

# INTRODUCTION



## Preliminary Remarks

This book does not set out to provide a comprehensive history of its subject. Rather, its aim is to delineate certain themes in the history of German–Polish relations to show that, while this history contains a lot of mutual distrust, violence and often one-sided aggression, it also reveals periods of cooperation dating from the Middle Ages to the present day. It therefore aims to act as a certain corrective to the view that German–Polish relations have mainly been characterized by Germany’s historical dominance of Poland through conquest, exploitation, and economic and political inequalities.

While this view undeniably has plenty of historical legitimacy and evidence behind it, it does not provide a complete picture. The difficulty in grasping a total view is certainly compounded by the fact that the boundaries between German and Polish identities, like the geographical ones, have not been static, a product of often peaceable German settlement of Polish areas and of the migration of Poles to Germany, as well as of the mixed marriages and other forms of mutual assimilation and identity-switching that have resulted from these currents. In addition, Germans in what is unambiguously Germany have themselves often been ambivalent about their eastern congeners, feeling that, even if they do speak German, they have become Polonized or otherwise Slavicized and have thus left Germandom – or at least are only on the fringes of it. Our topic therefore cannot take identities for granted, nor be dogmatic about who is German and who is Polish, not

least because many on both sides are in a position to ask themselves these very questions.

This topic is, of course, part of the much wider theme of the opposition between ‘Teuton and Slav’, as many older histories describe it. ‘Teuton’ clearly refers to German Germans, but it should also include Austrian Germans, despite their different history and the opposition in which they partake historically between the allegedly ramshackle Habsburg Empire and the similarly extravagant stereotype of the super-efficient German Reich, as much as that between Teuton and Slav. ‘Slav’ covers not just Poles, but Russians, Czechs and many Balkan peoples, competition over whom between Austria–Hungary and Russia led to many nineteenth-century political crises and ultimately to the First World War and the collapse of both empires, as well as the German one.<sup>1</sup> This freed their Slav populations, only for them to suffer reconquest by Hitler’s Germany a generation later, and subsequent Russian domination under the guise of communist ‘liberation’ and control in the wake of his defeat. Freedom only finally came with the collapse of communism, though not without violence, especially in Yugoslavia, and division, especially of the Soviet Union itself, as well as Czechoslovakia, while non-Slav Germany was reunited.

Maybe it is my imagination, or my greater familiarity with this case, that leads me to see German–Polish relations as somehow archetypal of this wider opposition between Teuton and Slav. However that may be, I have been led to this particular choice largely by personal circumstances, as well as by seven years of residence in Berlin that coincided with the period when the famous wall came down, coupled with residence in and repeated visits to Poland starting shortly after that event and continuing up until the present day. The fall of the Berlin Wall also had the effect of leading me away from my earlier concentration on kinship and marriage practices among Indian tribes, and towards conducting fieldwork and research on this new area of interest. The present volume is the partial fruit of that interest, already foreshadowed by a handful of articles (Parkin 1999, 2002, 2013a, 2013b).

This is not primarily a history of state-to-state relations, though these will often have to be referred to. Rather, the emphasis is on othering, the stereotyping but also fluidity of identities, and, in part, on the organization of Poles and Germans as national minorities in each other’s countries. The focus will be partly historical: first, so as to trace changes in identity and help establish the reasons for them, and second, because history is frequently used by informants, politicians and sometimes even academics to validate claims to both identity and territory.

It will probably have been noticed that up to now I have avoided using the word ‘ethnic’ to describe German and Polish identities, and only allowed the word ‘national’ once. First, the focus in this book is on ‘local’ or ‘regional’

