Over three decades ago, Bronisław Geremek – an eminent historian and parliamentarian – suggested:

> A sensitivity to national values coexists with the decision to leave the home country. One can similarly say that significant threats to national identity are growing, even though stirred national aspirations are not weakening at all. This means that each of these contentions applies to a different group of people, or concerns different tendencies in the psyche and behavior of individuals. Contemporary experience shows that a high level of national consciousness does not at all immunize against the breakdown of group ties, or against passivity, a sense of helplessness, and a lack of hope (Geremek 1987, 152).

Those words were penned at an exceptionally difficult time lending little hope for improvement: the deteriorating phase of the communist system with its foreign domination in Poland. The current international situation of Poland – along with the internal economic and strategic situation of the state – leads us to consider the words of that scholar and politician in one. At the same time, this leads to a more positive reflection that corresponds with the findings of our mixed methods research project.

3.7. Summary

The results of the qualitative in-depth interviews are in accord with the outcomes of the quantitative survey study. As can be recalled, in all three of the surveys over the last three decades, the highest percentage of

respondents considered two criteria to be the most important: a sense that one is a Pole and fluency in the Polish language.

We can state that the interviews confirm the survey results in the sense that the former deepened our understanding of the phenomenon of identity in precisely the form in which it functions in social consciousness. In certain social categories, the survey selections more strongly accented the weight of self-definition and language fluency as the most fundamental indicators of conventional thinking about Polishness. Taking the qualitative and quantitative outcomes into consideration, it appears that in the cognizance of society in general those two indicators are consistently decisive in identifying someone as a Pole. Looking deeper, we see:

- Self-definition as a psychological, subjective factor dependent to a large degree (certainly understood this way) on the decision of an individual human being; and
- Fluency in the Polish language along with its usage in daily life as an equally crucial factor although it is to a greater extent objectivized and to a lesser one dependent upon individual free will.

Analysis of our interlocutors' responses indicates that they understood the national community as a cultural, historical, and biographical community which, nonetheless, draws much from psychological, emotional, and consciousness factors.

The subject of Polishness was associated with a civic community extremely rarely; in principle it was seen as a cultural community. Still, when we investigate the sequence of statements as well as free associations in specific responses, other things come to light. Alongside the dominant, cultural theme (e.g., language, historical memory, customs, etc.) not so rarely another theme surfaces: a need to build, maintain, and preserve the nationwide community. Despite individual, local, and worldview differences, there is a focus on a community that is also, in essence, political. The level of the nation dominates, but does not exclude (sometimes even supporting) the level of politics: indeed, the political community should be the practical supply base for the national community.

Chapter IV
Language as a Determinant of Polishness

4.1. The crux of the sense of a linguistic community

Language as a criterion of Polishness was mentioned by persons from all demographic categories – regardless of age, gender, place of residence, or level of education. That fact only underscores how universal and obvious this choice was for respondents. Among the interviewees in the qualitative research – after the psychological factor of a feeling that one is a Pole – a pointing out of the Polish language as crucial for Polish national identity appeared most frequently and spontaneously, in association with various cultural features. Striking, therefore, is (despite the dominance of specific elements therein) a concept of Polishness that is seen as composed of many components. That concept is anchored both in more subjective and declarative elements, and in objectivized (or substantial in Ossowski's eyes) ones.

We assume that, when a respondent was assessing the importance of language as a decisive criterion in determining who is a Pole, included was a subjective attitude towards language as well as its place in an individual's life and thinking about him or herself. Very fluent knowledge of Polish alone does not make someone a Pole – just as knowledge of Italian does not make someone an Italian nor perfect knowledge of Hungarian make someone a Hungarian. There are cases of persons who know the Polish language perfectly and use it every day, but this nonetheless does not mean that they see themselves as Poles or are treated as such by other Poles. Another case worth considering is that of people who do not speak Polish on a daily basis and are only a bit (or not at all) familiar with the language – and yet they consider themselves to be Poles and

are treated as such by their social milieu in Poland. This and other issues will be analyzed towards the end of this chapter.

On the one hand, Polishness is an individual's self-declaration, a kind of self-determined, volitional decision. On the other hand, Polishness is knowledge of the language with all its cultural potential, supra-individual contexts, and social conditions. Language is undoubtedly a keystone for the social experiencing of identity, individually and collectively. It is both a tool and a resource actively used throughout a person's life.

Historical factors and social experiences impact the identity of a society's members, but the first beams of that identity are carved by the language. It is precisely through language that our identity is transmitted to us, along with a given world and its inhabitants. It is also because language is how we communicate our identity to the world and other people that this is one of the most significant social experiences available to humans. The fundamental characteristics of a language are acquired during socialization. This means that its specific form renders it exceptionally rare for someone to fully transfigure language competency and national identity. Such a phenomenon often entails conversion to another nationality (Hałas 1992). It is language that models a person's thinking about various spheres of life.

A general definition of language describes it as a socially shaped and molded system of signs and the way that system is created and used. It is also a means facilitating communication and inscribing the way it functions within the whole community. It is language that allows the collection of a community's social experiences and products. It is thanks to language that we gain necessary knowledge; it constitutes a both available and accessible space for our individual as well as communal identity. Through language we describe ourselves, are defined by others, and build the community we consider "ours." We are shaped by it.

In the process of communication, constantly defining and being defined, we live within a group whose world (i.e., identity) is delineated by language – both a system of signs and a system by which those signs

are created. Language is simultaneously a form and instrument of interpersonal communication; its unique characteristics and possibilities for expression of certain content gives a group a chance to be collective in the precise cultural universe that is typical for a given nation and cultural community.

For an individual the collective language is a primary, preexisting reality. It is not only a system of signs to familiarize but it also a way by which signs can be created, possibly interpreted as well as a means of perceiving and comprehending the world. The individual world mixes with the social world and the foundation for that interrelationship is the complex nature of language.

Thanks to language, collectivity is achieved, because the communicative aspect creates a space in which collaboration and mutual understanding is achievable. A sense of similarity emerges in cognitive categories, encompassing, too, a system of values so key from the perspective of a community. Language is an instrument of learning, participating in, and cocreating of the social and individual fields. Since language – a realm of knowledge that is possible to imagine – comprises the bases for the world we see as "ours," then expression of the self in any way and with respect to any identity (including the national) is feasible only in some language that is shared with other members of the group.

Language is not only a mechanism for the internalization and creation of some "natural" community. Application of the criterion of language in practice can serve not only in the recognition of the Other but also act as an instrument of aggression intended to diminish or destroy the identity of another group. Certainly systemic were the forced 19th century russification and germanization of Poles on territory occupied by Russia and Prussia, the denationalization of Hungarians under the Habsburg Empire, and the compulsory usage of English in reservation schools in the United States. Attempts to impose the victor's language on the conquered have been rooted in the idea that if people are forced to learn the subjugator's language, they will, in time, begin to think in that language.

Practices of russification or germanization on Polish lands lasted too briefly in a historical sense for certain processes to be completed and for the impact on identity to be investigated. Those practices did, however, strongly pressure the Polish population; this constituted more than symbolic violence. Language connects people and communities, but also separates them from other people and communities. Language can be a shield that unites and protects a group, but also a sword which acts to eradicate the identity of other groups.

4.2. The Polish language – Distinguishing and identifying one's compatriots

In social practice the unique character of a language constitutes a distinguishing feature for a national group. We usually identify someone's nationality by their fluency in a specific language. Our respondents noted the phonetic idiosyncrasies of Polish. Difficulties in pronunciation render it more complicated and hence, by articulation, intonation, and syntax Poles are able to distinguish a foreigner from a Pole. For instance, "Well, and the Polish language, our *ś* and *ć*. All of this makes us exceptional. Foreigners are in shock when they try to repeat '*pięćset sześćdziesiąt*'" [2]. One interviewee joked meaningfully when asked about what makes a Pole a Pole: "The first thing is a surname unpronounceable for foreigners" [12]. Yet another person enthusiastically answered with a laugh, "Because I wanted to say that it's really cool that Poles have their own language" [14].

The level of hermeticity and difficulty acts as something that strengthens (in the eyes of our respondents) Polish identity. Its integrating and identity functions can be employed in verifying a person's "real" identity: "We're often able to tell by the accent whether somebody has acquired the language or if it's the mother tongue" [9]. Thus is appears that a consequence of learning the Polish language in adulthood might arouse admiration, but it just as easily fulfills the role of an identifier.

Thus the internal national status of an individual's identity could also undergo verification. Concepts emerging in our interviews also included a gradated scale of Polishness and the notion of a "real Pole." "Any real Pole should have good command of correct Polish" [5]. Therefore, already on the basis of the level of fluency in Polish it is possible to assess the level of "reality" in a person's Polish identity.

This linguistic pride along with an awareness of one's linguistic distinctness comprise an element which unites Poles regardless of other divides, regardless even of the nature of a communication. For example, "Coming back to the previous question on language, once, when I was a tourist in England and taking the underground, I suddenly heard Polish profanities as two people started arguing. It was funny, but, hearing their discussion, I felt my Polishness inside despite the vast distance from my country" [6]. Thus even expletives and situations which, under different circumstances, might evoke discomfort awakened a sense of community which is independent of our life choices and supersedes social divides. Such a communal sense of linguistic identification turns out to be an integral part of national identity, arousing in an individual emotions that fortify a feeling of Polishness.

The power of such emotions is evident in a response by one of our interlocutors:

> **I** – Recently, I was on a business trip with a colleague in Germany. It was the period just before Christmas, so we decided do some shopping in a German supermarket. There's so much talk about better-quality products [there], so imagine that, during our conversation in the store, a woman working there came up to us, saying 'Hello, I heard Polish and decided to come up to you to chat.' That was amazing, surprising, and nice all at the same time.
>
> **R** – Why were you surprised?
>
> **I** – Because here in Poland we rush all the time, move away from each other, and rarely encounter such a situation. Things usually end up with a 'Hi!' or a wave of the hand. Yet here a complete stranger comes up simply to talk. I think that in such situations we feel this closeness with [our] identity and the longing comes out [19].

A "closeness with [our] identity" and emotions: all of this is connected and forges into a community and into Polishness.

In turn, a different respondent pointed out that language is an exceptionally important communal element, because it integrates but also permits (sometimes emphatic) segregation. "I don't like the fact that in our country they force us to speak English. Let's say in France, the official language there is French, and there are very few places where you can communicate in English – so why should we forget our mother tongue?" [11]. Hence language not only identifies us, but, in the opinion of this man, it also defends us against foreign (linguistic) influences. A sense of endangerment with regards to one's own identity can lead to a questioning of the value of other languages. When queried further about situations in Poland in which a foreigner tries to speak Polish, but ultimately communicated more successfully in English, this respondent answered, "Yes, certainly. Unfortunately, however, the majority spoke in English or – what's worse – in their mother tongue" [11].

Whereas speaking in other, foreign languages did arouse aversion among some of our interlocutors, the Polish mother tongue is an object of special assiduity. Every foreigner should "respect our language" [17], and everyone who wants to be recognized as a Pole, "should be able to communicate with every Pole, regardless of whether that Pole knows other languages or not" [31]. Justifying a position that Polish compatriots do not need to learn foreign languages was the difficult history of the country. After all, the identifying and distinguishing role of Polish was tested dramatically over the centuries, and "people fought for us to be able to speak and use the Polish language today" [16].

Underscoring this idiosyncratic collective memory demonstrates how very important a place language holds (as some of our respondents saw this) as something that creates the ties that bind. It distinguishes the group, cements differences from others, and allows self-identification vis-à-vis others. "Of course language defines us – because who else speaks in Polish? Well, by definition, only Poles" [16a]. Language sets people apart, but can bring them together. Through its complexity,

Polish links those who speak it in pride and a feeling of extraordinariness which is an additional element strengthening and forging Polishness. "We have an original culture through the possession of a singular, exceptional language, unique on a worldwide scale. That is very important" [7]. A different respondent asserted, "I believe that the Polish language is very interesting. What more is there to say – this distinguishes us plain and simple from other countries" [15].

When asked what a foreigner needs to do to become a Pole, an immediate response was "Well certainly learn the language" [2]. Inasmuch as it unites one group, it also comprises a boundary that must be crossed by Others, by foreigners, and by all those who are outside the group. Taking into consideration the high degree of homogeneity and in social distance vis-à-vis persons perceived as foreign in Polish society, a non-Pole's familiarity with the language (which is assumed to sift Others out) almost immediately translates into acceptance by Poles.

From the perspective sketched above, language – in the words of one woman – becomes a "common denominator" [13] which delineates the realm of what could objectively be seen as Polishness. The linguistic factor also facilitates the marking of a clear border between Poles and non-Poles. The linguistic community creates and demarcates the limits of its own group; it is a measure of integration as well as of a sensed communality, but also an indicator of who is "us" and who is "them."

4.3. The Polish language and the Polishness of Polish culture

Language is something more than a means of communication or a way of discovering the world, other people, and oneself. Although it is always humans who create a language, ultimately language finds us where we are born and continues to shape us. Considering dependencies and the possible components of identity (especially supra-individual identities

such as the nation), it can be said that language as an instrument creates, in a sense, its creators.

Language is the foundation upon which we build and objectivize all individual, singular experiences. Thanks to language we create a reality, but are also subject to its profound impact on us. Although so very clear, the borders of an internalized language can be invisible to us. Those limits become a complete certainty which exists within at a very basic level – so much so that people usually do not ponder the essence of how they function within a language.

Starting with the assumption that we are immersed in language, culture, and history (with which our respondents seem to concur), it is language that moves to the fore among cultural traits. One man commented, "Well, I was born in Poland, speak in Polish, and do not imagine life outside Poland" [5]. Another person elucidated further, "In my opinion this is very simple. It's enough to be born a Pole and live in Poland, at least while growing up. Then one absorbs certain behaviors, convictions, and so on" [30]. Such simplicity as expressed above illustrates exactly the level of obviousness that is independent of the individual: "Language? If I would have been born in another country, then I would speak a different language, so for me it's obvious that I speak in Polish" [6b]. Having been more or less deeply socialized in the national language is, from the standpoint of human fate, totally coincidental. But this opens a chance for meaningful inclusiveness in a community that is anchored in linguistic culture.

Identity as incontestable thanks to language appeared in the response of another interviewee: "I feel myself to be a Pole because I was born in Poland, because I speak Polish …. The fact that I speak Polish also makes me a Pole" [26]. The indubitability of being someone in an ethnic (Polish in this case) sense stems from the fact of being born on specific territory. Speaking in one's own language is inbuilt both in the way that our interlocutors spoke of this as well as in their underlining of linguistic "responsibilities": "In my opinion, composing Polishness is language. That is a very important element; every Pole must use his or her mother

tongue on a daily basis" [17]. That response points straightforwardly to a linguistic duty, connects it to emotional-territorial elements, and draws the boundaries the respondent discerns.

Other interlocutors nuanced their opinions more, yet we still found details which could not be reduced to a single factor: "For me it is above all a connection with the Polish language and the culture rooted therein as well as a subtle connection with the past. …. Polishness is in the language and culture" [1]. Someone else stated that, "Still the main factors deciding that a Pole is a Pole are probably the fact that we speak in the same language, that we are, to some extent, connected with each other by history" [23]. Delving into this deeper, the same person added, "The fact that I learned in Polish, I was taught Polish history. I think that that's what it is" [23]. Yet another interlocutor mentioned altogether three factors that, in her opinion, are requisite for Polishness, albeit mutually intertwined: "Knowledge of the Polish language, and then knowledge of the culture and history of Poland" [25]. A different respondent subjected the topic to more detailed analysis:

> In second place I would put knowledge of the Polish language. Just now I'm looking and was wondering a bit what would be second – if it would be knowledge of the language or culture, history. But, you know, my logic is that rather first would be language through which we can get to know culture and history very well. I am a philologist and I know that a very strong, considerable cultural code is in language [4].

Language, culture, and history mentioned together were a crucial issue for one respondent: "If a foreigner knows the language, has learned the culture and history, then who would forbid him from [becoming a Pole]?" [25]. Another individual emphasized a completely different facet of being born into a specific language – that is, the permanence of this identity element: "It's hard for me to imagine that – from one day to the next – you could cast off your native culture and take on another" [11].

A different interlocutor expressed a similar view:

> By moving to another country, we don't change our nationality. …. Because you move to a different country and change your citizenship, [but] you still have a

> Polish family, you know how to speak Polish, you know Polish customs. Citizenship is just a different passport and more options in some countries. …. Everything remains the same – you only get a different passport [22].

Something that arose in another conversation was recognition of a child from outside the Polish national community as a Pole: a condition was that the child acquire Polishness in the process of familial socialization. This pertains to a foreign child as well as to a Polish child born abroad. We will return to these issues, analyzing them more broadly and in more detail in Chapter 6.

In the eyes of our respondents, the linguistic factor is a sign of identity, but generally does not manifest as the sole factor. Usually it is linked with other elements such as, primarily, the cultural and historical. All three of these taken together create a complete and unique identity – a structure that cannot be reduced to any of its single components. Moreover, it cannot be easily shed; this is a whole which, in a manner not wholly understood by our respondents, influences, shapes, and fixes Polishness.

