

# A New Tradition. Construction of Cultural Identity of Farmers in "Regained Territories" of Poland After the II World War in the Light of Their Letters to Authorities<sup>1</sup>

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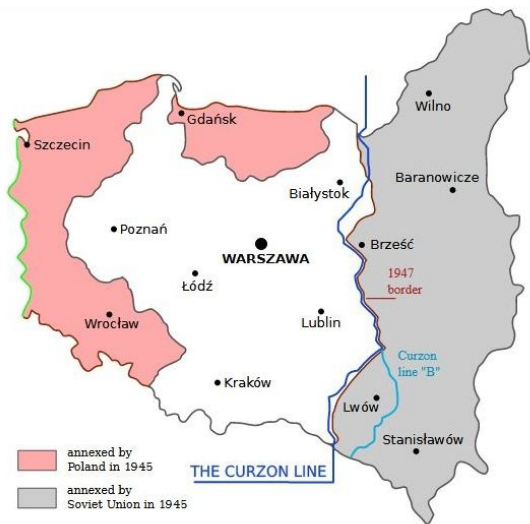
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# Research Problem

"Regained Territories"

# "Regained Territories" — Polish "Wild West", a Melting Pot of Nations



## "Regained Territories" — a Melting Pot of Nations

- Germans (Prussians)
- Poles from central Poland
- Poles from the East
- Poles coming back from forced labor in Germany
- Ukrainians
- etc.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Halicka 2015: 211; Jarosz 1998

# Methodology

*“The Polish peasant, as the present collection shows, writes many and long letters. This is particularly striking, since the business of writing or even of reading letters is at best very difficult for him. It requires a rather painful effort of reflection and sacrifice of time. Letter-writing is for him a **social duty of a ceremonial character**, and the traditional, fixed form of peasant letters is a sign of their social function”<sup>3</sup>*

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<sup>3</sup>Thomas, Znaniecki 1918, 303



# Cultural Identity

*“One hears today of identity and its problems more often than ever before in modern times. And yet one wonders whether the current obsession is not just another case of the general rule of **things being noticed only ex post facto**; when they vanish, go bust or fall out of joint.”*<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Bauman, 1996: 18

*“One thinks of identity **whenever one is not sure of where one belongs**; that is, one is not sure how to place oneself among the evident variety of behavioral styles and patterns, and how to make sure that people around would accept this placement as right and proper, so that both sides would know how to go on in each other’s presence”*<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>Bauman, 1996: 18

Tradition as ...

1. an act: transmission of goods
2. an object: heritage — culture
3. a set of values: form of life<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>Szacki, 2011: 102

# Elements of Cultural Identity

# Elements of Cultural Identity

1. Nationality
2. Language
3. Confession
4. Political engagement
5. Institutional affiliation
6. Geographical origins
7. Financial status
8. Professional skills
9. Physical shape



*"I am **Polish, a Roman catholic, during the whole life I was (. . .) a loyal citizen and I am a good son of democratic Poland, because a) went I and my children to a Polish school, b) I use at home a Polish language only, inasmuch as I didn't know other language and I don't know, c) I served in 1930/31 in Polish Army, d) during the occupation I was and I have got identity document as a Pole, e) I carried on with all the burden of obligatory deliveries and taxes as an honest Polish farmer, f) my wife Maria is Polish as well, a Roman catholic and a good Polish mother"** <sup>7</sup>*

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<sup>7</sup>MZO 2/196/0/4/930, Michał Zdolski to Ministry of Regained Territories, Jurkowo, 19.08.1947



*“our family village (...) (totally Polish village) during long time of occupation defended itself heroically against fascist **Ukrainian bands**, and against **German terror** and persevered at the post, until it was liberated by **Red Army and Polish Army**”<sup>8</sup>*

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<sup>8</sup>Franciszek Jaroszewski et alii to Ministry of National Defence, Zakrzów, nd. , Żegiony"1998 No 1/3, p. 122

*"I am a repatriate from Easter Borderlands and I lost big properties"<sup>9</sup>*

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<sup>9</sup>Władysław Czarnak do Starostwa Powiatowego, Wierzchowicze, 21.09.1946, Żegiony"1998 No 1/3, p. 122

*“szabrownik can have two houses (...) whereas I am not supposed to have any decent house”<sup>10</sup>*

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<sup>10</sup>MZO 2/196/0/4/930, Alfons Olejnik to Edward Osóbka Morawski, Kochanowo, 21.07.1946

# Geographical Origins, Institutional Affiliation, Physical Shape

*"I (...) a repatriate from behind the Bug served in Polish Army, I am as an invalid"<sup>11</sup>*

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<sup>11</sup>Paweł Zawada to Ministry of Regained Territories, Prusinowice, 17.03.1947, *Żegiony*"1998 nr 1/3, p. 132

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