identities within a national identity: in this context that does not necessarily mean ‘ethnic’ identity. There are ethnic minorities in the general area, such as the Ukrainian-speaking Łemkos in south-west Poland (e.g. in Zielona Góra) and the Sorbs around Cottbus and Bautzen in Germany; but, incidental remarks aside, I am not concerned with them here. In general the focus is specifically, and quite deliberately, on the *local* identities of one or both *national* majorities. One reason for making the distinction lies in the different relationships between national identities and sub-national identities that are ethnic or regional (or both). Although politically subordinate, strong ethnic identities tend to oppose themselves to the dominant national identity as epistemologically equivalent; there is a clean cut. Non-ethnic regional identities, by contrast, generally see themselves as partaking of the national identity too: the relationship is therefore rather segmented, and also hierarchical, with the national identity outranking the regional one (cf. Parkin 1999). Thus, at least for the self-designated militants, Breton identity is ethnically quite distinct from French national identity and locally opposed to it (McDonald 1987, 1990), whereas Normans generally appear to see themselves as *also* French. MacClancy (1993) has said the same about Navarran identities in relation to Spanish national identity, at least for some in the region, in contrast with the more radically separate Basque or Catalanian identities.<sup>2</sup>

That is not to say that use of the terms ‘ethnic’ and ‘national(ist)’ will be avoided here entirely, though the distinction just made between regional identities that are separate (potentially ‘ethnic’) and those that are segmented with the national majority should be kept in mind. As I have provided a personal view of anthropological approaches to ethnicity elsewhere (2001, Ch. 6; also 2022, Ch. 6), I will not reproduce that here. My view of nationalism, however, will be set out below, followed by a consideration of the significance of national, territorial borders in this study.

## Nationalism

Any study of German–Polish ‘ethnic’ relations must take into account the fact that both Germany and Poland can be seen as ‘nations’. Indeed, modern nationalism is often traced to the German poet Johann Gottfried von Herder, who in the early nineteenth century advocated the independence and statehood of all peoples as a counter to the universal values of the all-conquering French Revolution, and the Napoleonic regime that succeeded it.

As already noted, the difference between ethnicity and nationalism seems to me to be relatively easy to define, and it comes down to a single word: statehood. Not all states are nation states, and not all ethnic groups or minorities want their own state, but at least in Europe most majority ethnicities

probably now have one, which they tend to dominate – potentially to the detriment of the minorities that remain within them; it is these we tend to call nation states. At the same time, the aspiration for a state may be more significant than its actual possession, as with, for example, Catalans in Spain, Basques or Scots. The nation state can therefore be seen as representing the highest degree of Handelman's notion of ethnic incorporation (1977), while nationalism is its ideological referent.

Although many of the same features that apply to definitions and discussions of ethnicity also apply to nationalism, study of the latter has certainly produced some peculiarities of its own, as well as independent theories. In the first place, nationalism was taken up by anthropologists rather later than ethnicity. In the second place – a possibly connected point – while ethnicity might be considered to have become a central anthropological topic, despite anthropology having to share space with, for example, sociology and political science here, nationalism seems to belong more to history and political science, though these disciplinary boundaries have not been sustained in the longer term. Thirdly, while nationalism may be interesting as an academic topic of study, on the whole it has not proved popular with academics, who see in it at best a crude exclusivity potentially denying humanity to others, and at worst the extremism of genocide.

Not that there has been any shortage of theories of nationalism. Perhaps the two most often cited in anthropology are by Gellner (especially 1983, but also 1996) and Anderson (1983). For Gellner, nationalism was first and foremost a tool of the rise of the European middle classes to power in the nineteenth century, just as much as capitalism, industry and constitutionalism. Through this movement, coupled with the First World War, outmoded multi-ethnic, dynastic, largely agrarian states like Russia, Austria–Hungary, Turkey and to a lesser extent Germany collapsed into new and often tiny nation states taken from their component ethnic units.<sup>3</sup> Although Gellner stressed economic and political factors, he also recognized the importance of culture: high culture already in the long-united states of the far west of Europe (France, Britain, Spain and Portugal), and often deliberately created or modified folk culture being adopted as high culture, and turned into it elsewhere. Although nationalism does not efface class, it glosses over it where it can to produce cultural and ideological unity – gone are the deep cultural differences that gave definition to class in the agrarian dynastic states.