In the responses of various participants in our project it is nevertheless possible to distinguish one irreducible facet of the linguistic criterion: "Yes, language is not only the basis of communication, [but] it allows us to communicate with ourselves and with [our] inner circle, to exchange experiences, make discoveries, and thus create and mold our own identity" [19]. After all, as one woman observed accurately, "We think in some language" [1]. This is a very interesting observation which we can connect with the opinion of another individual: "I think that language and consciousness determine that a Pole feels Polish" [15]. In this context, meaningful is the suggestion of some respondents that identity is permanently acquired through language: "In my opinion, one is a Pole for a lifetime. It's not important where we presently live, we carry Polishness in our hearts all the time" [19].

Language is the core of society within a person. It is objective and, even if it facilitates the shaping of reality, it also evokes that reality in each human being. Therefore, there is not other reality in language than

a collective reality. Language is, after all, both individual and collective. It belongs eternally to a group and allows each member to understand him or herself precisely in the group. Only in language and its realm are we able to think of ourselves. To paraphrase a literary quote, "Say what you will, you will always… say what you will in some language." Exactly because language, as a collective endeavor and the product of a specific society, likely predestines a person to a permanent attachment; it will be impossible to tear oneself away to any significant degree.

Understood thusly, national languages are simply pieces extracted from language as a whole; national languages permit us to distinguish one another and to endow a certain community with its own character. This is especially the case when the history of a society has for centuries bestowed its language with extraordinary meaning. The language is seen as important to the coherence of the group as well as mutual identification within as a community that is bound together.

4.4. The practical value of Polish language fluency

Language usage has its obvious practical component. It is used by people to communicate so as to interact capably. The achieving of necessary errands is possible even with a mediocre linguistic competency – or even with little or no knowledge of the language. Nevertheless, getting to know the dominant language of the land, especially for a foreigner, enables (from a strictly utilitarian standpoint) more efficient cooperation; additionally, it enables more effective permeation into the cultural specificity of a new community.

Practically speaking, respondents called attention to the level of fluency as associated with the fact that, "Living in Poland, I wouldn't be able to communicate with my family or team at work. I feel that not using the Polish language would greatly hinder my functioning in society" [19]. The response of another interviewee hinted at something more than simple communication in a literal sense: "In second position

I would place knowledge of the Polish language so as to be able to communicate" [32]. With respect to the situation of foreigners in Poland, our interlocutors named significantly more practical aspects of language fluency: "Knowledge of the Polish language is also important. Without that, I think that, in the long run, it would be difficult to live in a foreign country. …. It would be tormenting, for example, to deal with official matters or some more serious things" [11]. Difficulties connected with an unfamiliarity with the language can have an impact on daily life: "If you live here, [are] on a two year contract, or it's ten years and in Polish you can't say much, that's kind of pitiful. Because say you go to the store, and how would you talk there?" [3].

More serious and detailed examples were also given:

> He only broke his leg, but we had to go to the emergency room and to communicate there in English, that would be a catastrophe…, explaining things, issues with insurance. He by himself, without knowing Polish, would sooner burst into tears than get something arranged…. Even filling in the registration form would be burdensome, so it was lucky I was nearby [10].

Indeed all these types of problems become less stressful when helped "for sure [by] that knowledge of Polish, at least at the level of communication" [9]. Another interviewee spoke of a non-Polish woman he knew who,

> loved Poland, even lived in Poland for a few years, was accepted by others around her. But, unfortunately, the fact that she could not master Polish and did not use it hampered her life in Poland where – in government offices, in hospitals, clinics – it was difficult to communicate in English. [So], unfortunately – at a certain point in her life, already an older person – when she needed medical assistance and various other things, taking care of official matters or meeting basic needs, she returned to her country. That did not, however, change the fact that this person still really loved Poland and spoke of it in nothing but superlatives [20].

This detailed account best sheds light on the numerous, practical, simple limitations placed on foreigners who do not know the language.

Some of our respondents, anticipating these practical problems, declared that for them personally, language fluency is not so important. However, "I feel that, despite the fact that it's not a problem for me, if someone speaks, for instance, in English, too. But in a country like ours, in which we live, I feel that the majority of people thinks it's important for a foreigner to speak in Polish" [28]. From this perspective, familiarity with the Polish language – in a country where familiarity in other languages (e.g., English) is not so universal – usage of the Polish language is treated as requisite in daily life. It serves as an instrument which opens most of the doors heretofore shut; it basically simplifies life.

Still, the researcher here asks a different question: Could a foreigner's perfect mastery of Polish be decisive in his or her recognition as a Pole? Among Poles whose national belonging goes unquestioned there are persons whose fluency in the language is far from perfect. Nevertheless, a foreigner's good knowledge of Polish can be treated as a sign of some stronger relationship with or special attitude towards Poland; it could also be a cause or consequence of a deeper knowledge of Polish history and culture. Some of our respondents betrayed greater inclusivity, suggesting that a foreigner "may," but certainly does not "have to" know the language.

The practical elements of language which, according to our interviewees, are important for becoming a Pole mainly concern foreigners and likely stem from the fact that one's own language is a psychological obviousness. For this reason it was easier for respondents to realize problems that arise in acquiring a new identity and immersing oneself in Polishness on the basis of foreigners in Poland. It is in this context that difficulties were more noticeable. One of the interviewees noted, "If you don't know the language, it's difficult to get to know the country" [11]. Another commented, "Because how can there be such a Pole who doesn't know Polish or even speak it? It'll simply be hard for him to be a part of our community…. [Language] will surely allow him to be more at home in our culture, society or at work" [7b]. Again, fluency in Polish

bears a practical aspect for the non-Pole: "But knowing the Polish language will be very necessary for this person, so that she can accustom herself to our Polish culture, into our Polish society" [15]. This respondent continued, "To truly feel Polish, to integrate with Polish culture, with Polish society, that knowledge of the language is indispensable" [15].

In order to acquire social knowledge and cultural competencies, and, along with that, the necessary components of individual identity, not only is fluency in the language necessary, but also the time for its acquisition. This is the process of getting habituated – a process of "becoming." It is precisely knowledge of the language that enables more efficient and quicker acculturation of the components discussed earlier. All this, consequently, can serve a successful integration and the construction of a "new" world. This, exactly, is the essence and importance of the practical dimension of language fluency in the creation of a new, Polish identity, of a new world for the individual. The change in identity which must accompany "becoming" a Pole requires, in first order, self-motivation on the part of the non-Pole – his or her, sometimes complicated decision.

In the words of one interlocutor, a "new" world without knowledge of the language can mean inaccessibility: "Without the language, I think it's impossible, because, you know, at the moment, this is a person who is interested in Polish culture – but this person will not have any ties with Poland, if he or she doesn't know the language" [15]. Thus, as can be ascertained by reading the opinions of our respondents, the binding power of language also has (in their eyes) a profoundly practical dimension.

The interview excerpts provided above – especially those describing the usefulness of Polish for a foreigner – point (in the practical sense) to the way in which identity is constructed. It is created through persistence, acquisition of skills and knowledge, participation in everyday life shared with others, and through the arduous, usually subconscious building of oneself in a new environment – this with the help of language and precisely thanks to the language of the given community.

4.5. "Almost Polish": The foreigner and his or her attitude towards the Polish language

Yet a different situation is created when a non-Pole does not disown his or her ethnonational roots, but chooses Poland as the place of residence, consciously aiming to get closer to that country and its culture. Here the motif of auto-socialization arises – one strongly emphasized in a few of our interviews with reference to foreigners and strongly linked to their mastery of the Polish language. Among others, it was presented this way: "He or she should live here a bit, 5, 10, 15 years [and] know the language a bit. …. That is an expression of respect – meaning the linguistic issue. Of course, he or she should also learn about Polish culture, but that happens almost automatically" [2].

An accent should be placed on the word "respect," because a non-Pole who has put down roots in Poland, but who is not learning the language is perceived as disrespectful. Testifying to this is the fact that knowledge of Polish is one of the consistently most important criteria, a sign of deference, and a manifestation of ties to Polishness. Another interlocutor asserted,

> Exactly! For me, that's a very important condition. I can't imagine a situation where someone is a Pole, but can't say a few words in Polish. I watch a lot of football. Lately on the national team there've been several cases where someone has been granted citizenship and represented the colors of Poland. Thiago Cionek, Taras Romanczuk or Eugen Polanski. They've always given interviews in Polish, even if it would be easier for them to speak English, but this way they had to prove their bond with the nation. The fans wouldn't forgive them if one of them was unable to put a sentence together in our language [3].

Key here is the pronoun "our" when speaking of the Polish language. That underscores the communal function of the national language – a symbol of the community. For the majority of our interlocutors, Polishness is strongly connected with the language. Polishness, nationality,

and identity are all anchored in language as a base. Language is so important because it socializes but also permits auto-socialization. Among the responses we gained, it is possible to discern a principle of building group identity through a language and thanks to a language. This is a complex process in which linguistic and cultural factors overlap.

> If someone is of Polish nationality, is deeply interested in our culture, and is learning the Polish language, then for me such a person can also be a Pole. That knowledge of the Polish language is certainly important, too. It is known that it's one of the most difficult languages to learn, but I would not feel that Polishness in someone, if he or she couldn't string a sentence together in Polish…. Knowledge of Polish culture and history is also important [5].

However, the difference between "putting a few words together" and linguistically "proving their attachment to the nation," completely alters the way our interlocutors perceived the Polishness of non-Poles in Poland: "I would also like to say that I greatly respect people who are learning the Polish language. It's one of the hardest languages in the world, so you need to be very motivated to learn it." [19].

In the auto-socialization of foreigners, one of the most desired elements mentioned by our interviewees was an emphatically underlined desire to become a part of the community. On the one hand, "[The person] must want to be a Pole" [14]; on the other hand, there should be a longing to learn Polish: "Above all, he must want to learn Polish. He doesn't have to speak full Polish. Just like, for instance, Pascal Brodnicki who hosts a culinary program on TVN or Michael Moran on *Master Chef* – it's his twisting of the Polish language and texts [with grammatical errors that] are so charming that we've come to love it" [8]. From this perspective it is not even necessary to know the language well, but one should express a strong desire to become familiar with it. The Other must want to undergo an auto-socialization. Such a yearning opens doors wide open for acceptance and positive perception of a foreigner by Poles. This kind of non-Pole can be loved; with open hearts, Poles will recognize such a person as "almost a Pole," shower the individual with great kindness, and make the person one of "us."

Nevertheless, another matter is attention to the purity and correctness of Polish language usage by "native" Poles, people who make great efforts at eloquence. Our interlocutors attached great importance to language as a sign of national identity. Among the comparative group of our older interviewees, there were words of concern for an unspoiled national language: "For me, the biggest problem is exactly – well dialects, maybe not, because that's in relation to some regions, place of residence, and so on – but rather the introduction of foreign words, say well, well, from German, English or French. After all, we have our own language, [so] why use some foreign languages here when we can speak in Polish" [MM2].Polish is, therefore, a value; one needs to care for its purity and autonomy.

4.6. Polishness and loss of the Polish language

Another category worth taking under consideration are people who have lost their knowledge of Polish in their lifetime. Found in this category are children of emigrants who have been born and raised abroad. Under migration circumstances, the parents must show great determination in order for the children to preserve full and fluent knowledge of the mother tongue.

Also found are situations in which parents make a conscious decision to not encourage or even discourage children from learning a language unneeded in their lives as immigrants. Intentional dissuasion when resettling outside Poland is a consequence of a specific identity choice for oneself as well as future generations. Among our interviewees, this was met with criticism: "It's a bit sad because they grew up here and they speak Polish. It's a pity that they leave and, in the end, don't come back, forgetting about our Polish values and customs" [6]. Use of the word "pity" indicates regret over loss of the language treated as an intrinsic value, but also as a means for comprehending various levels of Polish

culture. The above-cited speaker seems to assume that loss of the language distances or even cuts a person off from competencies in one's own national culture. Abandonment of one's mother tongue is linked here to rejection of the culture and identity of one's birthplace.

In a unique and different category are persons from ethnically and/or nationally mixed families which often leads to bilingualism, following the languages of the parents. Most often, however, one of the languages will become dominant and more frequently used on a day-to-day basis. Regardless of whether a language is that of early or secondary socialization and regardless of other circumstances, one language will become dominant: our respondents assume that there can be only a single, leading language.

This opens the path to deliberations upon the possibilities for "perfect" biculturalism or "real" bilingualism. However, we concentrated in our study on the views of our respondents who – in the younger cohort – all had a tertiary education, but none of whom was a linguist. Their conviction was that a single language, single culture, and even a single national identity must prevail, even in persons who are multicultural, multinational.

4.7. Summary

The two most important criteria for Polishness are in the foreground of higher-educated, younger Poles. The first criterion is psychological – a feeling that one is a Pole, a national identity at the level of identification. The second is a cultural competency in the national language.

The territorial criteria (e.g., being born in Poland and living there permanently) are more secondary factors, but concurrently fulfill the role of elementary bases. Knowledge of Polish history and culture intertwine with the aforementioned, creating a logical whole. Rare in our interviews were direct references to biological factors and the notion of inheriting national belonging. That criterion is nonetheless inextricably

linked with cultural continuity, with its transmission of knowledge, consciousness, and social identity (of which national identity is an essential part).

Looking from a perspective opposite of that applied thus far, in the following two chapters we will focus on those criteria of Polishness which were most rarely marked as important or very important. In both the quantitative and qualitative research, the criteria discussed and analyzed below were consistently seen as less significant for belonging to the Polish national community.

Chapter V

The Structure of Understanding Polishness: From More to Less Crucial Social Criteria for Polishness

5.1. Introductory remarks

The primary objective of the book at hand is to try to unravel the structure of how Poles think about their national identity. We attempt to distinguish the key elements within that identity – the elements that logically organize this thinking – including those with secondary, supplementary, or even coincidental connections with thinking about Polishness.

In addition to the exceptionally durable content which fits within the concept of Polishness (essentially building it), some persistent directions of change can be noticed when comparing over the course of three decades. The observable shifts concern a decrease in the significance assigned to the criterion of service on behalf of Poland and in the premise of a professed religious faith in common – that is, Roman Catholicism.

When considering the standing of specific criteria of Polishness – both in the quantitative survey and in the qualitative interviews – noteworthy is that the two criteria just mentioned (elements of Polish national identity) are unswervingly the least frequently indicated as important for Polishness. However, during the survey, respondents were expected to express their opinions within strict limitations. The response categories ranged from "very important" through "rather important" to "rather unimportant" and "definitely unimportant" and respondents faced the necessity to react quickly in registering their choices. In contrast, during the lengthy, thematically organized interviews, the respondent was not forced to make a concrete choice among the criteria. It is significant that in this section of the interview, some criteria surfaced under different names:

- A belief that one is a Pole along with various levels of emotional engagement associated with such a conviction;
- Knowledge of the Polish language and its fluent usage; and
- Knowledge of Polish history and culture.

Among the traits seen as crucial were language and knowing the history and culture of Poland. In the interviews, there was no spontaneous articulation of the criteria of service on behalf of Poland or of the religious (i.e., Roman Catholic) community. Moreover, it turned out that decade after decade these last two foci are diminishing in assigned significance in survey results. An increasingly smaller percentage of people (and to a lower degree) assigns a link at all with Polishness and Polish national identity.

The crux of our qualitative research – conducted more than a year after the quantitative survey – was rooted in a desire to deepen comprehension of the statistics provided by the three edition of the survey. To some extent, it was possible to compare the responses to the strictly standardized questions with the broader, spontaneous statements made; only minimally refined, additional questions were added by the researchers. The interviewee statements made sense in explaining the position of each criterion of Polishness proposed in the survey; it also made it possible to discover how respondents justified particular choices.

During the first part of the interview, the researcher refrained from making any suggestions. Only in the middle of the conversation did we introduce the entire set of the survey criteria into the interview guide. This left respondents with the possibility of spontaneous reactions, without suggesting an ordering of the criteria in terms of their importance. We only suggested this time that the criteria of Polishness, which had been duplicated from the survey, should be ranked according to their significance. The importance and meaning of each criterion was carefully considered.

In addition to those already discussed in the earlier sections of the volume at hand, the listed factors included special service on behalf of Poland

and Roman Catholicism. We leave discussion of the last of these criteria for another publication as it requires additional, in-depth analyses.

5.2. Service on behalf of Poland
– Comprehending the criterion

We will deal now with the most rarely mentioned criterion or component of Polishness. This aspect was introduced by phrases mentioning "meritorious service for Poland" or "special service for Poland." Such terms presuppose great value placed on the country and could be understood as an emphasis on the political interests of the Polish state or "Poland" as a certain abstract value in and of itself. In fact, the value of a country is related to the value of an individual identifying with it, but sometimes also with emphasis on Polish cultural uniqueness.

The qualitative research from 2020-2021 identified certain sources of shifts and changes – referring in this case to a decrease in the significance assigned to this criterion. There were also indications of a broader trend in thinking about the relationships between national and religious identity vis-à-vis the state identity. It seems that changed reactions to the questions posed could be partially attributed to the effects of changes in the meaning of certain conceptual categories functioning in Polish (including in our study). In the phrase that appears both in the interviews and in the survey question about the criteria of Polishness, there are two nouns which, aside from their emotional content, sound quite general and even abstract – one is "service" and the other is "Poland."

