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The Habitus of the Settlement in the Upper Silesian Tradition
on the Example of Radzionków

SUMMARY

The doctoral dissertation focuses on the habitus of the inhabitants of a small town - Radzionków - located in Upper Silesia. The theme refers to several cultural phenomena that interweave and complement each other, enabling the creation of a research matrix to determine how the cultural structure and functions of small towns in Upper Silesia influence habitation patterns.

The primary objective of the PhD thesis was to describe the settlement practices in Upper Silesia, which are shaped and organized by the long-standing and diachronic dispositions (habitus) of the inhabitants. These practices were extracted from the material obtained through anthropological, qualitative, questionnaire-based field research, which was conducted in Radzionków and Bytom from 2019 to 2021, and the results were set in the broad context of Upper Silesia. Radzionków was chosen as a research area due to its potential to capture numerous cultural phenomena over an extended period, due to its historical background and interrelated circumstances. The research's foundation was to define the relationship between habitus and settled spaces (home, neighbourhood and places "tamed" in public space) shaped in relation to an important urban and industrial centres in Upper Silesia, and to capture the changes in this respect that took place over the course of the 19th, 20th and 21st centuries. This broad time horizon made it possible to answer the question of the impact of the changes associated with industrialisation on the extent of the space a person wants to inhabit and made it possible to consider the impact of industry on small communities and their perception of "feeling at home" in the post-industrial world. Guided by Pierre Bourdieu's concept of habitus, it was important to identify the common rules observed by residents that influence their practices of domiciliation. These factors include: the type and structure of the living space, the location of the town and its relationship with larger cities, the development and change that has taken place in the transformation of Radzionków from a village to a small town, its current post-industrial character and the formation of the cultural landscape.

The confluence of these circumstances adds up to a specific conjuncture that shapes the relationship between structure and practice.

The dissertation focuses on the discourses of settlement, the history and objective structures of Radzionków, the analysis and interpretation of the settlement's habitus. Settled landscapes and the memory of settlement of the inhabitants are also considered.

The analysis and interpretation of evoked sources made it possible to show the mechanism of the local world of Upper Silesian towns on the example of Radzionków. Settlement largely relies on the capital of social relationships established in the community and the gradability of habitus, which occurs most often in contact with 'strangers', involving the requirement to fit in with this community by adopting local cultural patterns using the argument of respect for tradition and heritage. This is a process that has been shaped by centuries of attachment to Radzionków, strengthening one's own identity in opposition to larger urban centres. The persistence of habitus structures of settlement has dynamized and supported these processes, determining the sense of separateness. This has its spatial dimension. The biggest urbanisation and industrial changes took place in Rojca, which is "separated" from the oldest part of Radzionków by a railway crossing. This seems to be a symbolic border between the old and the 'new' order. The development of the mine and the entire settlement infrastructure around it initiated the town-forming process, dividing Radzionków in half. In the inhabitant's narrative and notion of Radzionków, the "Stary Koniec" centre, cover their traditional lifestyle and strict attachment to old values, while others declare an openness to change. Memory thus goes back many decades and the past of the town is well known. Differences, sympathies and antipathies are therefore maintained. Intergenerational memory and generational transmission have a sustaining effect on the products of habitus, or practices. Additionally, the phenomenon of topophilia influences strong attachment to family sites, which is sustained by tradition and habitus simultaneously. These elements have allowed to isolate a characteristic feature of Radzionków's cultural patterns, which shapes a special kind of bond among the visitors and the residents.