For Anderson, the emphasis is on post-colonial states outside Europe, and on cultural metaphors of the fatherland, as well as on the unifying influence of print capitalism, in which everyone reads about the nation's affairs in the same newspapers at about the same times of day – around the breakfast table or in the evening by the fire. Most famously, nations are 'imagined communities': institutions with a community feeling, which has to be imagined

because no face-to-face event typical of the national community can bring all the nation's citizens together.<sup>4</sup>

A variant theory of nationalism that is not found with ethnicity is the perennialism of Anthony Smith. Keen to eschew a pure primordialism in favour of a creationist view not dissimilar from those of Gellner and Anderson, Smith (e.g. 1986) nonetheless points out that certain *ethnies* (he routinely uses the French word) have such a long history that they appear to have always been around – like the Chinese, Japanese, Greeks, Jews and Persians. Even in these cases, though, there is enough evidence to indicate that these identities too have specific historical foundations, and have changed through history (e.g. Just 1989 on Greeks; Farrokh 2007 on Persians).

A more recent study of Basque nationalism (MacClancy 2007) emphasizes culture over considerations of economics, politics or identity alone, partly in order to make the claim that this is the area in which the anthropologist can most usefully make his or her mark. MacClancy also makes a useful point about the nation and time: while some aspects of Basque identity, which never fails to emphasize its supposed uniqueness, certainly take one back to the Neanderthals of the Palaeolithic by referring to palaeontology and biology, other aspects stress uniqueness within modernity, as with evolving Basque tastes in cooking, football and art. This can be seen in other national identities too.

## Borders

The big names in the anthropological study of borders in recent times have been Hastings Donnan and Thomas Wilson (especially 1999; also Donnan and Wilson 1994, Wilson and Donnan 1998, both edited volumes), but Liam O'Dowd (2001), a sociologist and long-time researcher of the Republic of Ireland's border with the north, has also provided some significant insights. As with virtually all commentators on borders, we meet the unexceptional observation that they bring people together as much as divide them, with the qualification in O'Dowd's case that any attempt to make a border more permeable reduces its significance. Much work, of course, has been directed at activities that are indeed often seen as challenging the integrity and significance of particular borders, such as cross-border trading, especially smuggling, migration and even tourism, as well as how border communities are themselves constituted (see Donnan and Wilson 1999 for a thorough discussion). At the same time, for O'Dowd borders are also fundamentally undemocratic institutions even in an otherwise democratic Europe, as they owe their existence and their exact configurations more to past wars than to democratic approval; yet even liberal democracies need them in order

to know whom to distribute rights and duties to as national citizens. With their extensive apparatuses of control, they are also, for Donnan and Wilson, symbols of the state's power, and sites of perhaps the most intense degree of official scrutiny that the law-abiding citizen is ever likely to encounter.

Nonetheless, local officials too may aim to reduce the significance of particular national borders, in which case they may come into conflict with border guards and other police officials representing the state as a whole. In Europe, they are doing this particularly through the creation of cross-border regions. This goes way beyond the shortening of border queues or sending rescue services across the border to help with an emergency. O'Dowd neatly sums up their significance:

Although most trans-frontier regions are created for pragmatic or instrumental reasons to access EU funding as a means of addressing shared environmental, planning or economic development problems, it may be argued that their real significance lies elsewhere [as] cross-national policy communities, advocacy and discourse coalitions, epistemic communities where the logic of communicative action, discourse and consensus creation may be just as important as the logic of instrumental action. (O'Dowd 2001: 103, after Risse-Kappen, reference removed)

Certainly all cross-border links between Poland and Germany seem to exist at least in part to celebrate themselves as well as to pursue practical concerns in the narrow sense, and they may even have a higher 'enjoyment' quotient for the officials involved than any real instrumentality. As O'Dowd also points out, the significance of cross-border regions and other links is frequently exaggerated by their supporters, whose core often consists of a local and rather unrepresentative elite of businessmen and officials, and they are generally woefully under-resourced. In fact, most of the foregoing remarks can apply to the present ethnographic situation, and I will not pursue them further here.

### **The Polish–German Border: Previous Work**

The Oder–Neisse line, named after the two rivers that constitute the post-Second World War border between Poland and Germany, was a border between two diplomatic allies in Soviet-controlled Eastern Europe, but also a sharp ethnic and linguistic border, official relations between two socialist 'brothers' occluding the hostility engendered by the late war, and the largely one-sided killing that had been committed during it.

