

(Ethno) Regionalism in Upper Silesia

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Introduction



1998. Administration reform
political compromise, demands are not taken into account

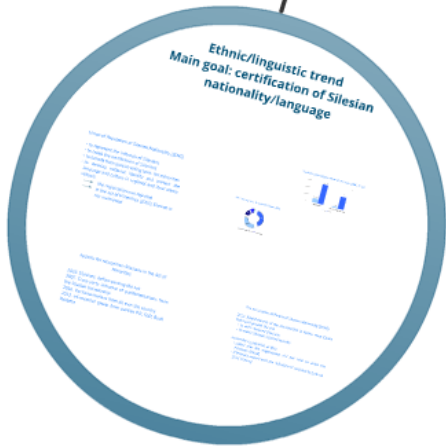
Upper Silesia

Characteristics: regular boundary changes, multiterminal area, developed region, high level of urbanization, socio-political rigidity
→ ethnic-cultural and traditional region

1990. Establishment of Polish-Austrian Silesian (Autonomy) Movement

Appearance of two regional trends:

- ethnic-linguistic trend
- autonomist-regionalist trend



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Ethnic/linguistic-cultural units



demands for ethno-linguistic and cultural rights

Traditional territorial units



demands for higher degree of self-government or
autonomy

1998. Administration reform

political compromise, demands are not
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The planned and the implemented voivodeship system



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Silesia today



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Ethnic/linguistic trend

Main goal: certification of Silesian nationality/language

Union of Population of Silesian Nationality (ZLNS)

- to represent the interests of Silesians
- to reach the certification of Silesians
- to benefit from special voting laws for minorities
- to develop national identity and protect the language and culture in regional and local ethnic schools

- the registration was rejected
- in the Act of Minorities (2005) Silesian is not mentioned

Appeals for recognition Silesians in the Act of Minorities

- 2002. Silesians before passing the Act
- 2007. Cross-party initiative of parliamentarians from the Silesian Voivodeship
- 2010. Parliamentarians from all over the country
- 2012. 64-member group from parties PO, SLD, Ruch Palikota

Silesians according to national censuses (2002, 2011)




The most populous minorities in Poland, 2002



The Association of People of Silesian Nationality (SONS)

- 2011. Establishment of the organisation in Kotórz Mały (Opole Voivodeship) with the aim
 - to unite declared Silesians
 - to create Silesian regional identity

- Successful registration, as they
 - stated that the organisation did not wish to enter the elections (Statut)
 - effectively argued with the definition of nationality (Law on 2011 Census)