Both of these suggest content understood at a linguistic level, but containing great potential for interpretation. Overall, connotations that arise when these two nouns are connected go in various directions; those connotations could cause problems for our respondents. Analysis of the interviews points specifically to two interconnected problems:

- The way that "being a Pole" or "becoming a Pole" is under-stood – Through primary socialization, taking hold together with language acquisition in the family, in close circles, and in school; and
- The way that "service on behalf of Poland" is understood – Two very open concepts are employed, hence introducing a wide range of interpretations.

Already in the early editions of the survey, the categories referring to service for the country and Roman Catholicism were seen to be losing percentiles; respondents did not see these as meaningful in describing a person as a Pole. Now, in the course of the in-depth, loosely structured interviews it turned out that simply posing such a question did not speak to the imagination of our young, well-educated adult respondents.

The notion of special service was understood by our interlocutors in terms of heroism – such as surrendering one's life, sacrifice in struggles for the country's independence, or (more positively) pro-state, pro-so-cietal, or, in economic terms, honest and efficient work in Poland and for its benefit. It was difficult to identify behaviors that could be con-sidered service for Poland today; this was a fairly general concept, very imprecise with the exception of the political aspect.

Alongside the political changes in Europe – a growing sense of safety and security, aims at peaceful negotiations in the resolution of ethnic and/or international conflicts – there is a decrease in situations of the most dramatic sort and thus less thinking of Polish society in terms of needing to resolve drastic, violent disputes. Such associations are a thing of the past, although in the notion of "service for Poland" there is an element of the sublime as the country and/or the entire nation be-comes a value. With this query so ambiguously and poorly understood, we can explain the relatively low score earned by this survey question about this criterion for recognizing a person who has contributed such service as a Pole. We suspect that the lack of clarity in this question and its outcome was due primarily to the pressure of time and an inability

to consult with a researcher when completing a questionnaire; this limited chances for deeper reflection.

With regards to the second problem, it is more linked to political, economic, and cultural changes taking place over the last dozen years in Poland and Europe. In this part of the world, in Poland as well, there is no longer a strong emphasis on aspects of defense of a sovereignty politically and violently threatened; instead, the interests of individual countries, especially EU countries, primarily emphasize an economic aspect. Therefore, in all three editions of the survey, serving the country was consistently among the least applied criterion when deciding that someone is a Pole.

In the course of the qualitative study, respondents were also a bit disoriented by this issue. Their commentary and (more generally) their behavior indicated that the question about extraordinary service to the country caused confusion for many. Some of them did not know how to answer; there were long pauses in their responses and they were uncertain of their opinions. Not infrequently there was incredulity when the researcher asked about recognizing someone as a Pole and then added the query about meritorious service. This problem was especially clear in the following exchange between the researcher and interviewee:

> **R** – And special service on behalf of Poland?
>
> **I** – Special service for Poland…. Perhaps a short explanation?
>
> **R** – I don't have any – but what do you think, how can this be understood?
>
> **I** – I haven't the faintest idea [1].

The interviewee either did not have a way to phrase this or did not want to put in words how this criterion was understood. It was evident, however, in the replies that two types of connotations were arising in connection with serving Poland: one was associated with Polish citizenship bestowed as an award; the other was associated with recognizing someone as part of the Polish ethnonational community. These two paths of thinking were made with reference to a foreigner earning citizenship.

One could gain the impression that our interviewees were often puzzled by the issue. Some of them understood this to mean that a non-Pole

sacrificed his or her life: spontaneously described were cases of foreigners who took action under extreme political or social circumstances. Appearing in interviews were occasional doubts about how various of the criteria of Polishness should be understood, but here questions pertained explicitly to the phrase "service on behalf of Poland."

It is worth examining the reason for the disruptive troubles brought on by that phrasing. One reason is that such a notion is manifestly absent in everyday conversation, the mass media or political discourse. For interviewees it also seemed archaic – referring to battles for independence unconsidered under current circumstances, or referring to a contemporaneously marginal, inapplicable deeds when all that is necessary is honest work and sound fulfillment of obligations.

The lack of an unequivocal reading of this criterion also concerned something which could be seen as serving Poland – the country as a whole or the entirety of its society. In the unrestricted comments of our interlocutors mention was made of radical, extraordinary, and unusual situations. This meant giving one's life in defense of Poland, medal-winning achievements in sports, or accomplishments that raised the prestige of the country and its society. At times this encompassed risking one's life for another person (regardless of nationality) or the high moral virtues of an individual. All of the above can be taken under consideration, although the last two might be seen as serving humanity in general, rather than Poland in particular.

The rarest idea – a more positivistic one – coming to the minds of our respondents was that of honest efforts contributing to the development and prosperity of Poland. It should be emphasized here that special service was associated with the President of Poland simply bestowing citizenship upon an individual and not with the individual being subsequently treated as a Pole, or as a deserving, valued foreigner and good citizen who should be respected. Consequently, no further question was raised to see how interviewees felt Polish society should treat such a citizen.

In the course of our interviews, both the researchers and the respondents easily moved from the matter of "becoming a Pole" to that of

acquiring Polish citizenship. Interlocutors, however, were not aware that institutional citizenship is coincidentally linked with national belonging. As the responses of our interviewees show, the word "Polishness" could be associated with the institutional, official sphere by which in a republican tone, it is only the holding or not of a Polish passport that decides who can be called a Pole. For a significant group of our interlocutors, such reasoning was instinctive although encompassing some contradictions. The interviewees did note the paradoxes, but only after deeper consideration – when they realized the gap as well as link between citizenship and cultural belonging (especially with its psychological component). Thus the concepts of possessing citizenship, Polish nationality, and service on behalf of the country were variously interwoven by our respondents – or not at all.

We now look at particular reactions by our interlocutors to the question of whether Polishness can (and, if so, how it can) be earned by serving Poland. To a suggestion that it could be brilliant scientific achievements, one person initially answered, "For me, scientific achievements are more private achievements" [48]. When asked about a Nobel Prize, he added: "Yes, that is meritorious, but it doesn't have, for me, a great deal of meaning in qualifying an individual in the categories of Polishness" [48].

This type of service is, therefore, a conscious act of one's own volition. But for a portion of our interviewees, the fact that someone is Polish stems from factors independent of the person's will. Along these lines of thinking, being a Pole is decided (alongside the psychological considering oneself so) by birth – regardless of whether the person wants this or not. A Nobel Prize is seen as private, even if it adds some prestige to the country. But raising Poland's prestige appears not to be sufficient service on behalf of the country to qualify someone as Polish.

The respondent cited above seemed to be operating in a psychological sphere, more focused on deeply rooted, primal traits than the institutional.

Another interlocutor replied,

> Well…. Special service? Very few among flesh-and-blood Poles is who have [performed] special service. I understand this as some scientific accomplishments, not to mention military, sports…. How many such people are there? 5% of the society? Probably not even that much. Then all the more [rare] among foreigners or people who do not live permanently in Poland, that's rather difficult [to find] [44].

We do meet, too, with commentary strongly arguing against such awarding of citizenship:

> In my opinion, that's impossible. Nevertheless, I also don't know if such cases have not taken place in history. However, if we take into account the fact that, after his death, such a person no longer had a chance to, in and of himself, recognize himself as a Pole, then we can't ascribe that to him. That could be perhaps against his or her will. And you just can't. He or she must express such a desire and not be forced into something. So posthumously this is impossible. After all, how can we consider someone a Pole due to his or her service? That would be like selecting the best things and assigning them to yourself [39].

One woman likewise considered a posthumous citizenship in the case of exceptional service to Poland: "I would be a rather careful with such an ascription. It depends on the case, but, in fact, we cannot really know, if the person would want to be recognized as a Pole" [41].

5.3. The social significance of the service for Poland criterion

When we asked our interviewees to arrange all the criteria from the most to the least important, they usually classified the notion of earning citizenship in last or the penultimate (ahead of Roman Catholicism) place. One of the women who placed this at the bottom of the list justified his choice: "Because, in fact, Poles themselves rather don't do anything special for Poland" [33], adding further that such deeds do not, intrinsically, make a Pole of anyone.

A male interlocutor provided a more detailed response which we quote here in its entirety:

> In the case of a foreigner – but the same with a Pole – there is a sense of national identity. Next, in my opinion, is knowledge of Polish culture and history. In third place, I would list observance of Polish customs, on par with knowledge of the Polish language because that will allow the person to appropriately adapt to Polish tradition, culture, and society. Next in line would be living in Poland because that allows you to find yourself in our culture, take advantage of it, and find yourself in it. The following aspect could be being born in Poland. In my opinion, that may not be the most important thing for becoming a Pole, but certainly those people who were born in Poland, but haven't lived in the country all their lives – certainly because of the very fact of [their] birth, they feel a bond with Poland or it's easier for them to find that feeling inside. Having a parent of Polish nationality will also – like with the place of birth – have an influence on the feeling of an undefined bond with Poland. Because it will nevertheless always be this country – talk about this country, tradition, family, and history – that will crop up in such a family where one of the parents will be of this, Polish nationality. I think that service for Poland, well that will be the last aspect here. Therefore, earlier – we still have the Catholic faith as part of Polish culture, but that is also one of the least important criteria for me [29].

This same man also felt that skin color was inconsequential, just like serving the country or Catholicism, stating that "An Orthodox Christian, Catholic, or even a follower of Judaism can feel a connection with Poland" [29]. Similar was the response of another interlocutor: "After all, Poland – as we remember from the pages of our history – was very differentiated in terms of religion and nationality. I think this can't be a reason to consider that someone is a better, and someone else a worse Pole" [49]. Replying to a query, if a practicing Muslim living in Poland could be called a Pole, one of the respondents said, "Well… [pause], faith is not strictly assigned to the country, so well… that can't be treated as a very rigid criterion either. Not treating faith as an important criterion for a sense of Polishness, [or] from which families they come, etc." [24].

As for the entire list, different respondent ranked the criteria as follows:

> Oh Jesus…. Well…. Can I start from the least important? The least important are… special service for Poland, then the Catholic faith, having at least one parent, um…

> [pause], then being born in Poland, following Polish customs, having Polish citizenship, then permanent residence, knowledge of culture and history, knowledge of the language, and coming out as the first thing is the feeling that you are a Pole [37].

Thus this was an example of a very classic ranking of the criteria for Polishness in which a feeling that one simply is a Pole takes first place.

In summary, it can be said that at the forefront of associations with Polishness are this psychological decision as obvious as well as cultural competences, including primarily language. Other criteria of Polishness suggested by the list provided are somehow supplementary or are connected with the most important criteria. Both faith (worldview) and (all the more so) the rather vaguely perceived service on behalf of Poland are treated as extraneous.

5.4. To become a Pole, to become a Polish citizen?

Analyzing the responses which place weight on the criteria of a parent who is of Polish nationality and Polish citizenship (as well as on various cultural competencies), we notice that only the feeling that one is a Pole is conclusive in recognizing a foreigner as a Pole. This means that an inner, individual feeling and conviction of one's own ethnic and national identity ultimately decides about a given belonging. Such a strong conviction among our interlocutors about the self-definition of national belonging is also reflected in the belief that no one can be considered a Pole without his or her own word on this.

Regarding the essence of the cultural community, this surfaces in answers to questions as to whether a foreigner can become a Pole. "I think that he will never be [a Pole] completely. Because he cannot wholly understand and feel what we Poles born in Poland and raised here feel, how we understand each other, what we have gone through, and how all that has influenced us" [20]. Another interlocutor, replying to the same question, asserted that, "He will never be entirely Polish. He can live here, he can assimilate, he can seem to be a part, so to speak, of Poland.

…. our nation, society. …. But will that make him a Pole, will it help find those features of Polishness? Not necessarily, I think" [15].

The respondents suggested that certain unique traits exist which are markers of Polishness. There was a strong feeling that Poles are incapable of erasing from their biography the longterm elements of identity constructed over a life time (since early childhood) and variously intertwined inextricably with the individual. Such aspects are definitely beyond the reach of a single person with his or her personal decisions.

Here we can recount the opinion of one respondent who inferred that supra-individual linguistic elements can be almost deterministic and, to some extent, irreversible. "We are born in the country called Poland, among people called Poles, so automatically we become Poles without any kind of intervention. And, just perhaps, this is against the person's will" [22]. From the viewpoint of a single biography, someone's Polishness (as it would likely be with Czechness, Hungarianness, or Frenchness) is coincidental in the sense that this is not the result of conscious decisions and actions. Therefore another question arises: How can a foreigner become a Pole if only an accident of fate decides our nationality?

Nonetheless, from the many responses quoted above it can be concluded that, feeling a bond with Poland, Poles, and Polish culture, a foreigner can fully or at least to some degree become a Pole – or at least a Polish citizen. Moreover, to achieve Polishness, he or she does not have to meet all of the symbols of Polishness proposed herein. For instance, a Pole can be someone who was not born in Poland; a Pole can also be someone without even a single Polish ancestor.

One of the interviewees gave the example of an Englishman, the husband of her cousin who came to Poland with his wife and newborn child. This foreigner feels quite at home in Poland and is intensively studying Polish and learning Polish culture. According to the interviewee, the reason why this man wants to apply for Polish citizenship is "the love which he experienced on the part of his Polish family" [3]. For such individuals, citizenship is important, but – as a different interviewee said – this is not always necessary, because "one can be a Pole, feel Polish, and not

have Polish citizenship" [5]. It is worth recalling that very few were the respondents who responded exclusively in an institutional fashion that being Polish is equal to having Polish citizenship.

Rare, too, were comments that renounced any and all of the psychological aspects of Polishness. "A Pole, German, American, or French person – for me, those are only identification tags for someone who is a legal citizen of a country. To my knowledge, only a document confirming Polish citizenship can decide whether someone is a Pole" [9]. Also surfacing at times were the deeper levels of understanding citizenship, not only as an institutionalized state of affairs, but as a certain value that can be bestowed upon someone.

5.5. Summary

The focus here was the last criterion, expressed in a question of whether exceptional service on behalf of Poland can constitute a reason to recognize someone as a Pole? Instinctively, our interviewees tended to associate a response to this question with the issue of Polish citizenship granted by the President to foreigners. This type of citizenship was seen as reward and recognition for substantial deeds, invaluable for the country of Poland.

Emerging from time to time in the commentary of our interviewees were specific examples of great service for Poland by foreigners. These were very well-assimilated individuals, defenders of Poland's independence acting for the benefit of that country. When asked if he recalls historical examples of a non-Pole being recognized as a Pole, one respondent answered, "Certainly there are, but I would have to remind myself. I know that there was a Black man who took part in the Warsaw Uprising and he came from Africa. But that was no obstacle, everyone liked him. Someone who gave his life, devoted himself to the cause. It's hard for me to come up with something off the top of my head" [18]. Another respondent spoke in a similar vein, "Well, today we don't have such examples, no one will

stand with a weapon, because a conflict today would look different. But there is just such an example, that it happens this way. He died by choice, for Poland. Well, there's more than one example for sure" [21]. Asked what such meritorious service for Poland would entail, one man said,

> Such a clear example would be assistance in critical situations like war, but... it could also be some kind of political assistance. For example, if someone has a lot of influence – say, in the European Union – and knows it would threaten him, threaten his position, but he would say something that puts Poland in a better light, well that, too, would also be some kind of assistance. But of course too small for someone to be granted Polish citizenship [11].

Some interviewees plainly differentiated a situation in which a foreigner – one who essentially neither considered him or herself a Pole, nor was treated as one by others – elicited traits which, in his or her own opinion as well as in the opinion of Polish society, would classify the individual as a Pole. For instance,

> Mmm... [longer pause], well now we don't have such situations, but, for example, during the war, if someone was of great service to this country, supported the Poles – well, then yes. I think that in moments of great tragedy, or also... There are various situations that are crises for the country – for Poland, for the environment – where different people from different countries contribute to [fixing] it, and I think that these are the moments when someone seems to have an attitude, could prove [him/herself] enough to be considered a Pole [9].

In response to further questioning about whether giving one's life for Poland warrants recognition as a Pole, this same woman said,

> It could be, it could be that way – and I don't know if, don't know if that hasn't happened before, that if someone even had different citizenship, but died for a given country, then the community would recognize him as one of its own and I agree with that. I would consider such a person a Pole as if he were one of my own [9].

A different person was asked if there were some special circumstances that could lead to saying that someone is a Pole: "I think that only when he himself wants it. No one else can define us ourselves. It's the heart that defines this" [12]. Asked more pointedly if a foreigner can become a Pole if he or she does something remarkable for Poland, he answered

that, "To be honest, I don't really understand why anyone would become a Pole just because they did something for Poland. After all, [they] possess the values of their own country, and one should help others, just like Poles support other countries in difficult times" [12]. Analyzing his replies, it is clear that the respondent distinguished between three things: 1) becoming a Pole culturally and out of conviction, 2) Polish citizenship, and 3) the role of working for or helping Poland (or some other country) as a way to earn citizenship.