However, initially in 1945, after the Polish authorities had managed to take over their 'new territories' from Germany, the respective authorities in

the twin towns along the border realized that they needed a modicum of cooperation just for practical reasons, despite the inevitable lingering hostility to one another. This was partly because key infrastructure, especially that controlling the river system, including sewage disposal, was located on both sides of the border. But also, Germany had skills needed on the Polish side, while Poland could reciprocate with its better food provision. This flexibility was ended by the founding of the GDR in 1949, which closed the border more firmly and consistently. Between Gomułka returning to power in Poland in 1956 and 1967, there was another period of greater flexibility; it was repeated from 1970 to 1980, a period of Germans trading their textiles and manufactured goods for cheap Polish food. However, in 1980 the GDR government took fright at the legalization of the Solidarity opposition in Poland and firmly closed the border again – and it remained so until liberation in 1989/90. In these periods of greater flexibility, Poles especially crossed the border to work, and for shopping and tourism, and inter-ethnic marriages were also conducted in some numbers, usually between German men and Polish women. However, there was some resentment on the German side at Poles buying up all the food (as they saw it), and there were reports of German shopkeepers refusing to sell certain items to Poles.<sup>5</sup>

Although popular with other disciplines, this border has not received much attention from anthropologists thus far, exceptions being Andrew Asher (2011, 2012), who worked in Frankfurt and Słubice, and Małgorzata Irek (2001), who inter alia wrote on the Dreiländereck further south, where Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic meet, and its main city of Görlitz/Zgorzelec. In this twin city between Germany and Poland, cross-border cooperation seemed both plentiful and effective; on the Polish side, Zgorzelec was capable of significant freedom and agency in dealing with its bigger German twin. Briefly comparing the situation in the cross-border urban area at Frankfurt an der Oder and Słubice, Irek found that cooperation was much less frequent and/or effective, that there was official reluctance to talk about it very much, and that Słubice – much smaller and less powerful compared to its much bigger German neighbour – relied excessively on the cross-border trade and therefore on decisions made in Frankfurt. This difference suggests that local strategies were needed, tailor-made for each case, rather than attempts at blanket solutions to supposedly uniform problems. Irek also gives reasons for the success of such initiatives:

The success of those initiatives depends mainly on the urgency of its problems, the degree of economic necessity, the common sense of local authorities, and the goodwill of inhabitants. The initiatives can be facilitated or made more difficult by the international political climate and the degree of understanding

between the respective governments responsible for creating a legal framework for bilateral contacts between the local populations.<sup>6</sup> (Irek 2001: 218)

However, a later paper on this twin city by Sandberg (2009), reporting research with schoolchildren aged sixteen and seventeen on both sides, indicated that many of them only crossed the border infrequently, and that there were clear barriers between them, not least language: while many of the Polish pupils spoke some English as well as Polish, none of the German pupils spoke either language, making contact difficult. Sandberg's research was conducted not in the classroom, but during walks through either town; few of these 'walking interviews' crossed the border.

Asher, who did most of his fieldwork in Frankfurt and Słubice from 2003 to 2006, during the period of Poland's EU entry, emphasizes both the problems of applying the idea of European citizenship in the face of popular scepticism and outright opposition, and the funding support for border cooperation through the EU's PHARE and INTERREG programmes. In Frankfurt and Słubice, most cross-border cooperation is official, though there is now much more cross-border shopping, especially by Germans going to Poland to buy more cheaply. These economic disparities also occurred under socialism, when the movement was in the opposite direction: some Poles experiencing shortages were able to work in East Germany, which was relatively well stocked for an East European state under socialism and could therefore support families over the border. Conversely there was still little in the way of cross-border residence when Asher was doing fieldwork because of the excessive rents charged for housing on the German side of the border, despite its greater availability. The same applied to employment, partly because of legal restrictions, which some entrepreneurial Poles 'got round' by simply ignoring the applicable laws (Asher 2011). Asher's other paper (2012) reports on an informal attempt by an enthusiast for Europeanization to get the Frankfurt/Słubice conurbation recognized as a unitary city under the newly coined name of 'Słubfurt', as in the days before the Second World War, when Słubice was the Frankfurt suburb of Dammvorstadt over the river Oder/Odra. Although he achieved some modest symbolic success, his initiative was not taken seriously enough to be implemented by the authorities on either side of the border. Serrier (2013: 212) mentions a similar initiative by the writer Andrzej Zawada from Wrocław, Silesia, to combine the present name of the city with Breslau, its name in the German period, producing 'Bresław'.