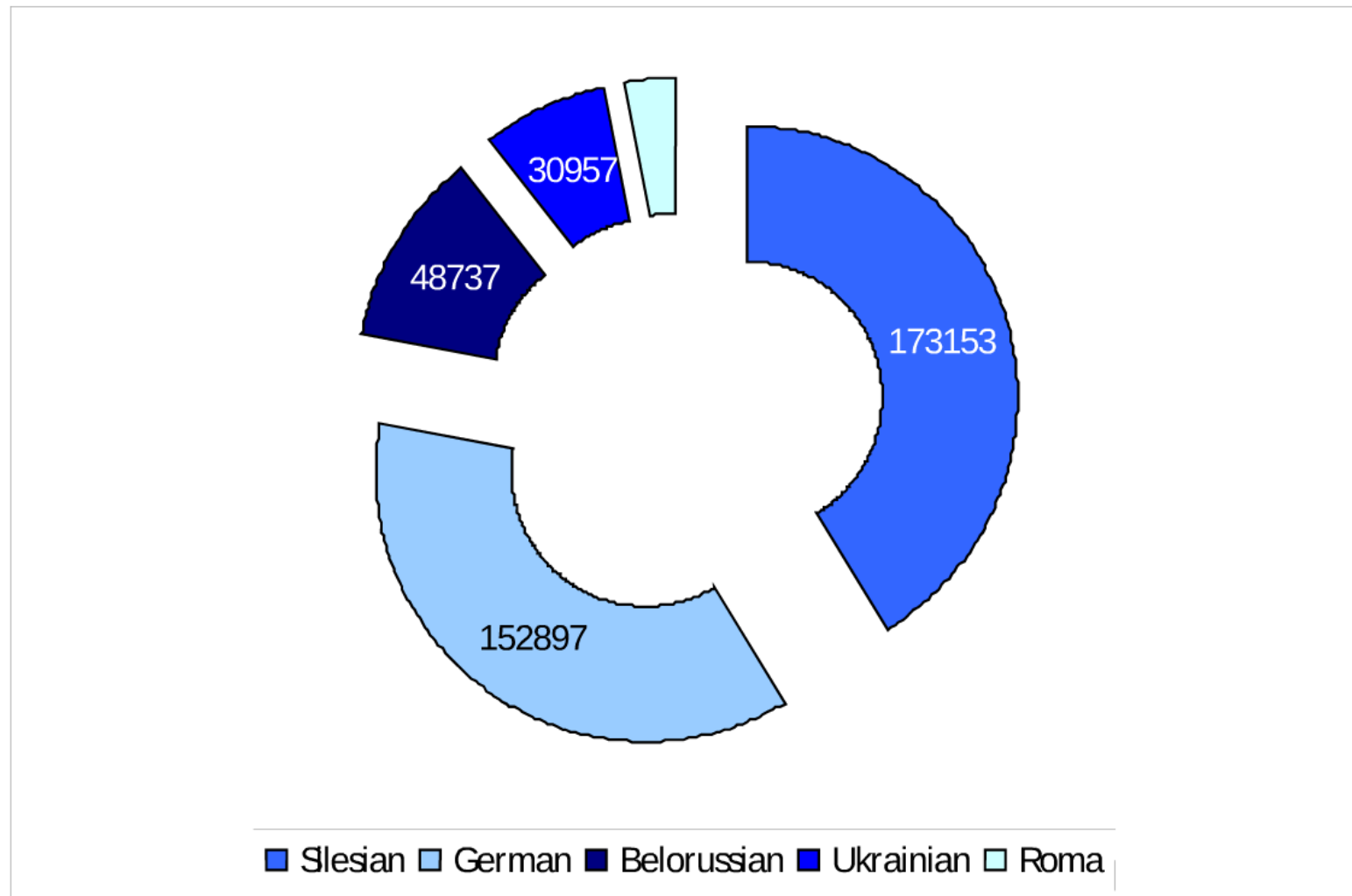


Ethnic/linguistic trend
**Main goal: certification of Silesian
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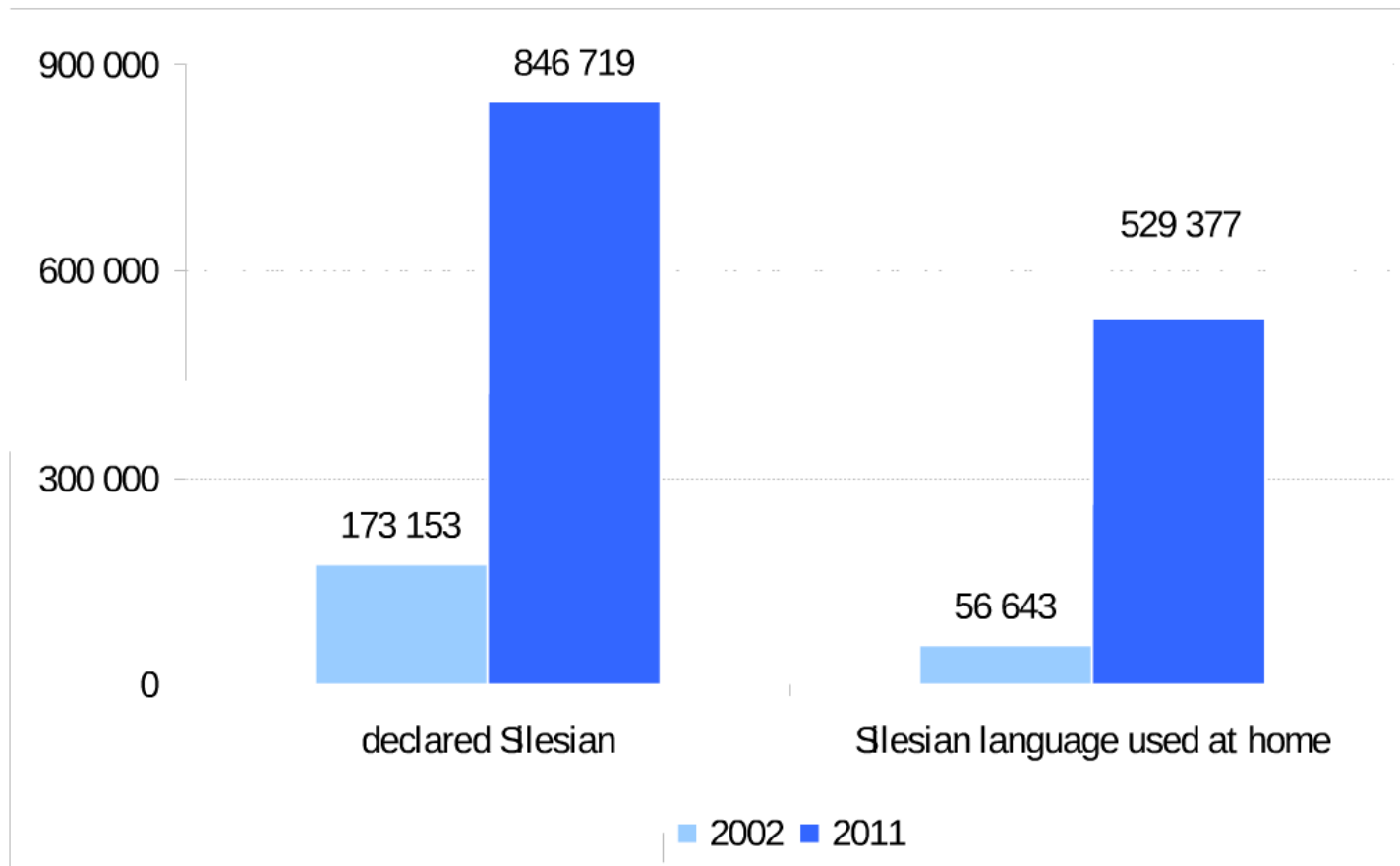
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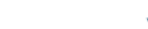
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Autonomist-regionalist trend