With regards to the last of these, a female respondent lay seeds of doubt: "If someone's done something good for Poland, then, of course, one should definitely talk about such service – but recognizing him or her as a Pole might be a bit too much" [13]. Still, when asked about sacrificing one's life for Poland, she qualified, "Here I'm more inclined to recognize such a person as a Pole, although I also think that you can't describe anyone like that without knowing what his or her exact goal was. Here you can talk about a love for Poland, but I think you can love Poland and not necessarily feel like a Pole" [13].

At times bestowal of Polish citizenship was raised in the sense of a great deed less on behalf of Poland and more on behalf of humankind. The backdrop for this was an incident in which a Ukrainian immigrant rescued a family from a vehicle in flames. That Ukrainian's gaining of Polish citizenship was a benefit, but, at the time of his act of bravery, he certainly was not thinking of some reward. One interlocutor asserted,

> Of course not. The point here is that what he did could be something wonderful for Poland, and we should appreciate this and we can honor him with various medals and posthumous orders, but this person, this won't make him a Pole. What kind of Pole is that? There could be such a situation where he's done something for Poland, but doesn't even know anything about Polish history, Polish culture, doesn't know the language, doesn't have any roots [here] [27].

Evidently in the thinking of this interlocutor, what makes someone a Pole is biological descent and cultural competencies. These are instinctively and spontaneously raised in comparison with deeds that bear no intrinsic link to Polishness as such. The most important element in becoming a

Pole is a desire to be recognized as such – as well as general involvement in social life, basic knowledge about the country, paying heed to culture and history, and extolling Poland's glory far and wide.

In summary,

- Service on behalf of Poland is not fully comprehended by respondents, but always categorized in terms of sacrifice for the Polish nation;
- Recognition of someone as a Pole is consistently associated with conferral of Polish citizenship;
- Citizenship is treated as a form of reward – sometimes financially or socially measurable, sometimes just a symbolic honor;
- Recognition of someone as a Pole is possible solely when that individual expresses such a will and desire;
- Service on behalf of Poland only rarely evokes heroic sacrifice; and
- Services rendered on behalf of a Poland understood more abstractly are equally abstract (to be kept in mind during interpretation); people are unable to link concrete acts with a generalized notion of Poland.

Significant is that the institutional act of bestowing Polish citizenship and treatment of someone as a Pole are seen as a form of acceptance and even a reward. Sometimes such a prize was not foreseen for bravery on the battlefield or for a love of Poland and its culture, but for a heroic rescue of a specific person, exceptional sacrifice in order to save someone's life. Surfacing in a few responses was the case of the Ukrainian and his exceptional response to that life-threatening accident. Overall, however, that specific example is not actually a response to the question posed as it does comprise service strictly on behalf of Poland. The Ukrainian acted impulsively and could not have known the nationality of the people trapped inside the vehicle. Ultimately, what counted the most among our interviewees was, again, an individual's desire to become a Pole; this was more important than familiarity with various aspects of Polish culture.

Chapter VI

Relinquishment of Polishness: Distance, departure, and rejection

6.1. Introductory remarks

In this chapter we will focus on circumstances which – according to our respondents – could lead to a renunciation, abandonment, departure or distancing from Polishness. Worth a reminder is that our research moves in circles of what is imagined or conceived. We are analyzing ideas our respondents have about various thinkable situations in life, but not real life situations (although such are occasionally recalled). At the end of our interview guide, we included a query which touches upon a problem more complex than others and less obvious to our interlocutors. The question – Can one stop being a Pole? – was left open, without any specific propositions or suggestions to shed more light on this.

The replies provided, directly or indirectly, subtle information about the attitudes of our respondents to the issue of Polishness and its subjective definitions. Crucial for us sociologists was that this topic (albeit not easy) did arouse interest and deeper reflection among the younger generation. The issue of abandoning a nationality is intertwined with the issue of acquiring a national identity: both pertain to changes in an individual's national identity.

When posing the earlier question about a foreigner entering into the Polish national community, we did not go further. We did not ask if a foreigner who feels Polish, holds citizenship, lives and works in Poland, and has a Polish family ceases to be an Englishperson, Indian, American, or other original national belonging; that emerged spontaneously in

interviews in connection with the problem of conferral of Polish citizenship and becoming an "ethnic" Pole. It was only at such a moment that a distinction was made this between institutional and ethnical Polishness while replying to open-ended questions.

It is for this reason that we concentrate in this part of our analyses only upon situations involving Poles. In what situations in life, under what exact circumstances can someone stop being a Pole. Can such a relinquishment of Polishness be viewed in the categories of an internal, thought-through decision, or as a consequence of external, dependent factors.

6.2. Can one stop being Polish?

Our interlocutors expressed a variety of opinions with regards to the possibility and rationale behind a person's shedding of Polishness. Some responded negatively, others positively to the question; there were also responses that, to a degree, connected both the negative and positive. Some interviewees were not completely certain how to approach this subject, made reference to a variety of arguments, evoked different criteria for Polish national belonging, and usually employing a few of these lines of thinking simultaneously.

It is worth looking at an argumentation articulated by interviewees who claimed that Polishness is not something ascribed to an individual once and for all and that one can stop being a Pole – although evaluation of such a fact can be varied. Asked this question, one respondent provided an extensive reply:

> **I** – Tough question, but I think so. For example, when someone pretends that he's not. Travels, for example, to America, changes his name from Kowalski to Smith, [and] as soon as he learns English, he'll forget Polish in a single day. If someone doesn't admit to his nationality, then what kind of Pole is he? Let him be called an American [and] renounce his citizenship since that Polishness bothers him so much. Because even living abroad, you can be a full-fledged Pole – cultivate Polish traditions, get friends interested in them. Such people are absolutely Poles.

R – So the worst thing is to deny your roots?

I – Absolutely. Something like that irritates me a lot [18].

Among the interlocutors who did feel that a Pole can cease to be a Pole, many referred to the criterion of self-identification; for some this was the sole argument. They would say, for instance, something along the lines of "He has to stop feeling like a Pole in order to be able to say that he isn't" or "If someone doesn't feel Polish, then he simply isn't." This kind of response affirmed that only one's own sense of being can decide about national identity.

The absence of other criteria, however, does not mean that the others are wholly insignificant, but that self-identification was the overriding and key criterion. In fact other interlocutors linked self-identification with specific aspects of the remaining criteria. Specifically in two cases there was a linking of legal and territorial issues. The first was "If someone stops feeling Polish. Well, if it's a rejection. The reasoning is this: if someone renounces their citizenship and moves to another country, then why not?" [17]. The second expressed it this way: "You can! By renouncing Polish citizenship. It'd be hard for a person who doesn't feel Polish, doesn't live in the country, could call himself a Pole" [19]. These answers just cited show that, in addition to a sense or feeling that Polishness has been lost other actions are also expected in order to fully realize such a departure. This can mean emigration from Poland as well as an official renunciation of citizenship.

Here we come across the formal, institutional criterion. The taking of Polish citizenship as well as surrendering it constitute legal consequences and are secondary with respect to a sense of Polishness. Respondents observed that the situation can go both ways for a Pole outside Poland and a foreigner inside Poland: "Just as someone can feel Polish despite not having Polish roots, someone can go abroad and start identifying as English or a German" [19]. Such a reply suggests that a person can indeed change national identity by leaving the homeland.

Another respondent claimed that, "If someone mentally wants to cut themselves off from all this and leave this culture, then I think yes" [31].

She further implied that when there is no sense of a bond with the country and its culture, then one can stop being a Pole. There were responses in which interviewees justified their views by referring to territorial-biological and cultural criteria – above all, being born in Poland. One example of this is, "Someone doesn't want to be Polish anymore, because he went to the States and started a family there, settled down, and doesn't have much to do with Poland – doesn't follow information about what's happening in our country and it doesn't interest him at all" [43]. Another comment in a similar vein was, "Let's say that someone was born in Poland, has this citizenship from the start, but left the country at a few years of age, never came back here, doesn't know the language, history, and current events" [38]. Interestingly, these persons did not take into consideration the historical, 19th century wave of Polish emigration which sent Poles to many different countries and continents.

All the responses analyzed here comprise a narrative from the perspective of Poles who continue to live in the country and are deliberating upon the possibility of no longer being a Pole. This is often an outcome of travel abroad that becomes permanent. In the opinion of our interviewees, a physical relocation and the creation of new familial and cultural ties in another country often results in a distancing from Polishness. With regards to this particular question, respondents neither mentioned the self-identification criterion, nor did they present the possibility of resignation "on demand." Instead they pointed to the lack of precise actions: a person who does not live in the country, is not interested in current affairs, and does not use the language de facto cease to be a Pole.

Yet another thought that came to one respondent's mind is the concept of recognizing someone as Polish on the basis of ius sanguinis, but against the person's will. Our interlocutor provided a case:

> She is considered Polish, even though she herself doesn't have to feel like a Pole at all and doesn't really want to be one. These can also be people who emigrated from Poland for some reason, don't maintain contact with the country and family,

and want to cut themselves off from their national identity. Then if someone describes such people as Poles, it's against their will. I think that such examples are not so few [19].

6.3. One cannot stop being Polish?

Considering the argumentation of respondents who opposed the notion that a possibility exists to stop being a Pole, it is worth noting that most of these interviewees relied upon a colloquial understanding of the nation described earlier herein. This is why they took into account biological and territorial criteria in their arguments, but also pointed to links with Polish culture as features testifying to the durability of the ethnonational identity. The following statement is especially telling: "That means, certainly, if we were born in Poland, raised in Poland, then we are certainly Poles to the end of our lives" [8]. With regards to the above-mentioned questions about understanding Polishness as a community of an ethnic nature, the following dialogue between the researcher and respondent is worth reading:

R – And what do you think, can you stop being a Pole?

I – No, I mean how? [answer comes lightning fast, without thinking]

R – Why?

I – How can you stop being what you are? [2].

The decisive tone taken and immediate responses preclude the very idea of breaking with a Polishness once it has been acquired. Polishness is, generally speaking here, an inalienable trait.

Only a minority of the respondents felt that a national identity can be changed on the basis of a personal decision. In some cases, this was the main argument presented by our interviewees; for others this was a criterion coexisting on the same level as others. Among those other criteria was a person's birthplace. Some respondents claimed that, "When you're born in Poland, well, you'll always be that Pole „ [22]. Affirming such an opinion was this statement, "If you were, so to say, brought up here, for years you

lived surrounded by other Poles, then it's unlikely that at the age of forty you'd be able to suddenly forget about it" [33]. Again, responses of this type suggest that only territorial and biological criteria – being born in Poland of Polish parents – decides about whether someone is Polish or not.

Another topic raised was where an individual was raised: this essentially links with birthplace, residing in the given country, parental descent, and their assumed transmission of national culture and tradition. Even if someone permanently emigrates from Poland, Polishness cannot be forgotten or cast aside: "it's in us." As one man described it, "Moving to another country, we do not change our nationality. … You're a Pole all your life" [24]. Another male (cited more briefly earlier in this volume) agreed, "In my opinion, one is a Pole for a lifetime. It's not important where we presently live, we carry Polishness in our hearts all the time, and history and tradition are something we will reference all our lives" [19]. Thus expressed is a patriotic attitude among our respondents, a stance assuming an attachment to the history and culture of one's birthplace, regardless where one finds oneself at a given moment. These replies to our questions also highlight the fact that a Pole does not necessarily need to permanently reside in Poland.

In connection with the question at hand, a determinedly negative response would occasionally be more elaborated:

> I think not. Because if someone previously felt Polish, then they'll always feel that they are Polish. That belonging to the group of Poles could be weakened, for example, by the political situation in the country, because someone might not agree with the ways in which Poland is managed by the ruling party and thus believe that the country is being destroyed and getting weaker. Additionally, politics divides people very much – often into 'better' and 'worse' Poles. However, it seems to me that the feeling of being Polish is definitely sitting somewhere in your head and a sentiment towards Poland won't let you stop being a Pole [20].

Surfacing in our interviews were also infrequent opinions about the criterion of self-identification as an argument against a renunciation of Polishness. Such interlocutors claimed, for instance, that, "You can fake

it, create impressions that one is not a Pole, but internally you will always be one" [27]. Or another assertion, "I think that if someone already has the feeling that he is a Pole and has had this feeling in his life, then … I'm unable to imagine a situation – what would have to happen for this person to completely cut himself off from the country" [17]. These responses also lead to a conclusion that the respondents were convinced of a permanent, unalterable, and inalienable identification with the nation and with being Polish. The views of people who would claim that they are no longer Polish were seen by our respondents here as playing games, being untrue, and pretending to have successfully "converted" in national terms.

Summarizing this aspect of a personal decision to obtain or renounce a set national identity, it is worth categorizing the views of our interlocutors. Overall, they felt that deciding about a departure from Polishness are:

- The person him or herself;
- The group to which the person has belonged heretofore; and
- The other (ethno)national group.

The last of these usually involves a community and identity to which an individual would like to belong. There are, however, various and numerous complexities and interconnections possible which entail concrete details and circumstances. We will not go into this further here, taking as an assumption that the problematics of a national conversion in a world dominated by mass migration is taking on increasing meaning. A real analysis would require separate fieldwork that would continue and develop a line of thinking proposed by Elżbieta Hałas (1992).

Generally speaking, looking at the views expressed by our respondents, we observe that the majority expressed a clear yes or no with respect to the possibility of divorcing from one's Polishness. Only a few individuals expressed more ambivalent opinions on this topic which can be understood as consistent with socially clear judgement on this point.

6.4. National fluctuations and consistency with the criteria of Polishness

Reflections on the subject of forsaking a national identity sometimes included complications. One interlocutor deliberated upon a dichotomy inherent in such a situation: "Mentally yes. Physically not necessarily" [30]. This terse summary can be understood at a few levels. On the one hand, an individual can decide (for any number of reasons) to change his or her national identity and group belonging. On the other hand, he or she can preserve many traits which would allow external observers (Polish or of other nationality) to categorize him or her as a Pole. Such an outsider classification can be on the basis of parents of Polish nationality, being born in Poland, and/or living in Poland for a significant part of one's life. In the opinion of the respondent cited above, such facts "physically" guarantee lifetime Polishness. This expressed the dualistic nature of national identity – here in our case, "being a Pole."

A female respondent was of a different opinion: "However, despite everything, everyone somewhere, at the end of the day, senses that nationality of theirs" [14]. From this perspective, this continues even if a person were to reject any and all of his or her characteristics testifying to a Polishness; even if that person were to feel that he or she is the citizen of a different country. Key to this reply was that the woman initially allowed for the possibility of someone ceasing to be Polish – only to assert that Polishness would still be a deep-rooted feeling. Yet another interlocutor stated that this possibility "depends upon one's character, on personality" [42]. That would imply that Polishness is not intrinsically linked to any specific criteria: some people simply are capable of divorcing from Polishness and others are incapable.

Discernable here is, again, the operation of several levels. Interviewees initially replied that they agreed or disagreed with the concept of changing one's nationality. Next they introduced an argumentation which either stood in contrast with or, to some degree, was inconsistent with their

initial declaration. The multidimensionality of this issue is evident in statements anchored in specific contexts and social situations.

Another example can be this declaration by a male respondent: "A person who would renounce this Polishness is not a Pole to me" [19]. The interviewee does assume the possibility that someone can cease to be a Pole based on an internal, personal decision; this man as an external outsider would also not include such an individual among Poles, but due to the fact that this would constitute an affront to the country. This type of answer can stem from the fact that, as more than one interlocutor asserted, "this is very difficult." It is likely, too, that the inconsistent responses were due to the lack of previous reflection on this topic.

Because our interlocutors had, earlier in the course of the interview, ranked the criteria for Polishness, there was a chance to compare their order with the situations and conditions for forsaking Polishness. Crucial in this instance is whether the listed criteria were decisive in the issue of who can or cannot be a Pole, and who can or cannot stop being a Pole. It turns out that – despite the complications and turns in the lengthier responses – the majority of our respondents was consistent in applying their standards for being a Pole or renouncing Polishness. To a great degree the coherence was linked to the high position of self-identification in the rankings; this was usually named as the most important criterion for Polishness as well as the reason to change one's national identity. In addition, there was great coherence in the responses of interviewees convinced of biological determinants for national identity.

In some of the interviews, our respondents appraised a sense of being Polish as the most significant, but referred more to the culturally-related criteria when asked about abandonment of Polishness. Others accepted the biological criterion of Polishness, but, when asked about cutting off from Polishness, they referred to self-identification and the cruciality of culture. It also happened (albeit infrequently) that the criteria considered the least important in the case of incorporating someone into the Polish nation (e.g., being born or residing permanently in Poland) were

subsequently added as one of the primary arguments for both the possibility as well as preclusion of changing one's nationality.

As with other facets of our focal inquiry, this specific question had probably not been discussed previously by our interviewees. It is also conceivable that respondents treated these two situations – becoming a Pole and ceasing to be a Pole – as distinct and unrelated matters. This would explain the two images: one set of people comes to mind when thinking about Polishness, and quite a different group comes to mind when thinking about people who have rejected their Polishness. The former could pertain to any average person met on the street. The high level of homogeneity in Polish society leads Poles to imagine (without deeper thought on the subject) that everyone they meet is a Pole. The latter set, however, is not visible in Poland itself: the interviewees generally associated this with emigrants from the homeland, people who are living permanently in another culture and society.