Much of this work has been produced by disciplines other than anthropology, such as sociology, political science and economics. Stefan Krätke, for example, wrote about the economic prospects opened up by the lifting of border restrictions generally in the context of what was then merely Poland's planned entry to the EU with a series of papers written in the 1990s (1996,



1998, 1999). He tended to be pessimistic about the success of cross-border trade and industry, pointing out that not all such activities benefit border regions; he emphasized that the pull of inland cities like Poznań had been more successful in attracting inward investment than the border towns. Moreover, whereas what the Polish side of the border needed, according to him, were high-grade businesses relying on innovation, what it actually had were a number of so-called 'bazaar economies' based on large informal or semi-formal markets attracting Germans over the border for cheap shopping. He also pointed out the tensions and impediments to cooperation between Germans and Poles caused by West German firms coming to Poland to take advantage of cheap labour and by a residual lack of trust and stereotyping on both sides that saw, for example, Germans as arrogant, and Poles as thieves. Hence the perceived need for so-called Euroregions as forums for encouraging cooperation.<sup>7</sup> The wider situation in which he wrote was one of massive deindustrialization, farming decline, and population flight on the German side of the border, but not so much in western Poland. However, there was still a severe asymmetry between the two sides in terms of wages and spending power: in the 1990s, the ratio of German to Polish wages was generally in the region of 8 to 1 (Dürreschmidt 2006: 249). Eastern Germany, after all, had rich uncles to support it in the more prosperous west of the country and the EU, which Poland conspicuously lacked until it joined the EU in 2004 and could begin to draw on EU funding for itself.

Another text published before Poland's EU entry is by Ann Kennard (1995), who specifically advocated the formation of a cross-border region between Germany and Poland, and described both attempts to provide quite sophisticated institutions for the new Euroregions and the linking of borders such as these with regions through EU funding (the PHARE and INTERREG programmes). Like some other authors, Jorg Dürreschmidt (2002), who worked in the twin city of Guben/Gubin, drew attention to the scepticism and lack of support for cross-border cooperation and institutions among the ordinary population compared with the often extravagant official enthusiasm for them, due to old suspicions, stereotyping and a lack of trust between ordinary Poles and Germans. In a joint paper between Dürreschmidt and Ulf Matthiesen (2002), the authors remark: '[S]o far, there is little evidence of a bottom-up Europeanization of Guben's everyday culture', but rather a process of 'cultural closure' (ibid.: 20). This is at least partly due to the presence along the border of 'one of the most pronounced language barriers in Europe' (ibid.: 19). Later in the paper they again draw attention to the gaps between official and popular perspectives, as the former do not match the latter's perceptions of reality. Practically all the two sides can agree on is that they live in a dying town that does not even have a proper town centre (ibid.: 35ff.).

Similar observations are made in a separate paper Matthiesen wrote with Hans-Joachim Bürkner (2001). They highlight the fear among Poles of Germans being able to buy up Polish land after EU entry and returning Poland's 'new territories', won in 1945, to Germany; nonetheless, in general Poles saw the opening of the border as an opportunity, while Germans saw it as a threat. They also show how German politicians began to be criticized for showing undue consideration to their Polish opposite numbers in negotiations over cross-border cooperation, and for focusing too much on issues of 'culture' rather than on encouraging business investment. One mayor was threatened with recall at one point over this issue; and while he survived this, he was defeated at the next election.