Main goal: restore the autonomy granted in 1920

Idea of modernization and deeper decentralization

Changing French model towards Spanish-based regionalized, "asymmetric decentralized" model



- draft amendment of the existing Constitution
- draft statute for the autonomous Silesian Voivodeship

Results of RAS at the parliamentary (Senate) elections in 2011

Electoral district	Number of seats	Average of valid votes	Party (number of seats)
Opole Voivodeship			
Łódź district, Opole	4/27	7.06	5 (7)
Silesian Voivodeship			
70A district, Gliwice	25/107	14.93	3 (4)
70B district, Rybnik	36/283	21.89	3 (5)
70A district, Katowice	41/303	25.28	2 (8)
70B district, Katowice	54/227	32.33	2 (5)
70A district, Bielsko-Biala	14/283	6.78	4 (5)

Results of RAS at regional elections in 2006 and 2010 (Silesian Voivodeship)

Electoral district	Number of votes		Average of valid votes	
	2006	2010	2006	2010
04444	1,815	3,57	0.87	1.58
Katowicki	15,895	35,284	7.68	15.96
Rybnicki	16,778	32,888	8.14	14.57
Gliwicki	11,7	17,729	5.53	8.70
Chorzowski	11,139	29,851	6.95	17.58
Częstochowski	662	1,263	0.41	0.69
Sandekowski	1,02	3,646	0.48	1.37
Total	58,919	122,781	4.35	8.62

"Poland of Regions" (Polska Regionów) programme

- establishing League of Regions by foundation regional movements all over the country
- Result: regional organizations
 - with legal status and membership
 - with Facebook-profile
- March of Regions in 2015
- referendum on constitutional amendment in 2019
- establishment of autonomous voivodeships in 2020



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Autonomy of the Silesian Voivodeship 1920-1945



Results of RAŚ at regional elections in 2006 and 2010 (Silesian Voivodeship)

Electoral district	Number of votes		Average of valid votes	
	2006	2010	2006	2010
Bielski	1,815	3,57	0.87	1.58
Katowicki	15,805	35,264	7.69	15.96
Rybnicki	16,778	32,068	8.14	14.57
Gliwicki	11,7	17,719	5.93	8.70
Chorzowski	11,139	29,851	6.95	17.50
Częstochowski	662	1,263	0.41	0.69
Sosnowiecki	1,02	3,046	0.48	1.37
Total	58,919	122,781	4.35	8.62

Results of RAŚ at the parliamentary (Senate) elections in 2011

Electoral district	Number of votes	Average of valid votes	Rank (number of commissions)
Opole Voivodeship			
53rd district, Opole	6,637	7.06	5 (7)
Silesian Voivodeship			
70th district, Gliwice	25,037	14.93	3 (4)
73rd district, Rybnik	26,303	21.92	3 (5)
74th district, Katowice	41,003	25.30	2 (6)
75th district, Katowice	34,527	32.35	2 (3)
78th district, Bielsko-Biała	14,203	6.78	4 (5)

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Ethnic/linguistic trend Main goal: certification of Silesian nationality/language


Source: [http://www.silesia.europa.eu/DocsAndImages/Default.aspx?DocID=100](#)

1. **Language**

- recognition of Polish and Silesian as regional languages
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of schools
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of universities
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of vocational schools
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of adult education centres
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of folk schools
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of cultural centres
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of libraries
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of museums
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of theatres
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of television and radio
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of newspapers and magazines
- inclusion of Silesian in the curriculum of internet

2. **Nationality**

- recognition of Silesian nationality
- inclusion of Silesian nationality in the curriculum of schools
- inclusion of Silesian nationality in the curriculum of universities
- inclusion of Silesian nationality in the curriculum of vocational schools
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Autonomist-regionalist trend Main goal: restore the autonomy granted in 1920

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1. **Autonomy**

- recognition of Silesian autonomy
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- inclusion of Silesian autonomy in the curriculum of internet

2. **Regionalism**

- recognition of Silesian regionalism
- inclusion of Silesian regionalism in the curriculum of schools
- inclusion of Silesian regionalism in the curriculum of universities
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Conclusions

The Silesian masses of almost one million people cannot be ignored any longer

BUT

1. The independent existence of Silesian nationality and language are unverifiable

2. Recognition of Silesians

- could awake minority consciousness among other groups
- could strengthen the activity of regionalist movement(s)

RAŚ fights for political rights and representation

1. In the future RAŚ

- could become a determining political force in the Silesian Voivodeship
- could become a leader of the national political party based on regionalist movements

BUT

2. West European examples strengthen the fear of losing the unity of the state

Thank you for your attention!