One theme that occasionally appeared with regards to the question if it is possible to stop being a Pole is that this is a personal decision: "But this is an individual matter, you can't take that away from someone; he has to define this, not someone [else]. To say that someone has ceased to be a Pole for some reason – we cannot" [49]. Or, for instance, "Oh that's an individual matter. We, as Polish citizens, can't take that title away from someone; he has to be aware of and feel such a need" [31]. Striking in the above-cited is that the interviewees are convinced that no third party can intrude upon our own national identity and the way we sense it. It can only be the person him or herself who decides.

Another motif is the way interlocutors spoke of Polishness – as if it was something physically bestowed that cannot be "taken" or "reclaimed." It was not spoken of directly as something emotionally and mentally sensed, even if most respondents had accented self-identification as one of the most important criteria in national identity.

Reflecting upon a personal choice to change that identity, one respondent stated, "Of course, you can stop being a Pole – but not because

someone thinks so, but only because we don't want to be one" [14]. Another person affirmed, "If only someone wants to stop being a Pole, then it seems to me that it's only of your own free will that you can stop being one" [17]. Such answers indicate that, in the opinion of these respondents, it is possible to abandon Polishness, but only individually and voluntarily. This can be interpreted as a sign of decision-making agency in terms of nationality: the country with which we identify is the one we decide to choose.

Looking at the other side of such a decision, there were responses such as, "We can't force anyone to be Polish" [23]." Or, "You cannot condemn someone for not being a Pole if he doesn't feel like one" [20]. Whereas the earlier responses showed that no one can be excluded against his or her will from the Polish national community, these responses assert that it is also impossible to force someone to remain within the community against his or her will. Generally everyone was of the opinion that it is possible to remove oneself from the community and that this is justified on the basis of the self-identification criterion. In other words, the national identity is perceived as an individualized characteristic which is subject to autonomous decisions with regards to the nation of choice.

6.5. Reasons for forsaking Polishness

A significant topic which emerged in our conversations was the issue of determining certain kinds of conditions for abandonment of Polish national belonging. Respondents naturally referred to different criteria of Polishness discussed earlier. To a great extent those criteria were treated like a description of a process leading to a shift in national identity. Rarely did they refer generally to specific events which could affect a change in nationality. For instance, "I cannot imagine what would have to happen for this person to completely want to cut himself off from the country"

[31]. Yet, "For each of us, something in life can happen like this – after which we find that [Polishness] is not [what we want]" [11].

Replies of this sort attest to a belief among our interlocutors that only some special, exceptional event could make someone stop wanting to be a Pole. The respondents participating in this research project did not even take under consideration that a change of nationality like this could be a notion initiated purely intellectually, coolly, and rationally.

6.5.1. Emigration and Polishness

Among our respondents were those who presented more detailed explanations for an identity change. Key in this case is the emigration condition. As one woman noted, "Although these have to involve some complicated situation, such as someone went to the States and felt that his life is better there. And he started a family there, settled down, and he hasn't much to do with Poland, and he doesn't follow information about what's happening in our country, and this doesn't interest him at all" [22]. Here it is worth looking at the "complicated situation" which implies a certain assessment of the entire process: this is not an easy thing to do, forsaking Polishness is complex. This female interviewee next raises the subject of a permanent emigration, reasoning that the new place of residence, a family elsewhere, and loss of contact with Poland would lead to a change of national identity.

In a similar vein was this answer: "Because we have the example of many Poles who completely renounced their country and Polish tradition, broke off contacts with family and are trying, so to speak, to feel a connection with other nations" [51]. Here direct reference is made to the historical emigrations of Poles. The previous quotation mentioned the USA; another person mentioned Poles who left for France in the 19th century. For centuries Poles decided to leave their homeland for political and/or economic reasons, and the USA and France were historically two of the key destination countries. Ultimately, for many a

Pole, this meant a gradual severance from Polishness and acceptance into the new national community.

However, the respondent just cited went on to add that, "On the other hand, we have many wonderful Poles who all their lives longed for their homeland and never renounced Poland" [51]. This illustrates a certain alternative situation: emigration does not always mean a change in a sense of nationality. A male respondent stated that, "Because you move to another country and change your citizenship, [but] you still have a Polish family, you can speak Polish, you know Polish customs" [47]. Thus, according to this interviewee, regardless of other circumstances, one cannot stop being a Pole. From this perspective, certain basic features of Polishness, such as citizenship, biological descent from a Polish family, or knowledge of the customs and language remain even if someone is living outside the home country.

Another interlocutor also made reference to citizenship: "Probably yes, if someone stops feeling Polish, if someone renounces his citizenship, moves to another country, why not?" [43]. Seen here is a slightly different trajectory. On the one hand, we can interpret this response as an envisioned pattern of steps: someone no longer has a sense of Polishness, renounces his citizenship, and moves to another country. On the other hand, these can be three concurrent elements or appear in different order. Therefore, a change in national identity is a multi-faceted state of affairs which simultaneously requires a shift in self-identification, in one's legal citizenship, and in geographical place of residence.

A respondent cited earlier describing the situation of a foreigner becoming a Pole noticed that,

> Just as someone can feel Polish despite not having Polish roots, then, just the same, someone can go abroad and begin to identify as an English or German. … Just the same, you can both become as well as stop being a Pole. That is, if someone, analogously, moved to another country and felt, for example, French…. If it would be a really long time … the person would be immersed in the culture of another country [40].

This interviewee therefore claims that a Pole, just like a foreigner, can change national identity. Even if we do not have any biological connection with a given country – by going there, spending a sufficiently long time there, and adapting to the other culture – one can change national identity.

6.5.2. Age and Polishness

Another factor which can have an impact on the notion of forsaking Polishness is the age of the person who undertakes such a change. Our respondents noticed that leaving one's homeland at a younger age can advance an abandonment of Polishness: "Let's say that someone was born in Poland, has this citizenship from the start, but left the country at the age of a few years, never came back here, doesn't know the language, history, and current events" [9]. More light is shed by the following, more detailed description:

> If you were, I say, brought up here, for years you lived surrounded by other Poles, then it's unlikely that, at the age of forty, you would be able to forget about this suddenly. …. It's certainly easier for children who, for example, were born in Poland, but left at the age of one, two, three – it's easier for them [21].

Emphasized here was the fact that adult emigration from Poland means the person will rather not be able to change national identity; yet youth emigration can make it easier to stop being Polish. From this standpoint, attention is called to a firm rooting of the national identity with age; this view also rejects the biological and geographical criteria such as being born in Poland of Polish parents. Children, even if born in Poland, do not evidence Polishness if they do not cultivate the culture and language while in another country. Likely playing a role here, too, is the way children are raised, because even abroad it is possible to maintain strong ties with the homeland – or

to abandon them. With such a choice made by adults, it would be difficult for the child to be later treated as a person of Polish nationality.

6.5.3. Embarrassment and Polishness

A subject raised in a few interviews is the way some Poles behave as emigrants, revealing their attitude towards Polishness: "We can give examples of Poles who left for France in the 19th century and renounced their Polishness, and, so to speak, assimilated with the French, renouncing their Polish origin, even being ashamed of that" [24]. Surfacing at this point is the historical issue of abandoning one's national identity due to being embarrassed of being from Poland – a non-sovereign people, less economically developed. Despite the fact that man a decade has passed, this problem seems to continue to exist: "I understand, for example, working abroad for some time, but feeling shame for being from Poland…. No, that already means that you are not that Pole and that's all there is to it" [31]. Underlying this comment is also the issue of humiliation in the context of an economic migration from a more impoverished country to a wealthier one. A female respondent described her own experiences in greater detail: "We very often promote ourselves abroad; we want to show how cool we are. If we want to get rid of this Polishness in us, this is exactly what often happens abroad" [22].

This brings us back to an issue raised earlier in this volume: the presence of shame as something accompanying Polish identity. It appears that Poles abroad simply feel inferior. Due to a sense of mortification and a desire to be like the locals, Poles discard their Polishness and assimilate to the new society in which they live. However, ceasing to be a Pole can comprise an adaptive strategy for an immigrant to a new country. It is possible that a kind of distancing from the culture of one's homeland and immersion in the culture in which one currently lives is a side effect and not a purposeful act. Nonetheless, this can

lead, as our respondents assume, to a change in national identity. Therefore, answers to the question – can one stop being a Pole? – provide a rather complex image of Polishness. It is not something fixed and permanent; our national identity can succumb to changes under the influence of various factors.

Polish national identity turns out to be a value which, for many of our respondents, should be preserved – even if they do point to circumstances in which loss of that identity is understandable. Playing a crucial role for the majority of the interviewees is long-term residency in Poland. That criterion is of little importance when considering who should be considered a Pole, and yet that condition appears with some regularity in questions about renunciation of Polishness.

Polishness, as envisioned by the participants in our project, is anchored in conventional, national ties that are typical of contemporary societies, but also in the substantial ties described by Ossowski. Clearly evident is the fact that more traditional criteria continue to be named, and even are, for a few of our interlocutors, the most important.

Overall, national identity is, for most of our respondents, a fluid characteristic which can be transformed, especially if someone has permanently emigrated from Poland. despite references to the biological and territorial, a significant subset of our interviewees felt that, in the end, one cannot stop being a Pole. They also notice the secondary role of legal, official criteria such as citizenship which was, for the participants in our study, rather only a document providing rights and responsibilities in a given country and not a vital part of Polishness.

Our respondents were not in agreement with regards to whether one can, indeed, cease being a Pole. For some it was possible because national identity is an individual's sense of belonging. Others claimed that there are certain concrete factors, such as being born and raised in Poland, which mean that one is irreversibly a Pole. Still other respondents spoke in greater depth and density which underscored the fact that this issue is not as clear as it may initially seem. Nevertheless,

one theme that is rather manifest is that abandonment of Polishness is usually associated with moving permanently to another country.

Interestingly, in none of our interviews was the possibility of a dual or cosmopolitan identification even considered; no one envisioned a person who did not identify with any nation at all. Many of our interlocutors accented the significance of emigration in identity loss, but none of them even entertained the idea that someone who lives permanently in Poland itself could consider renouncing his or her national identity. In their minds, someone who no longer feels a bond with his or her nation will simply leave the territory physically. In fact there were rather severe judgements expressed about such Poles. One person said, "We do not need Poles who renounce their Polishness „ [7]; another declared, "It's hard for me to imagine that, overnight, I would heave my native culture out of myself and adopt a different one" [13]. A 30-year-old man doubted the possibility of shedding Polishness: "What's around us influences this. Even if someone tries to eradicate this from their life, it's simply not possible. He can stop feeling that what he took from Poland is with him all the time, but it probably still will be. He may not take advantage of what he gets from a given country, but it's out there somewhere" [5].

6.6. Summary: Circumstances and assessments of forsaking Polishness

A loss of Polishness, departure from Polish identity or change of national affiliation are phenomena mostly perceived by our respondents as complicated in their course, psychologically complex, and dependent upon several social circumstances. Overall, such circumstances were treated as meaningful both at the level of individual, personal decisions and from a general social perspective.

Analysis of the responses to the specific questions discussed in this chapter is subtly complemented by responses to other questions.

Sometimes the respondents worded their beliefs about the crux of Polishness more directly, sometimes more indirectly. Nonetheless, the answers we gathered reflect the emotional content of the idea of Polishness as something valuable – even if it brings no material or other benefits. From this perspective, preservation of a national identity appears to be a value in and of itself.

Chapter VII
Acquisition of Polishness: How a Foreigner Can Become a Pole

7.1. Introductory remarks

At this point we delve into the situation contrary to the one discussed in the previous chapter. Rather than the process of Poles shedding their Polish identity, we look here at the process of becoming a Pole. The analysis will encompass the ways participants in our study imagined that foreign nationals – children, youth or adults, people of all ages, and in different situations – could acquire Polishness. On the whole, the attitude of our respondents was one of strong acceptance. This was regardless of the circumstances surrounding a foreigner's desire to enter into the Polish national community. A positive stance was taken both in the case of adoption of a child from abroad and of a non-Polish adult applying for Polish citizenship.

Our self-definition tends to surface in our attitudes towards others who are not defined as members of "our" group. The "us-them" relationship is a significant indicator of the shape of our thinking about ourselves as members of "us." This was an impetus for examining signs of inclusiveness and exclusiveness, especially (with an eye to the future) among representatives of young Polish intelligentsia.

In targeted questioning we asked our interlocutors to take a stand regarding the possibility of a non-Pole to cross an ethnic boundary and enter into the Polish community with full acceptance of all its members. In first order, a more general query was posed: Do you think that a for-

eigner could become a Pole? Nearly all persons we interviewed immediately (which is worth accenting) rejoined that undoubtedly yes, this was possible and there would be no problem. We treated such a spontaneous reaction as indication of an openness – a far-reaching inclusivism among our respondents who were from Poland's urban intelligentsia.

From the analyses presented in earlier chapters it is clear that "becoming" a Pole is something quite obvious and unquestioned when both parents are Polish, the birthplace is in Poland, one is permanently settled in Poland, fluency in language and culture is high, and when one has been steeped since childhood in the customs, history, and collective memory delivered by the education system, friends, and family. But all these components create complications when they pertain to a foreigner. One of the imaginable scenarios presented during our interviews was a Polish family's adoption of a child from outside Poland. Respondents were asked to consider identity issues involved in such a case.

7.2. A child from abroad adopted in Poland

One way to acquire Polishness raised in our conversations occurs through a procedure that is both institutional and familial. Usually research studies look at adult foreigners who attain Polishness. On the one hand, this is through the institutional bestowal of Polish citizenship; on the other hand, this is through various ties to Poland that are cultural, mental, and/or social. Probing the social sense of Polishness, we reached for situations that were rare or even borderline in which an adult foreign national can (under certain circumstances and with certain reservations) be seen as a compatriot in the minds of Poles. The fundamental condition is, however, that this is a free will decision and choice of belonging. Somewhat more complicated is the situation of a child adopted from elsewhere – born in another country, with both parents of non-Polish heritage, and (occasionally) partially socialized in a non-Polish cultural tradition.

Both in our quantitative survey and qualitative interviews we did point to situations in which at least one parent is of Polish nationality. This is, by Polish law, sufficient for Polish citizenship and national identity in the next generation. Logically thinking, those who felt that this criterion is very important in recognizing someone as a Pole should reject the possibility of recognizing someone as a Pole – be this a child or adult – if that person is not born of a Polish parent.

The matter of an adopted child was not included among the questions in our interview guide. It did, however, surface as a supplementary inquiry investigating peripheral cases of gaining or losing Polishness. Lines of thinking about such a situation were rather multifaceted. International legal codes establish different aspects of the institutional procedures for child adoption; responsibilities are specified and limitations are placed upon the parents of a child of a different nationality. According to some laws, an internationally adopted child has the right to know its biological parents, but the law in each country is different in this regard. In Poland an adoptive family does not have the right to make contact with the biological family of the child.

There are two ways of conceptualizing the ethnonational identity of a child adopted from another country. One is to think of that identity as something being built in the course of a socialization in the family and in the school. The second is to think of identity as something innate and biologically inherited from ancestors. The first can be described as socializational, whereas the second can be described as biological, genetic, or inborn.

Nonetheless, taking the factors constituting Polishness under consideration, one of our interlocutors declared that, "If we have only one parent of Polish nationality and the other of a different nationality, then we are only half Polish" [17]. Looking at this from another side, the fact that someone has a different citizenship and has lived in another country does not affect Polishness: "My uncle lived in Canada for 30 years and that didn't make him a Canadian, although all his documents are Canadian. Despite that he feels Polish" [6]. That same person asserted that

"Testifying the most to Polishness is the observance of Polish customs. That is, tradition, how we behave, and how we celebrate various holidays" [6]. Thus biological descent is intertwined with cultural traits; knowing the language and culture of Poland were most frequently underlined as crucial in establishing someone's Polishness. This could mean that, in the opinions of the participants in our research, a child raised in a Polish milieu who knows the Polish culture, customs, and language meets the crucial criteria for Polishness – and thus is a Pole.

Occasionally, however, answers to our inquiry here strongly accented biological descent: possessing at least one parent of Polish nationality. One man made this claim, but, in the next sentence, referred to socialization and cultural competencies: "Parents, regardless of where they live, try to make their children aware of who they are and where they come from – especially when the child lives in another country" [18]. Outside Poland, the parents are expected to substitute for the Polish school.

Although family ancestry seems to be the central issue, important (or the most important) on an equal or parallel level is the involvement of the parents in cultural transmission and the creation of a national identity. This fact is particularly key in the case of a child adopted from abroad whose identity is gained through socialization first at home and then at school. Some of our interlocutors examined this in depth:

> It's the parents who then bear great responsibility. They should try to familiarize such a child with the culture of not only Poland, but also the country where it was born, and in the future show him his country of origin. Of course, if such a child grows up and feels Polish, that's great, but it should also be able to feel the country in which it was born. It's a bit different with older children. For example, the parents of some 13-year-old die, and it turns out that the only person who can take care of him is Uncle Janek from Poland. In the end, such a child cannot be told that he's no longer an American but a Pole [18].