Despite this latent antagonism, Dürreschmidt (2002) found that there had been a number of Polish–German marriages over the years, some dating back to the time under socialism when some Poles were authorized to commute to Germany to work. This may lead Germans in these marriages to a bifocal vision of the Poles who are their neighbours, accepting those within the wider family into which they have married, but still condemning Poles as a depersonalized category with the aid of the usual stereotypes.

In another paper (2006), Dürreschmidt's criticisms of the administrative failures of cross-border relations in the period between the fall of socialism in 1989/90 and the extension of the EU eastwards in 2004 extend to the Euroregions, set up along the border in the early 1990s (*ibid.*: 250; see also above, note 7):

[M]ore than a decade after their foundation, observers have come to the somewhat sobering assessment that with their emphasis on infrastructural projects, such as water refinement plants, for example, as well as their adherence to national administrative hierarchies, Euroregions have done little for cultural integration on the ground. Thus, a huge gap has developed between the programmatic objectives – which also included the promotion of a sense of European identity and state subsidies aimed at fostering a translocal civil-society infrastructure – and the results so far achieved ... The identity-generating power of projects such as the Euroregions, or the declaration of twin cities as 'Model Eurotowns', has been grossly overestimated. Instead, they have turned into self-referential political projects without ever gaining the necessary grassroots support from the everyday cultures on both sides of the border. (Dürreschmidt 2006)

While cross-border festivals were popular, they represented only limited and temporary success while they were being put on: not even they led to significant gains in cross-border contact and understanding among individuals (*ibid.*: 251).

Cecilia Chessa (2004) has dealt much more comprehensively with the place of civil-society organizations like Euroregions in respect of the twin

city of Frankfurt/Ślubice, located north of Guben/Gubin and near the most important motorway border crossing for general traffic (there is also an urban crossing, which links the two towns directly). Most such organizations had funding problems, but on the German side the government stepped in, a benefit the Polish side did not really have, apart from any spillover effects of German cross-border activity. There were therefore more initiatives on the German side, which had the support of a much richer government and EU membership, which until 2004, the date of Chessa's paper, the Polish side lacked. However, German government funding meant that only semi-public organizations with a clear aim to improve cross-border cooperation were recognized: private foundations of a general sort and individuals could not benefit. As for the local Euroregion, setting one up became a condition of funding under the EU's INTERREG II programme, which led in turn to many civil-society organizations being created so they could sign the INTERREG II contract. Other organizations included the Bez Granic/Ohne Grenzen ('without boundaries') youth group and a number of women's groups. Generally, Chessa says, these organizations had some success, if only because their activities lifted the gloom somewhat over the lack of progress in the region, despite all the official promises.

## The Remaining Chapters

Geographically, the major ethnographic focuses in the book are Silesia and Ziemia Lubuskie (western Poland), both of which can be considered regions of Poland, as well as connections (especially of the former) with the German city of Berlin, the 'big lights' city for many in western Poland in particular, and the history of Polish migration to Germany since the nineteenth century. The Silesian case has been covered well enough for the available literature to form the basis of my description of what is going on there. However, in the case of Ziemia Lubuska my own original ethnography will be exploited. Other chapters draw more on published historical sources. In certain cases discussed throughout the book, I have refrained from identifying a particular town or village where I feel there are sensitivities compelling it to be anonymized. The identities of individuals have also been concealed unless their names are already in the public domain for other reasons.

Chapters 1 and 2 review the history of German–Polish relations, partly from the point of view of their respective states, but also as a matter of relations between peoples, as well as state policy towards the other nationality as a population. Chapter 1 covers the Middle Ages and the early modern period up to the end of the Second World War. Chapter 2 continues with the interwar period, the war itself, and the experience of German refugees in

West Germany since that war, and it ends with a short section on German nostalgia and irredentism for the lost lands in the east.

Chapter 3 looks at German and Polish national and regional identities today. While national identities should be readily understood, one can identify strong regional identities in both countries, but especially perhaps Germany, that still partake of the major nationalism: that is, they are not ethnically different from the latter. I therefore see them as segmented with the national identity rather than opposed to it by a clear conceptual barrier (see above). I do not discuss all such possible identities, but select mainly those along the border, namely eastern Germany (formerly a separate state) and Lubuskie in Poland. The final section looks at the circumstances of switching between identities as Pole and German, and vice versa.

