

## SUMMARY

The dissertation on „Jews in the collective memory of Zabrze and Gliwice citizens” refers to the subject of the city and the collective memory concerning the Jewish society.

The Jews living before the WW2 in Zabrze and Gliwice ( in those days: Hindenburg and Gleiwitz) found themselves mainly as members of German society. They didn't take into consideration that they could be representatives of religious or racial minority. The Jews belonged to social elite of Upper Silesian cities and towns. They could not be distinguished from another members of the local society by their outlook or behaviour. The Jews used to live following the principle “to be a Jew at home and in the synagogue but the European in the streets”. The Bernheim's petition that was put in 1933 to League of Nations was the turning point for understanding their position within the society and the symbolic moment of separation with German identity. The Jewish community was excluded by Germans from common cultural heritage and forced to treat themselves as national minority. It was a moment when a lot of Jewish citizens of Upper Silesian cities and towns decided to leave the country and emigrate. The Jews who decided to stay and managed to survive the Holocaust tried to rebuilt their community after WW2. They were joined by Polish Jews arriving from another regions. Notwithstanding this, the life in new realities was not easy. Antisemitic incidents, hostile attitude to German nationals, and the memory of the WW2 and Holocaust provided to mass emigration of Jews from Upper Silesia. The creation of the new state Israel made the decisions easier. In years 1949, 1955 and 1967-1969 most of the Jews left western Upper Silesia.

The research is unique due to two historical events that are responsible for current social and demographical structure of Zabrze and Gliwice. Firstly, before 1945 these cities (along with the rest of western part of Upper Silesia) belonged to German state. Secondly, the migration movements after 1945 led to exchange of citizens on the large scale. Most of autochthons left the cities (and the country), and their place was taken by migrants from another parts from Poland, from “the East” and re-emigrants from Western Europe.

The main purpose of the research was to define the content of the collective memory of current Zabrze and Gliwice citizens – the memory referring to the Jewish society. Secondly, it focused on remembering and forgetting processes that are responsible for current state of the memory. Thirdly, the research led to identification of sites of memory referring to Jews that are present in the memory of respondents.

The collective memory is understood as shared pool of memories consisting of autobiographical and socially acquired elements that underwent selection and transformation

processes leading to unification in presentation of the past. The collective memory is dynamic and variable process and its construction consist of three levels: individual memory in the social context, unified collective memory and the official memory.

The research was conducted by the use of qualitative methods. The main method (technic) were unstructured interviews with current citizens of Zabrze and Gliwice. Having in mind social and demographical structure of the cities, the respondents were divided into 4 categories: witnesses – the persons born in Zabrze and Gliwice before 1945, descendants of witnesses – the persons having at least one parent from category of witnesses, migrants and their descendants, and the last category were “millennials” – the citizens born in the cities after 1989.

The second research method was qualitative analyse of local press from period 1945-2017. The press is one of the mass media having significant impact on creation of social reality and collective memory.

The research was conducted in the period from July 2019 to December 2019 with participation of 55 respondents from both cities: 11 witnesses, 13 descendants of witnesses, 20 migrants and 19 representatives of the youngest generation. In total 1,839 minutes of material were recorded. Simultaneously the qualitative analyse of all available press from period 1945-2017 was carried out.

Lack of unified image of the past referring to the presence of the Jews in Zabrze and Gliwice is the basic conclusion of the research. Therefore instead of “collective memory” the concept of the “collective (non) memory” should be used. The (non) memory is the result of the following factors: distorted process of communicative memory between the witnesses and next generations, lack or elite character of local memory carries (including lack of Jewish community) , strong influence of national political history and global industrialisation processes. In majority, the local sites of memory referring to the Jewish community are outside of collective memory.

In the last part of the dissertation some further directions of possible research were suggested with a strong belief that the collective memory of western Upper Silesian citizens is research worthy subject.