Another respondent answered likewise:

> I think that these children have to define themselves. Certainly, different would be the situation of a child who's been adopted as an infant and is brought up in a

given culture from an early age, and different would be the situation of a child – for instance, a 10 or 15-year-old child – who's come to Poland from another country and has to learn to function in a new place. In the second case, the person might never feel fully Polish, because he might still remember his culture and certain traditions. Another factor influencing whether such a child will feel Polish is the way in which the parents are brought up. Some couples might not want to cultivate Polish tradition and might not inculcate Polish customs or teach about history. The environment in which a child is brought up can also give signs at every step that foreigners are not Poles, so such a child will learn that he cannot be called a Pole. This is quite a complicated topic [20].

Our interviewees above all noticed the context of the roots and heritage of the child, and then in second order they held to the key role played by socialization and childrearing at home or in the neighborhood. In third order, attention was drawn to both of these first two, running concurrently, although with weight placed on the age of the child. Respondents assumed that such a child will surely be raised in a single culture – and yet the suggestion does appear that it would be good to introduce elements of the child's original culture which evidences a link drawn to the culture of biological descent.

Some interlocutors emphasized that it should be the child's free choice to decide an identity for itself as an adult. Noteworthy here is the choice of the adoptee which would mean that cultural factors of the new country move to the background: "But also looking at it from a different angle, those adoptive parents cannot force him to be a Pole; he has to choose it himself" [15].

The age of the child at adoption is closely associated with the issue of the depth and degree of socialization. Older children will remember the country of their birth and early childhood rearing. This could lead to a reluctance to abandon cultural norms already assumed. One respondent analyzed this at length:

If a child has been adopted, then, when he's an infant, then he or she is certainly granted Polish citizenship. And if the parents feel Polish, then they will educate him in such a conviction of Polishness, [such an] awareness. However, if this child

is older and feels that he is of a different nationality, then it all depends on him and his parents, whether they'll allow him to continue his traditions, care about his nationality – or will they prefer to pass on theirs more. Although, in my opinion, it's not important whether you have parents or one Polish parent, it still does affect how others see us and what they think. And we also feel better knowing what our roots are. Man is a being who likes to know where he's from and where his place is. So it seems to me that a child adopted by Poles, some real Poles, will feel that Polishness and will also want to belong to the nation [17].

Another respondent noticed that, as a rule, we deal with persons becoming a Pole without a personal choice being made – something that is, in fact, quite normal: "All of us, at the moment of birth – every Pole, every citizen of this country unsuspectingly became a Pole at the moment of birth" [15].

This statement provokes some reflection: would this unconsciously becoming a Pole not also apply to an adopted child? Entangled in a response are legal rules in force in each country, which either oblige the adoptive parents to disclose (even very early in the child's development), its adopted status, or do not require this. Most of our interviewees assumed that it was legally necessary.

Some respondents called attention to the situation of a child that is physically different from the stereotypical Polish population, asking themselves how people would react to hearing perfect Polish from the mouth of, for example, a black child. Still, physical and racial differences do not function in the thinking of this younger, more educated category of interlocutors as an obstacle to gaining acceptance within the Polish national community or to obtaining Polish citizenship. However, these interviewees believed that especially a physically different child from abroad has the right to know his or her biological origin, as well as the culture of the country (social environment) from which he or she comes. Some thought that Polish parents should raise the child precisely in its home culture. Naturally, (more generally expressed) doubts were raised as to whether the parents would be sufficiently competent to do this.

Nevertheless, in all certainty the color of skin is in no way a condition that precludes Polishness.

Generally, straightforward asking whether a child adopted into a Polish family can become a Pole led, for instance, to such answers as "Yes, of course. If it's brought up in Poland by a Polish family, it will absorb all of Polishness from an early age " [3]. Or:

> I believe that if you adopt a small child who doesn't understand much of anything and cannot distinguish that it lived in Ethiopia for a year, and now in Poland with his parents raising him like a Pole. Then yes, I believe that such a child automatically becomes a Pole. And if one day it wants to go and discover other countries, for instance, the country where it was born, then that's great. Nothing stands in its way [38].

7.3. How can an adult foreigner become a Pole?

At this point, we take into account the case of an adult who is a foreign national and is to become a Pole. An adult is fully aware of his or her national identity and, within the culture of his or her homeland, possesses high national competencies. Worth stressing is the fact that the problem of integration of a foreigner into Polishness piqued the interest of our interlocutors – despite the fact that they recognized this as a difficult matter, demanding broader reflection.

In reply to the question of whether a foreigner can become a Pole, our interlocutors expressed clearly positive views. There were, however, numerous conditions listed in direct correlation with the criteria for Polishness set earlier. Some of the criteria remained at the very important or the most important level; other criteria took on meaning only when the case involved an adult foreigner, meaning an individual who, up until a certain age, was not a Pole. Remaining strongly at the top of the criteria was the feeling that one is a Pole which, in the case of an adult foreigner, becomes the will to become a Pole. Significant are also permanent residence and participation in social life in Poland. Those

two criteria facilitate the acquisition of cultural competences such as language, culture, history, and customs. With regards to the foreigner who is to become a Pole, the criterion of meritorious service on behalf of Poland takes on different meaning than in the case of someone who is born Polish. Also meaningful here is the acquisition of Polish citizenship.

A woman who strongly agreed that a foreigner can change nationality and become Polish drew attention to a few matters:

> In my opinion, yes. According to me, being a Pole is connected not only with being born in Poland. If someone is a foreigner, but lives in our country, studies or works here, and pays taxes – when he feels that this is his culture, respects our traditions and history, and cannot imagine living anywhere else in the world, then there shouldn't be any contraindications for him to call himself Polish. As I said, it's an individual matter [20].

A 30-year-old woman with a non-Pole in the family looked at this through the prism of personal experience:

> Because he can feel [that he is a Pole]. You see, it always comes down to this – to what you feel, what's important for you. If, in addition, a foreigner considers himself Polish because he lives here, speaks Polish, because maybe he has a family here, or maybe the love of his life is Polish, or maybe he came here and he liked it here. Well, it's not important what the reason is, really. What's important to me is for him to feel that he is a Pole, that that's what he wants to be called and that he wants to be considered that [1].

A male interviewee replied succinctly, paying attention to the cultural: "I think so. I think so, if he feels good here, if he knows Polish, doesn't have a problem with our customs, knows our history" [4]. A different conversation yielded the following exchange:

> **I** – As I said, there are many people here who have come here and are better Poles than someone born [here].
>
> **R** – What do you mean by 'better'?
>
> **I** – They feel more Polish than someone who was born here.
>
> **R** – What is your attitude towards foreigners?
>
> **I** – Rather friendly. As long as they adapt to norms or our customs. Nobody wants to invite someone home who'll step on a white rug in dirty shoes and knock over

furniture. If someone adapts to how we live here and doesn't want to turn every-
thing upside down here for us, then yes, if he's friendly [18].

Among other things, the institutional aspect came to the mind of another
female respondent admitted, "Seemingly so, but I've never thought
about this deeper, longer ... [then continues] but I think that yes, if he
has friends, work, and family here – in fact, if he has a family, then he
probably has citizenship. If he lives here like any other Pole, then cer-
tainly he can become a Pole" [7]. A different woman also agreed that
someone from another country can become Polish, but began to deliber-
ate the nuances of the situation:

Of course, in legal terms maybe, but I think it depends on the specific case –
whether this is just an official granting of citizenship and not much else follows,
or whether someone truly feels connected with Poland and there are some emo-
tions behind that. It could be some distant ancestor from Poland or, in my opinion,
some emotional bond tied to Poland. It doesn't necessarily have to be backed by
rational arguments. I would allow for the fact that someone could become capti-
vated by Polish culture, cuisine, language, and mentality, and feel such a bond
and feel to some extent Polish [10].

This same interviewee analyzed the issue more generally: "Because that
Polishness has two dimensions for me – the official-formal and the per-
sonal" [10]. Thus she saw two aspects: the formal granting of citizenship
to a non-Pole and recognizing someone as a Pole in a deeper, more psycho-
logical sense. These two aspects can, but do not have to go hand in hand.

One interlocutor accented the fact that it is possible for someone to
come to like Poland and want to deepen connections: "I think that key
in this respect would be knowledge of the Polish language, knowledge
of the culture and history of Poland, and the feeling that one is a Pole. I
also think that following Polish customs is important" [11]. A male re-
spondent summarized this more concisely: "A foreigner has to feel that
he is Polish, know the realities in which we live – well, and it would be
good if he spoke at least a little Polish" [18]. Useful is a look at aspects
that surface in this longer fragment of an interview:

> **R** – In your opinion, can a foreigner become a Pole, or can a foreigner be considered a Pole?
>
> **I** – Yes, in a way, I don't know if you are speaking here from the legal side, or from the human side?
>
> **R** – More from the human side, I'd like to ask you.
>
> **I** – I believe that yes. The world is now like one big country, perhaps with some exceptions, but the truth is that there's no big problem in getting from one end of the world to the other, so as long as this person wants to be Polish, wants to feel Polish, then I don't think I'd have any problem with that. You can learn the language, traditions, and culture – you can learn everything, so I think it's very easy now to change nationality in that sense, the human one, because it's enough if you learn a lot about this nationality and somehow support this country [17].

It is worth taking note of the distinction – one reflecting the two key dimensions of Polishness – between consideration of this issue from the legal perspective and from a human one. The latter concerns human attitudes: acceptance of a given situation as well as imaginable, internal shifts in identity that take place in an individual frame of mind. That acceptance and those changes do not necessarily have a counterpart in the legal-institutional sphere, but neither dimension hampers the other.

7.4. The foreigner, a feeling of being Polish, and being a Polish citizen

Emphasized should be that – when asked about the contents of Polishness and what makes a Pole a Pole – not many among our interlocutors approached the matter strictly from an institutional stance. They did not link being a Pole solely with the holding of a Polish passport even if such a loose association did occasionally come to mind. Rare, too, were replies that discounted any and all psychological aspects of Polishness as this respondent did: "Pole, German, American, French – those, for me, are just badges for someone who is legally a citizen of some country. As for whether someone is a Pole, decisive according to my knowledge, is

only a document confirming Polish citizenship" [9]. For the vast majority of the participants in our research project, it was obvious that a non-Pole who would want to have a Polish passport and feels bonded with Polish culture and society should basically get that citizenship.

If, however, we delve deeper into the responses of our interlocutors, then it is less citizenship (which is an institutional matter), and more the psychological considerations (the sense of a bond with Poland, Polish culture and history, and, most importantly, fluency in the Polish language) which comprise the crucial criteria. These are what make a Pole Polish and hence what can also make a Pole out of a non-Pole. In a certain sense, the national-cultural and the institutional are intertwined in the thinking of our respondents.

It can also be assumed that national and institutional divides do blur. Testifying to this could be the presence in Poland of citizens who belong to ethnic or national minorities: they are born in Poland, live here, speak the language fluently, and know the country's history. At the same time, however, these citizens knew well that their ethnonational belonging is not Polish and that Polish citizenship does not fully resolve other issues. This, among other things, could have evoked wavering doubts in our interviewees.

When asked if there could be some special situation when someone could be recognized as a Pole, a respondent cited earlier in this volume mentioned that "It's the heart that defines this" [12]. If the heart is what decides about Polishness, then this means an accent is placed on an attachment to a specific collective identity – a belonging to the community which (more or less) accepts you and with which you are emotionally bound.

Regarding the issue of a foreigner becoming a Pole, a different respondent said:

> To be honest with you, I don't know. You're asking very hard questions. It seems to me that, at this point, we're no longer talking about Polishness and about recognizing him as a Pole, but we're talking about a formal issue here, and, as for this formal matter, I don't know whether it's possible to obtain Polish citizenship

> posthumously. It seems to me that it's not, but my knowledge of the law may be too slight on this point [19].

It is clear from the start that this question caused great difficulty for the interviewee. Oddly enough, when later asked directly whether someone could be posthumous recognized as a Pole for exceptional service on behalf of the country, this person replied, "If such was his wish, then why not?" [19]. When the researcher pushed further about an exceptional situation in which a foreigner could be acknowledged as a Pole, the respondent answered, "I also don't know how to understand this phrase... If someone wants to become a Pole, then he can apply for citizenship to be granted" [19]. As is manifest, most important for this interviewee was the will of the given person – that he or she wanted to become a Pole.

Indeed, most of our respondents felt that service on behalf of Poland should not be a criterion for posthumous Polish citizenship precisely because we cannot be certain that the individual actually desired such an outcome. The component of free will and a wish to become a Pole (meeting specified requirements) constitute, over and over again, the most important criteria for recognizing someone as a Pole. Of little to no importance is, for instance, the fact that someone was not born in Poland or is not of Polish ancestry, as this 30-year-old woman (whose cousin's husband is an Englishman living in Poland) pointed out, "Because someone might not have been born here at all, might not have any Pole in the family" [3]. For the immigrant him or herself, citizenship papers are important, but for our respondent not so much. For her the institutional was not of the essence: a person can be a Pole or feel Polish without Polish citizenship.

When asked about the criteria for being recognized as a Pole, one interlocutor summarized,

> He himself should want and feel this Polishness. There are no strict criteria to determine if you're a Pole. It's impossible to issue a certificate of feeling Polish. It's very internal, what conditions should be met. Can someone be considered a Pole against his will? Maybe if, for example, he has Polish parents, but is born

> outside the country, doesn't feel culture, but is called and recognized as a Pole because of the law of blood – then he can be recognized against his will [14].

Underscored consistently is a personal sense of being Polish. This respondent mentions a feeling of being connected to the country and its culture because, in his opinion, a foreigner can feel him or herself to be a Pole.

On the one hand, a 32-year-old woman with a higher, technical degree accented the value of a foreigner being born in Poland because such an individual eventually becomes a Pole [52] The thinking is that this person has a chance to master all of the cultural competencies (such as language) seen as typical for Poles. On the other hand, another woman believed that, in order for a foreigner to be recognized as a Pole, he or she needs to fulfill several conditions simultaneously. She rejected the criterion of being born in Poland because "for me, then, that's not a foreigner" [KA2].

Taken into consideration in association with a foreigner's acceptance of Polish citizenship was a question regarding the logic of thinking in categories of the ethnic community. After all, a person who has perhaps served the Polish state very well and received Polish citizenship can continue to consider him or herself a member of the native homeland. For instance, someone from Cameroon, Nigeria, Vietnam or Spain can take on Polish citizenship, but continue to see him or herself as (ethno)-nationally Cameroonian, Nigerian, Vietnamese or Spaniash. Therefore, a settling down in Poland, long-lasting contact with Poland establishes a crucial cultural nearness, but does not preclude ties with one's home country. In fact, we did not meet with such an obvious line of thinking in our interviews, but this can be an underlying thought in the minds of our respondents.

7.5. Hierarchizing the criteria for inclusion into the Polish national community

As mentioned earlier, at one point during the qualitative, face-to-face interviews, we presented the set of criteria which had appeared in the quantitative survey. In contrast with the latter, respondents this time were not asked to rate each criterion separately on a five-point scale, but rather to take a closer look at the set and to rank them according to importance and necessity of being met by a foreigner who is making an effort to enter the Polish national community. This time the respondent was to position the criteria – as he or she saw fit – from the most to the least important.

Sometimes it was precisely citizenship which instinctively appeared in first place. A 35-year-old woman categorized everything quickly without hesitation:

> I would put citizenship first, then the feeling that you are Polish. On equal level, as I see it, is that he or she might have someone from the family here and lives here. Further, I would put Polish language and exceptional service, next following customs, knowledge of culture and history, faith, and, at the end, being born in Poland – because for me, then, that's not a foreigner. You have citizenship right away, and, as you've likely already noticed, that is a sufficient criterion for me (KA2).

In the course of the interviews there was occasional reference to persons who physically differ from the general population of Poland. A question was posed which addressed this directly: Do you feel that even if someone is of a different skin color and different customs than we do – can we also consider such a person a Pole? One respondent answered, "Of course. I have a friend who's black, but he was born in Poland, grew up here, speaks Polish, his mother is Polish. That doesn't make him less Polish. He was born here, follows these norms. It's simply that his mother entered into a relationship with a black man" [16]. Another woman mulled this over longer, "Maybe if the person's lived in Poland

for a long time, some 10 years or so, and spoke Polish fluently, and had a Polish wife or husband, then yes" [39].

Some of the participants in our study knew from their own personal experience (or that of friends or family) ways of dealing with the naturalization process for persons of other countries. They knew, for instance, the procedures for gaining citizenship in Great Britain, making reference to this in the course of an interview. Underlined was a conviction that the same principles should be in force in Poland – that is, the conditions should be residency for a specified period of time, paying a fee, and passing an examination. A foreign national in Poland should be able to enter into the national community via this purely institutional path.