Chapter 4 considers Polish migration to Germany both historically and in the present day. A major focus is on the city of Berlin, the big-city magnet for Poles, especially those in western Poland, as it is associated with the more prosperous West, and is also nearer than Warsaw. One section looks at German attitudes to Berlin itself; since reunification it has become the national capital again, but it is also considered a bit of a frontier town, with points east progressively becoming more exoticized and orientalized.

Chapter 5 considers another region in Poland with strong ties to Germany, namely the western province of Ziemia Lubuska. This province is characterized to an extent by migration and day-to-day cross-border traffic with Germany, but strong views in the latter about it having formerly been a part of Germany generally seem to be lacking. In this sense it forms a contrast with Silesia, which is subject to much stronger German irredentism, or Pomerania or the former East Prussia, neither of which are dealt with in this book (cf. Dönhoff 2010). Another difference is that most of the current population are descended from those who came from elsewhere in Poland or from the territories lost to the Soviet Union after the war, and who replaced the German population, who either fled or were expelled.

Chapter 6 links identity issues in western Poland with the reforms of local government introduced in Poland in 1999, asking what impact the latter has had on the former. Some of the consequences of these reforms are described in general terms, but recent cross-border relations between officials especially are also considered against the background of Poland's entry into the EU and the practical removal of the border by virtue of the Schengen agreement. One example of cross-border cooperation between ordinary citizens of Poland and Germany, and its fate, is also described.

Chapter 7 focuses mainly on the question of Silesian identity, both historically and today, asking whether it can be considered Polish, German or something else entirely. There have been shifts in that identity historically, but a specific Silesian identity is certainly being promoted in some quarters

today, even if it has to use German or Polish to explain itself. There is also an acknowledged German population in Silesia, in and around the town of Opole (now a separate Polish province). Stray remarks also apply to other areas of Poland subject to German nostalgia or irredentism, but the main focus is on this particular region, which has changed hands several times throughout its history. It forms a comparison with the data on Ziemia Lubuska in the previous two chapters.

Chapter 8 briefly brings things up to date following further periods of fieldwork in 2010 and 2014. The main finding of the chapter is that the initial enthusiasm in some quarters for cross-border cooperation seems to have cooled somewhat, as some such activities have died a death, while others have been ‘routinized’. Chapter 9 offers a brief conclusion.

Most of the first half of the book is based on historical and anthropological literature published in English, German and Polish. The weight of the sources in the second half is my own intermittent periods of fieldwork, mostly conducted in Poland with Polish-speaking officials, though I did also perform some interviews and attend some meetings on the German side of the border. As my German is better than my Polish, I was able to act alone with German informants but required an interpreter to deal with Polish ones (see Acknowledgements section below). Partly because of the vagaries of library access at the time of the research, especially in obtaining Polish sources, I have cited more texts in German than in Polish, and more in English than in either language. This gap has hopefully been made good by fieldwork.

Although parts of this book have previously appeared in print, the papers concerned have been somewhat broken up in the process of their reproduction here, so it has not been possible to associate them as wholes with particular chapters in the book (it is mainly chapters 3, 5 and 6 that are affected); see Parkin 2002,<sup>8</sup> 2013a<sup>9</sup> and 2013b.<sup>10</sup> All quotations from German in the text have been translated into English by myself. Most of the names of individuals and many geographical names have been avoided in the text, in line with current standards of anonymization.