A motif recurring in a few interviews was certain endeavors, which could be treated as meritorious service, undertaken by a foreigner in Poland. Such efforts could involve in-depth study of Polish history, culture, customs, and especially language. This would naturally draw the individual closer to Polishness, but, in principle, testify to his or her interest and emotional engagement in an integration with the nation. One interlocutor deliberated about the case of a person from Turkey who had a kebab stand. This Turk had long lived in Poland and basically knew the language and everyday life. Yet he was not very interested in the history and culture of Poland, since he had moved to the country for economic reasons. In this case, our respondent thought, it would be difficult to expect that Poles would treat him as a Pole [14].

A different interviewee ranked the criteria proposed by the researcher in the following manner:

> Most importantly, I think there would be knowledge of Polish culture and history, then knowledge of the Polish language, living permanently in Poland, having parents of Polish nationality, and observance of Polish customs. I think that the feeling that you are Polish is also very important – yes, because, if this person doesn't want to be Polish, why should we consider this in these categories at all? [40].

7.6. The criterion of meritorious service
on behalf of Poland

When comparing the reflections of our interlocutors on the subject of serving the country or other special efforts made on behalf of Poland a fundamental difference is apparent. This criterion is treated one way with regards to belonging to the Polish national community and another way with regards to it being a necessary component in order to include a foreigner in the Polish national community. The specificity and detail of an in-person interview – that is, the depth of a researcher's conversation with a respondent – allowed us to get to structures and ways of thinking among ethnic Poles. Hence, we were able to uncover key elements of how they understood Polishness generally as well as the process of becoming Polish by a foreigner specifically.

A foreigner who could boast of having contributed such service was very often pointed out as the best candidate for being a Pole. Some of our interviewees were even willing to grant such a person Polish citizenship posthumously. Others, however, emphasized that neither citizenship, nor inclusion into the group of ethnic Poles can be subject to external decisions: to be a Pole must be based on an individual's free choice. Still, interviewees often linked the precise criterion of exceptional, commendable service for Poland with the granting of Polish citizenship to a foreigner. Thus, as mentioned earlier, citizenship was therefore understood as a kind of reward.

In certain statements made by our interlocutors (and usually without a clear connection to bestowing Polish citizenship or qualifying someone as a member of the Polish ethnic community) mention would be made of historical figures – foreigners who fought for Poland's freedom. Accented would be that these heroes were highly assimilated and working to the advantage of Poland. Nonetheless, respondents were unable to provide any examples from memory, especially with reference to more recent times: "Well, today we don't have such examples. Nobody'll be

standing with a weapon, because conflicts today would look different. But there is such an example that this happens: he died of his own free will for Poland. Well, for sure there's more than one example" [18].

When asked what, in his opinion, would constitute such service on behalf of Poland, another interviewee answered,

> Such a clear example would be help in critical situations like war, but it could also be some political assistance. For example, if someone has a lot of influence, say in the European Union, and knows that it would compromise him, compromise his position, but he would say something that puts Poland in a better light, then that would already be of some help, too. But obviously too little to grant someone Polish citizenship [26].

Still, some respondents were able to clearly describe a situation by which a foreign national would gain traits that – in the eyes of the respondent and the opinion of Polish society – would classify a person as Polish (even if that individual neither saw him or herself as such, nor was treated as such by anyone). Replying to a query about such a set of circumstances, a woman elaborated:

> Well now we don't have such situations, but, for example, during the war, if someone rendered great service for this country, supported Poles – well, then yes. I think that in moments of some great tragedies…. There are various crisis situations for the country, for Poland, for the environment, where different people from different countries contribute towards [solving] this, and I think these are the moments when someone could prove themselves enough by their stance to be recognized as a Pole [28].

When asked if a foreigner who gave his or her life for Poland could be recognized as a Pole, this same interviewee replied,

> It could be, it could be that way. But I don't know, don't know if that hasn't happened already – that if someone was even of a different nationality and died for a given country, that the community would recognize him as one of its own. And I agree with that, I would consider such a person a Pole, as if he were one of my own [28].

7.7. Reservations about the possibility of a foreigner becoming a Pole

Answering a question about whether a foreigner can become a Pole by doing something extraordinary for Poland, one respondent said, "Honestly, I don't really understand why would someone become a Pole, just because they did something for Poland. After all, [that person] has the values of his or her own country and you should help others, just like Poles support other countries in difficult times" [39]. Here this interlocutor distinguished two significant matters: 1) becoming a cultural Pole out of one's own conviction, and 2) the role of meritorious service (assistance) rendered to Poland (or another country) as a sufficient and legitimate reason for granting citizenship or not. A female interviewee also expressed serious doubts about the latter: "If someone's done something good for Poland, then naturally we should talk about such services – but to recognize someone as a Pole, that could be a bit too much" [27]. Expressed in these answers are reservations about the sense of the question itself, about serving Poland as a basis for incorporation of a foreigner into the community of Poles.

Furthermore, some of the study participants even doubted the sense of a foreign national becoming a Pole. In their opinion, the fact that someone has gained official Polish citizenship does not, in essence, make a Pole out of that person. An individual can be accepted as a valued citizen and yet continue to be seen as a representative of quite a different national community. Hence we heard views stating outright that a foreigner can become a Pole solely in the formal sense: "On paper – yes. Mostly on paper. I think that those are Poles just on paper. Well, do they later feel somehow emotionally attached to this Poland?" [37].

When the interviewer pushed further, asking what would be needed, in that case, for such an individual to become a Pole, there was a hesitant response full of qualms: "Well, I don't know, it seems to me that if someone doesn't have at least one parent, for example... that if someone

doesn't have... Actually, there are not many people who would be able to feel that they're Poles. That, it's negligible. A negligible percentage has the feeling that they are Polish" [14]. This respondent distrusted the emotional Polishness of people who do not have at least a minimal genealogical connection. This was not an utter rejection by the respondent, but a mechanism which he saw as superseding all others.

The use of the phrase, "flesh and blood Pole," by one interviewee is, on the one hand, a colloquial phrasing, but, on the other hand, it indubitably contains an element which others (not unexpectedly) avoided in longer answers. That phrase referred not so much to the idea of a "real Pole," but rather to that of an "unquestionable Pole." The latter would be someone with biological roots in the society. All in all, dominant in respondent thinking about Polishness were psychological elements – that is, a foreign national's free will, intention, and desire to join the national community.

7.8. Summary: Acquisition of national identity as a process

How does a non-Pole become a Pole? How does a Pole lose Polishness? In assessing the weightiness of one aspect that defines how that national identity is transmitted intergenerationally, we need to consider certain key components of the Polish national community's inclusivism. On the one hand, there exist (at least on a declarative level) circumstances which permit the acquisition of Polishness and becoming a Pole. On the other hand, there also exist circumstances that can lead to the loss of Polishness and a Polish identity. Another issue is precisely the way in which Polishness is transmitted, how it can be gained or lost. One path towards Polishness is that of the non-Pole who can acquire the social status of a Pole; that foreign national can be an adult, but it can also be a child. Various perspectives and scenarios will be discussed below, closing with the circumstances and descriptions of a loss of Polishness. Overall, the securing of a Polish national identity – regardless of

whether this occurs at a primary, initial or a secondary, conscious stage of life – is a process. This is not a one-time act which is completed; it continues over time.

The next point pertains to such elements as the linguistic criterion. This facilitates communication, understanding others and being understood, and gaining other competencies useful in daily life. These constitute important aspects in the life of a foreigner in Poland. Moreover, there are those among the foreigners in Poland those who are in love with the Polish culture; they want to live here and strive to integrate. As one man described it, his colleague from work – a Swede living in Poland for 17 years – "uses the Polish language downright perfectly"; that colleague is comfortable in Poland, wants to become a Pole, and, according to our respondent, "he is naturally becoming that Pole" [14].

Such becoming and immersion in a concrete identity is a process that takes time. An essential component is daily communication in the language of the majority. Intergenerational transmission of language is rather obvious when it comes to a Polish family living in Poland. That is not a given when that family lives abroad and when maintaining Polish in the family is the effect of a certain choice – something that demands a more or less consciously undertaken decision. For instance, an interviewee spoke as follows on the recognition of a child born outside Poland: "If those parents raise this child in the Polish tradition, teach it history, and communication in the Polish language, then I don't see anything that would hinder recognition of that child as a Pole." [3].

The responses cited thus far have indicated a far-reaching openness among the social category we studied: i.e., ethnic Poles with a higher education, aged 30-40. However, this level of inclusivism required further verification, and therefore a question was raised about the possibility of a foreigner with darker skin color becoming a Pole. It is highly significant that not one of our interlocutors questioned such a possibility; they accepted all manner of physical distinctions among persons wanting to become Polish, as well as the adoption of a child of different

nationality. Our interviewees were certain that, in the process of becoming a Pole, a foreigner of a different skin color would not encounter any obstacles. All of them unanimously emphasized that skin color has nothing to do with anything.

Naturally, the setting of a face-to-face interview (i.e., in direct, personal contact with the researcher) does evoke certain pressure to express opinions which the respondent feels are "correct," "politically correct," and, in accordance with applicable social norms. In any case, setting aside evaluation of the deeper, psychological truthfulness in their statements, we learn what respondents think or assume they should be thinking. Here we come across a significant element of the socially functioning value system. That element is, in fact, fundamentally the most crucial for a sociological view into the value system of this cohort of Polish society: the underlying normative structures in the minds of young, highly educated, and working Poles who are conscious of social norms.

They bear respect for the cultural otherness of a foreign national; no one required of foreigners that they give up their own culture and identity to acculturate or assimilate. This was particularly evident with regards to the circumstances of an international adoption – expressed, for example, in the postulated introduction of the child to his or her home country and culture so that the child could make an informed, conscious decision about his or her identity. Noteworthy among the responses was the lack of a national proselytism or manifestations of some biological and/or cultural racism. In contrast, openness as well as a cultural and physical hospitality are universal. If someone wants to belong to the Polish community, there are no obstacles standing in the way of acceptance by Polish society.

Chapter VIII
Conclusion

The principal objective of the book at hand was to disentangle the threads of the fabric comprising the way Poles think about their national identity. Within the framework of that identity's structure, we endeavored to distinguish key elements which logically organize their reasoning; we delved deeper in order to reach other elements which are merely derivative or only incidentally linked to the way Polishness is envisioned. The sense of Polish national belonging is characterized by stability; this was demonstrated by the data drawn from both our quantitative survey research and qualitative in-depth interviews. The structural constellation of its determinants remains largely impervious to fundamental systemic transformations, international political networks, and economic changes (in other words, civilizational shifts).

Since the beginning of our longitudinal research project in 1988 (the last year of centralized, soviet socialism), the most vital criteria for establishing the Polishness of an individual remain: 1) a feeling of being Polish, and 2) fluency in the Polish language. Certainly, the emphasis placed on each criterion in the thinking about Polishness has shifted on a societal scale, but these have not been radical changes. The criteria assessed as important and very important by the vast majority of Polish society three decades ago continue to be at the top of the list of conditions to be met for national identity.

Seeking the causes for this clarity and sharpness in the model of Polishness functioning in the social consciousness of Poles, we can look precisely at the changing environs which constantly impinge upon the solidity of the Polish national identity. Underpinning this are the contemporary core values, as Jerzy Smolicz understood them (1981). Apart

from the exceptionally deeply incised contents encompassed by and effectively upholding the concept of Polishness, certain tendencies towards change can be observed. These include the decreased importance 1) of the criterion of confessing Roman Catholicism, and 2) of exceptional service, bravery, and sacrifice on behalf of Poland (which always occupied last place in rankings).

The findings of our research project – based on both the quantitative as well as qualitative data – point to key constitutive criteria on which the collective contemporary vision of Polishness is built. Communality is constructed around individually harbored beliefs; these do differ in many ways, but they share in common a spectrum of the intellectual code which coalesces those beliefs to a crucial degree. The main content of that intellectual code is something universally underlined by our respondents: knowledge of the history and culture of Poland. A key issue when investigating both variety and similarity in individually-constructed images of Polishness is how these form the ties that bind Poles together. Very important is what connects Poles in a single cultural community despite its internal diversity.

The results of our research project show that this is not only a cultural community, but something that can be described as an imagined political community. Furthermore, it turns out that colloquially expressed ideas that Poles build their national community on the basis of common biological ancestry (*ius sanguinis*) are false. The cornerstones of the dominant pattern of Polishness are a rooted inclusivism on the part of the Polish national community. The continuity and durability of specific convictions associated with a sense of Polishness can be explained by two things. Firstly, there is the power of cultural transmission taking place on all levels – from the familial, through the educations, and finishing with the mass media. Secondly, there is the unequivocal comprehension of the concept of national community which is universal across all nations.

The potency of the Polish national community does not stand in contradiction with a strongly European identification and Poles seeing

themselves as inhabitants of this continent. The boundaries of belonging to Polish society are demarcated on a similar basis as other European societies: Polish boundaries are also defined by criteria associated with consciousness and with culture.

It can be assumed that the increased intensity of intercultural contacts over the last 30 years – both due to the arrival of culturally diverse foreigners to Poland and to short- or long-term emigration by Poles – is related to a change in attitudes towards a multicultural society and the national identity. Those persons who have experienced emigration in different roles and historical periods – individually or as members of groups treated as clearly distinct – have different personal experiences and thus assess not only relations between various national groups differently, but also describe and comprehend their Polishness differently. Due to the massive increase in the number of Polish temporary or permanent emigrations over recent decades, the impact of intercultural and interethnic contact is gaining in importance.

Another matter is the recently enhanced contact with persons of other nationalities (most often economic migrants) within Poland. It appears that contact with others and especially "strangers" not only does not liquify Polishness, but, in fact, can provide it with new sense and meaning. Being a Pole can mean simply belonging to the collective group of Poles.

Worth adding here is that the research experience we have gained facilitated perception of the problems our respondents had with some of the issues touched in this study. Both in the quantitative surveys and in the course of the qualitative in-depth interviews it was clear that certain questions posed great challenges for the participants in this project. A few difficulties arose especially in respondent interpretations of specific concepts we proposed. One of these was the category of extraordinary, meritorious service to the country which respondents tended to understand as meaning rather ordinary things such as obeying the law, working honestly, paying taxes, etc. Should this research project be continued into the future, it would be worth paying special attention to the

list of criteria of Polishness. Added to the list of conditions to be met by a foreigner who seeks recognition as a Pole should be "obeying Polish law" or something similar.

Furthermore, worth undertaking in the future would be a more detailed, thorough inquiry into a few issues. Above all it would be good to concentrate (especially comparatively) on the circumstances which lead to a fading or to a fortifying of various national identities. Yet another matter which we would like to examine up close is the nuances secreted in the links between Polishness and Roman Catholicism – that is, the changing forms of religiosity vis-à-vis convictions held about the national community.

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Appendix

Questionnaire: *Swoi i obcy po trzydziestu latach*

The survey conducted in 2018 comprises a continuation of research first done in 1988 and then repeated in 1998. Because the value of equal comparisons is higher, we decided to leave the survey questions practically unchanged over the decades, despite the fact that some language (especially with regards to ethnic and racial group appellations) may today be perceived as problematic.

1. Gdybyśmy mieli kogoś uznać za Polaka, to co byłoby Pana(i) zdaniem ważne, a co mniej ważne?
(skala: 1 – bardzo ważne, 2 – raczej ważne, 3 – raczej nieważne, 4 – zupełnie nieważne, 5 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ
1. posiadanie obywatelstwa polskiego
2. mieszkanie na stałe w Polsce
3. wiara katolicka
4. urodzenie się w Polsce
5. znajomość kultury i historii Polski
6. znajomość języka polskiego
7. posiadanie przynajmniej jednego z rodziców narodowości polskiej
8. szczególne zasługi dla Polski
9. przestrzeganie polskich obyczajów
10. poczucie, że jest się Polakiem

2. Czy można by uznać za Polaka wychowane u nas w kraju dziecko Polki z:
(skala: 1 – raczej tak, 2 – raczej nie, 3 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ
1. Arabem
2. Anglikiem
3. Chińczykiem
4. Cyganem (Romem)
5. Murzynem
6. Niemcem
7. Ukraińcem
8. Hindusem
9. Żydem

3. Jakie, Pana(i) zdaniem, warunki musiałby koniecznie spełniać cudzoziemiec, aby można go było uznać za Polaka?
(Proszę wymienić wszystkie, Pana(i) zdaniem, konieczne warunki)
(Prosimy wręczyć listę odpowiedzi respondentowi)

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ
1. uzyskać obywatelstwo polskie
2. mieszkać na stałe w Polsce
3. przyjąć wiarę katolicką
4. czuć się Polakiem (Polką)
5. znać polską kulturę i historię
6. mówić dobrze po polsku
7. wejść w polską rodzinę
8. zasłużyć się szczególnie dla Polski
9. przestrzegać polskich obyczajów
10. urodzić się w Polsce
11. inne, jakie?
12. cudzoziemiec nie może być nigdy uznany za Polaka *[nieodczytywane – przejść do pytania 5]*

4. A gdyby chodziło o cudzoziemca o innym kolorze skóry, to czy uznał(a)by go Pan(i) za Polaka, gdyby spełnił wszystkie wymienione przez Pana(ią) warunki?
(skala: 1 – tak, 2 – nie, 3 – trudno powiedzieć)

5. Czy może Pan(i) wymienić cechy charakteru następujących ras i narodów?
(lista narodowości taka, jak w pytaniu nr 2)

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ
1. Arabów   ....
2. Anglików   ....
3. Chińczyków ....
4. Cyganów (Romów) ....
5. Murzynów ....
6. Niemców   ....
7. Ukraińców ....
8. Hindusów   ....
9. Żydów   ....