## The Research and Acknowledgements

Lastly, I offer a brief account of how the ethnographic research on which this book is based was conducted, coupled with appropriate acknowledgements. Initial fieldwork was carried out between February and September 2002 – that is, for Poland, pre-EU entry and pre-Schengen – and was funded by the Max Planck Society, through the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany. I am most grateful to Prof. Chris Hann, then

co-director of this institute, for arranging the funding during this period and for supporting my research generally, as well as to his staff for their unfailing aid. The core of the research consisted of interviews with officials at all levels of administration in Poland, particularly where they were concerned with cross-border relations, as well as many of their opposite numbers in Germany; I am grateful to them all for their time and trouble. I was able to sit in on some meetings and often given copious amounts of publicity material and other literature to take away with me. Other reflections are based on more casual conversations with new and existing acquaintances in Poland, including journalists and local politicians, but also ordinary people. As already noted, further, briefer, privately financed fieldwork was conducted on trips to Poland in 2010 and 2014. A plan to conduct a short period of fieldwork in Silesia in 2019 had to be aborted because of the coronavirus pandemic.

I would particularly like to acknowledge the invaluable aid of Maciej Irek, who acted as my field assistant during these periods of fieldwork. As well as getting us into offices for interviews without appointments and interpreting for me, he showed an excellent grasp of the issues involved, as well as of Polish politics generally, and provided me with many useful insights. Małgorzata Irek, whose work is cited above, also furthered my understanding of these issues, helped me with some interviews, and read a complete draft of the book. Special thanks are due to both.

In addition to the published papers already cited at the end of the last section of this chapter, other presentations relating to this research were given to the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, on 23 September 2002 (see Parkin 2002), the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, University of Oxford, on 8 November 2002, and the Max Planck Institute for the Study of Religious and Ethnic Diversity, Göttingen, August 2014. I also acknowledge with thanks the suggestions of those who reviewed this book for the press, suggestions I have taken seriously even when deciding not to incorporate them. Responsibility for this text is therefore mine alone.

## Notes

1. Certainly all three former empires survived as republics, but under very different non-imperial regimes.
2. I realize that this is to paint the situation with a broad brush. McDonald makes it clear that not all Bretons stress their ethnic identity to that extent, while MacClancy seems to be saying that some Navarrese do see themselves as ethnically different from the Castilian Spanish, while also stressing ambiguity and uncertainty on the part of some of his informants. The same could conceivably be or become true of the Norman identity, perhaps

- on the basis of its ‘Norse’ origins dating back to Count Rollo’s invasion of France in AD 911.
3. This process repeated itself with a vengeance after the collapse of communism in 1989/90, which within a few years had led to the break-up of other multi-ethnic states like the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia, though not Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria or Albania. It left Germany and Poland untouched in this sense, and Germany even experienced territorial growth through reunification in 1991.
  4. There has been a tendency to extend use of Anderson’s phrase ‘imagined communities’ to other social situations that are quite different from what he intended. Almost any aspect of the social can be considered ‘imagined’ at some level, and it only dilutes the force of the original meaning of the term to extend it to everything. Through no fault of Anderson’s it has, in short, become something of a cliché.
  5. This paragraph is based on Dürreschmidt and Matthiessen 2002, Chessa 2004, Ładykowska and Ładykowski 2013, and Szytniewski 2013.
  6. Irek has also worked on Polish migration to Western countries generally, including the UK and Germany, and on Poles conducting informal trade across Eastern Europe both before and after the fall of communism (Irek 1998, 2018). She has also criticized what she sees as the existing tendency in migration studies to treat social groups and networks as over-concrete and over-bounded, and to favour a hierarchical, vertical perspective over one characterized by more realistic assumptions and practices of equality and horizontality. Her major work is now 2018, but see also 2009, 2011, 2012, 2014, 2016.
  7. Euroregions, originally set up in the German–Dutch borderlands, are essentially non-official cross-border regions, generally but not always within the EU. The Polish–German border has four of them, including those centred on Guben/Gubin and Frankfurt/Ślubice. While often staffed by local government officers, giving them close links with the formal administration, they are unofficial bodies with rather the status of NGOs. Their basic goal is to improve cross-border relations in their area in anything from education and culture to controlling the rivers Oder and Neisse as an international border. See the section on Euroregions in Ch. 6.
  8. Permission received, with thanks, from Prof. Chris Hann, emeritus director of the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle, Germany, and formerly editor of the institute’s Working Papers series.
  9. Permission received, with thanks, from Berghahn Books.
  10. Permission received, with thanks, from Berghahn Journals.