6. Czy uważa Pan(i), że wszystkie narody mają prawo żyć według swoich obyczajów, nawet jeśli są one dla nas gorszące lub niemoralne, np. wielożeństwo?
(skala: 1 – zdecydowanie tak, 2 – raczej tak, 3 – raczej nie, 4 – zdecydowanie nie, 5 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

7. A kiedy cudzoziemcy przyjeżdżają na dłuższy czas do Polski, to czy powinniśmy wymagać od nich przestrzegania naszych obyczajów?
(skala: 1 – zdecydowanie tak, 2 – raczej tak, 3 – raczej nie, 4 – zdecydowanie nie, 5 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

8. Dlaczego tak Pan(i) uważa?

9. A kiedy Polak wyjeżdża do innego kraju, to czy powinien przestrzegać panujących tam obyczajów?
(skala: 1 – zdecydowanie tak, 2 – raczej tak, 3 – raczej nie, 4 – zdecydowanie nie, 5 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

10. Dlaczego tak Pan(i) uważa?

11. Czy możemy, Pan(i) zdaniem, nauczyć się czegoś od innych narodów?
(skala: 1 – tak, 2 – nie, 3 – trudno powiedzieć)
FILTR: JEŚLI 11=1

12. Od jakich narodów przede wszystkim i czego możemy się nauczyć?

NARÓD: …………………… -> CZEGO MOŻEMY SIĘ NAUCZYĆ? ……………………………
NARÓD: …………………… -> CZEGO MOŻEMY SIĘ NAUCZYĆ? ……………………………

13. Czy Pan(i) sądzi, że inne narody mogłyby nauczyć się czegoś od Polaków?
(skala: 1 – tak, mogłyby się nauczyć, 2 – nie, nie ma niczego takiego, czego inne narody mogłyby nauczyć się od Polaków, 3 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

14. Czego inne narody mogłyby nauczyć się od Polaków?

15. Czy obecność cudzoziemców w Polsce może powodować coś złego?
(skala: 1 – tak, 2 – nie (przejść do pytania 17), *3 – trudno powiedzieć* [nieodczytywane]*)*
FILTR: JEŚLI 15=1

16. Jakie mogą to być zjawiska?

17. Czy chciał(a)by Pan(i), żeby do Polski częściej przyjeżdżali cudzoziemcy?
(skala: 1 – tak, chciał(a)bym, 2 – jest mi to obojętne, 3 – nie chciał(a)bym, 4 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

18. Proszę uzupełnić podane poniżej zdania, wpisując do każdego z nich trzy nazwy krajów:

1. chciał(a)bym, aby do Polski przyjeżdżali cudzoziemcy z następujących krajów: ………………
2. nie chciał(a)bym, aby do Polski przyjeżdżali cudzoziemcy z następujących krajów: ………….

19. A gdyby to byli cudzoziemcy o innym kolorze skóry, to czy chciał(a)by Pan(i), aby częściej przyjeżdżali oni do Polski?
(skala: 1 – tak, chciał(a)bym, 2 – jest mi to obojętne, 3 – nie chciał(a)bym, 4 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

20. Czy uważa Pan(i), że ludzie różnych ras i narodów mogą żyć zgodnie w jednym kraju?
(skala: 1 – zdecydowanie tak, 2 – raczej tak, 3 – raczej nie, 4 – zdecydowanie nie, 5 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

21. Czy sądzi Pan(i), że na świecie są rasy lepsze i gorsze?
(skala: 1 – tak, 2 – nie (przejść do pytania 23), *3 – trudno powiedzieć* (gdy nieodczytywane – przejść do pytania 23)
FILTR: JEŚLI 21=1

22. Jakie rasy są gorsze i dlaczego?

GORSZA RASA: ………… DLACZEGO? ……………
GORSZA RASA: ………… DLACZEGO? ……………
GORSZA RASA: ………… DLACZEGO? ……………

23. Gdyby ktoś zaprzyjaźniony z Panem(nią) chciał zawrzeć związek małżeński z:
(skala: 1 – odradzał(a)bym, 2 – nie odradzał(a)bym, 3 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*
(lista narodowości taka, jak w pytaniu nr 2 i 5)

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ
1. Arabem
2. Anglikiem
3. Chińczykiem
4. Cyganem (Romem)
5. Murzynem
6. Niemcem
7. Ukraińcem
8. Hindusem
9. Żydem

24. Czy nie miał(a)by Pan(i) nic przeciwko temu, aby osoba o innym kolorze skóry była Pana(i):
(skala: 1 – nie miał(a)bym nic przeciwko temu, 2 – wol(a)łbym tego uniknąć, 3 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

1. sąsiadem lub sąsiadką
2. nauczycielem lub wykładowcą
3. kolegą/koleżanką ze szkoły lub z pracy
4. przyjacielem lub przyjaciółką
5. członkiem pana(i) rodziny (np. wujem, ciotką, szwagrem)
6. mężem lub żoną

25. Jakby Pan(i) postąpił(a) w niżej wymienionych sytuacjach?
(skala: 1 – raczej tak, 2 — raczej nie, 3 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ
1. Czy pozwolił(a)by Pani(i) bawić się własnym dzieciom z dziećmi o innym kolorze skóry?
2. Czy zgodził(a)by się Pan(i), aby Pana(i) dziecko chodziło do szkoły z dziećmi o innym kolorze skóry?
3. Czy zaprosił(a)by Pan(i) osobę o innym kolorze skóry do własnego domu (np. na kolację)?
4. Czy zgodził(a)by się Pan (i), aby Pana(i) lekarzem był ktoś o innym kolorze skory?

5. Czy stanął(ęła)by Pan(i) w obronie osoby o innym kolorze skóry, gdyby została ona przez kogoś obrażona lub oszukana na przykład w sklepie, barze, restauracji itp.?

26. Gdyby musiał(a) Pan(i) mieć transfuzję krwi, to czy przyjął(jęła)by Pan(i) zdrową, przebadaną krew od:

(skala: 1 – tak, 2 – nie, 3 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*
(lista narodowości taka, jak w pytaniach nr 2, 5 i 23)
ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ

1. Araba
2. Anglika
3. Chińczyka
4. Cygana (Roma)
5. Murzyna
6. Niemca
7. Ukraińca
8. Hindusa
9. Żyda

27. Z którą z podanych opinii Pan(i) zgadza się?
(można wybrać tylko jedną odpowiedź)

1. lepiej byłoby, gdyby w Polsce nie mieszkali żadni cudzoziemcy, bez względu na ich narodowość;
2. to dobrze, że w Polsce mieszkają cudzoziemcy i będzie ich w przyszłości przybywać;
3. dla pewnych narodowości cudzoziemców należy stworzyć przepisy ograniczające możliwość ich przyjazdu i pozostania w Polsce;
4. inne zdanie, jakie?

27 A. Jeżeli odpowiedział twierdząco na pytanie 27 punkt 2 to: Jakiej narodowości cudzoziemców najchętniej widział(a)by Pan(i) w Polsce?
(instrukcja dla ankietera: pozwolić więcej mówić, zapisywać wypowiedzi *in extenso*)

27. B. Jeżeli odpowiedział twierdząco na pytanie 27 punkt 3 to: Pobyt jakich narodowości szczególnie by Pan ograniczył?

28. Czy uważa Pan(i), że cudzoziemcy mieszkający legalnie na stałe w Polsce powinni mieć prawo do:
(skala: 1 – zdecydowanie tak, 2 – raczej tak, 3 – raczej nie, 4 – zdecydowanie nie, 5 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ

1. nieskrępowanego wyznawania swojej religii;
2. wydawania prasy w swoim ojczystym języku;
3. uczenia się swojego języka w szkołach państwowych;
4. posiadania rozgłośni radiowych lub stacji telewizyjnych nadających w ich języku ojczystym;
5. zasiadania we władzach lokalnych (np. w gminie);
6. praw wyborczych do parlamentu.

29. Jak Pan(i) sądzi, jaki stosunek do Polaków mają przedstawiciele wymienionych niżej ras i narodowości?

(skala: 1 – zdecydowanie przyjazny, 2 – raczej przyjazny, 3 – obojętny, 4 – raczej niechętny, 5 — zdecydowanie niechętny)

(lista narodowości taka, jak w pytaniach nr 2, 5, 21 i 25)

ROTACJA STWIERDZEŃ
1. Arabowie
2. Anglicy
3. Chińczycy
4. Cyganie (Romowie)
5. Murzyni
6. Niemcy
7. Ukraińcy
8. Hindusi
9. Żydzi

30. Czy Pan(i) sądzi, że na świecie są religie lepsze i gorsze?
(1 – zdecydowanie tak, 2 – raczej tak, 3 – raczej nie, 4 – zdecydowanie nie, 5 – trudno powie-dzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*
FILTR: JEŚLI 30=1,2

31. Jaka religia (lub religie) jest gorsza i dlaczego?

RELIGIA: …………………… -> DLACZEGO? ....
RELIGIA: …………………… -> DLACZEGO? ....
RELIGIA: …………………… -> DLACZEGO? ....

32. Czy zna Pan(i) osobiście jakiegoś cudzoziemca mieszkającego w Polsce?
(skala: 1 – tak, 2 – nie, 3 – trudno powiedzieć [nieodczytywane]*)*

33. Czy uważa Pan(i) problemy, o których dotąd rozmawialiśmy za (wybrać tylko jedną od-powiedź):
1. bardzo ważne
2. raczej ważne
3. raczej nieważne
4. zupełnie nieważne
5. trudno powiedzieć

METRYCZKA **Chciał(a)bym zadać Panu(i) kilka pytań dotyczących Pana(i) gospodarstwa domowego. Służą one do zbadania, czy w opiniach i poglądach na badane tematy występują różnice między kobietami i mężczyznami, osobami w różnym wieku, o różnym wykształceniu itp. Pytania te są bardzo ważne i służą do statystycznego opracowania wyników.**	
M1. Płeć respondenta *[ANKIETER: zaznaczyć bez zadawania pytania]*	1: mężczyzna 2: kobieta
M2. Proszę podać rok urodzenia.	rok: |___|___|___|___|
M4. Jakie ma Pan(i) wykształcenie?	01: niepełne podstawowe 02: podstawowe 03: gimnazjum 04: zasadnicze zawodowe 05: niepełne średnie 06: ukończone średnie zawodowe 07: ukończone średnie ogólnokształcące 08: pomaturalne / policealne 09: niepełne wyższe 10: licencjat / inżynierskie 11: wyższe magisterskie 12: doktorat / studia podyplomowe / MBA
M5. Jaka jest Pana(i) sytuacja zawodowa? Czy obecnie... *Możliwych wiele odpowiedzi*	01: pracuję na etacie 02: pracuję na umowę zlecenie/dzieło 03: pracuję na samozatrudnieniu 04: prowadzę własną firmę 05: prowadzę gospodarstwo rolne 06: uczę się / studiuję 07: jestem na urlopie macierzyńskim, rodzicielskim, wychowawczym 08: jestem na emeryturze 09: jestem na rencie 10: na co dzień zajmuję się domem 11: nie pracuję
Jeżeli M5 = 11 **M5a. Czy jest Pan(i) zarejestrowany(a) jako bezrobotny(a)?**	01: tak 02: nie 03: *odmowa*
M6. Proszę podać w którym województwie aktualnie mieszka respondent:	1. woj. dolnośląskie 2. woj. kujawsko-pomorskie 3. woj. lubelskie 4. woj. lubuskie 5. woj. łódzkie 6. woj. małopolskie 7. woj. mazowieckie 8. woj. opolskie 9. woj. podkarpackie 10. woj. podlaskie 11. woj. pomorskie 12. woj. śląskie 13. woj. świętokrzyskie 14. woj. warmińsko-mazurskie

	15. woj. wielkopolskie
	16. woj. zachodniopomorskie
M7. Czy kiedykolwiek pracował Pan(i) zarobkowo poza granicami Polski?	1. tak
	2. nie
	3. odmowa
M8. Jaki jest Pana(i) stosunek do wiary?	4. wierzący(a) i regularnie praktykujący(a)
	5. wierzący(a) i nieregularnie praktykujący(a)
	6. wierzący(a), lecz niepraktykujący(a)
	7. niewierzący
M9. Czy mógłby / mogłaby Pan(i) powiedzieć, w jakich granicach mieszczą się Pana(i) przeciętne osobiste miesięczne dochody i zarobki „na rękę”.	01: do 500 PLN
	02: 501-1000 PLN
	03: 1001-1500 PLN
	04: 1501-2000 PLN
	05: 2001-2500 PLN
	06: 2501-3000 PLN
	07: 3.001-3500 PLN
	08: 3501-4000 PLN
	09: 4001-4500 PLN
	10: 4501-5000 PLN
	11: 5001-6000 PLN
	12: 6001-7000 PLN
	13: 7001-8001 PLN
	14: 8001-10 000 PLN
	15: 10 001-15 000 PLN
	16: powyżej 15 000 PLN
	17: *nie mam dochodów*
	97: *nie wiem / trudno powiedzieć*
	98: *odmowa odpowiedzi*
M10. Które z następujących określeń najlepiej charakteryzuje sposób gospodarowania dochodem w Pana(i) gospodarstwie domowym?	1: starcza na wszystko i jeszcze oszczędzamy na przyszłość
	2: starcza na wszystko bez specjalnych wyrzeczeń, lecz nie oszczędzamy na przyszłość
	3: żyjemy oszczędnie i dzięki temu starcza na wszystko
	4: żyjemy bardzo oszczędnie, aby odłożyć na poważniejsze zakupy
	5: pieniędzy starcza tylko na podstawowe potrzeby
	6: pieniędzy nie starcza nawet na najtańsze jedzenie
M11. Jakiej wielkości jest miejscowość, w której Pan(i) aktualnie mieszka?	01: wieś
	02: wieś na obrzeżach wielkiego miasta
	03: miasto do 20 tys.
	04: miasto 21 - 50 tys.
	05: miasto 51 - 100 tys.
	06: miasto 101 - 200 tys.
	07: miasto 201 - 500 tys.
	08: miasto powyżej 500 tys.
	09: odmowa odpowiedzi
	10: trudno powiedzieć
M12. Gdyby w najbliższą niedzielę odbyły się wybory do Sejmu, to czy wziąłby / wzięłaby Pan(i) w nich udział?	1. zdecydowanie tak
	2. raczej tak
	3. raczej nie

	4. zdecydowanie nie
	5. nie będę jeszcze wtedy pełnoletni(a)
	6. jeszcze nie wiem
FILTR: zadaj M13, jeśli M12 = 1 lub 2. **M13. Na kandydata / kandydatkę której partii lub ugrupowania odda Pan(i) swój głos w takich wyborach?**	[SKRYPTER: rotacja odpowiedzi] 1. Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (J. Kaczyński) 2. Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej (W. Czarzasty) 3. Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe (W. Kosiniak-Kamysz) 4. Platforma Obywatelska Rzeczypospolitej Polskiej (G. Schetyna) 5. Wolność (J. Korwin-Mikke) 6. .Nowoczesna (K. Lubnauer) 7. Kukiz'15 (P. Kukiz) 8. Partia Razem (A. Zandberg) 9. Twój Ruch (B. Nowacka) 10. inna partia, jaka? .... *zapisz – nie odczytuj* 11. żadna 12. trudno powiedzieć

Interview Guide: *Być Polakiem/Polką*

In practice, the research questions were posed in various ways. However, two guidelines were relatively constant:

1) *the order in which topics were raised, and*
2) *the phrasing used by the interviewer, in keeping with what appears in the guide below.*

1. Co sprawia, że Polak jest Polakiem?
2. Co składa się na polskość? Co Ciebie (Pana/Panią) czyni Polakiem/Polką?
3. *Wręczenie badanej osobie listy kryteriów polskości, które były trzykrotnie stosowane w sondażach, z prośbą o uporządkowanie co do wagi, jakie im przypisuje badany w określaniu osoby jako Polaka/Polkę. Dyskusja badacz-badany.*
4. Czy i pod jakimi warunkami cudzoziemiec może być uznany za Polaka?
5. *Ponowne użycie kartki z warunkami dla cudzoziemca, które były używane w sondażach, też z prośbą o uszeregowanie od najważniejszych do najmniej ważnych.*
6. A czy ktoś wbrew swojej woli może zostać uznany za Polaka/Polkę?
7. Czy dziecko adoptowane przez polską rodzinę może być uznane za Polkę/Polaka?
8. Czy można przestać być Polakiem/Polką?

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Professor **Piotr Tadeusz Kwiatkowski**
Institute of Social Sciences, SWPS University

The book undertakes a topical and complex problem: the validity of criteria for belonging to the Polish national community based on the results of extensive empirical research. The methodological approach employed, as well as references made to previous studies by the same team, facilitate perception of the durability of attitudes towards one's own community as well as the modifications in the structure of national identity over the last three decades. This work comprises significant input in discussions about the identity of contemporary Poles and the changes which have taken place in thinking about Polishness during this period.

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