

*Łukasz Szwejka*¹  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-5168-3372>

Jagiellonian University

DESTIGMATISATION PROCESS WITHIN HENRYK JÓZEWSKI'S VOLHYNIAN EXPERIMENT

S u m m a r y: In the social sciences and liberal arts, the issue of labelling is an important field of analysis for a better understanding of the functioning of an individual in a group. The labelling theory has been developing since the 1950s, mainly in the United States. This theory found considerable interest also among the Polish resocialisation thought. The reversal of social labelling, that is the start of the destigmatisation process, seems particularly important from the readaptation perspective. In the paper, the discussion on destigmatisation is related to the Volhynian social policy project implemented between 1928 and 1938 by Henryk Józewski which was later called the 'Volhynian Experiment'. The aim of the experiment was a normalisation of the Polish-Ukrainian relations which during the Second Polish Republic remained tense.

Ke y w o r d s: Henryk Józewski, Volhynian Experiment, destigmatisation, labelling theory

Introduction

In the social sciences and liberal arts, particularly in history, philosophy and sociology, there is a growing interest in the reconstruction of ideas, methods of behaviour and reaction. These works often aim at showing the genesis of our daily practices and indicating the conditions which have led to their existence. Often, such works aim at a critical assessment of a contemporary human being, indicating discrepancies between the popular knowledge and actual determinants of given processes. A good example are the classical works by Michel Foucault,

¹ Ph.D. Łukasz Szwejka, Jagiellonian University in Kraków, Faculty of Philosophy, Institute of Education, Department of Social Prevention and Social Rehabilitation, ul. Batorego 12, room no. 18, 31-135 Kraków; e-mail: lukasz.szwejka@uj.edu.pl.

attempting a reconstruction of contemporary punishment practices², sanctioned sexual practices³ or the sources of West European power exercising systems⁴. Consequently, such works feature an outsider (deviant) converging punitive social reactions and also reconstruct social practices aiming at elimination of undesirable phenomena.

Undoubtedly, the issue of varying force of social reaction appears in such reflections. Sanctions for breaching the norm will depend on the behaviour standards dominating at a given time. This process of 'sensitisation' of social reactions to specific forms of behaviour was noted by Howard Becker⁵. The Polish literature also includes analyses indicating the fluctuation of social reactions in various historical periods⁶.

While there is a substantial amount of literature on becoming a deviant or, to be more precise, on how a deviant is created by 'social auditorium', the reverse process is given little attention. In the literature, this process is called *normalisation*⁷ or *destigmatisation*⁸. Such deficit of knowledge on the destigmatisation process was noted by the authors of the labelling theory⁹ where much more attention is given to the so-called 'status degradation ceremony' than to the process of regaining the normative status.

In Polish resocialisation thought, destigmatisation found a considerable interest, as indicated by the conceptualisation of the issue and its practical use in the reintegration of inmates by Bronisław Urban¹⁰ and Marek Konopczyński¹¹. The assumption of the Polish authors is that the destigmatisation process is started as a result of heroic efforts by the stigmatised entities who are trying to change their dominant deviant status to the normative status. Such point of view omits, however, another equally important plane on which the destigmatisation process takes place, namely social movements intending to change the social perception

² Michel Foucault, *Nadzorować i karać* (Warszawa: Aletheia, 1998), 221–303.

³ Idem, *Historia seksualności* (Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2010), 11–110.

⁴ Idem, *Narodziny biopolityki* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2011), 95–118.

⁵ Howard Becker, *Outsiderzy. Studia z socjologii dewiacji* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2009), 139–150.

⁶ Monika Abucewicz, "Problem narkomanii w Polsce – ujęcie konstruktywistyczne". In: *Badańie problemów społecznych 2*, ed. Jerzy Kwaśniewski (Warszawa: IPSIR UW, 2006), 21–51.

⁷ Andrzej Siemaszko, *Granice tolerancji. O teoriach zachowań dewiacyjnych* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993), 360–362.

⁸ Bronisław Urban, "Wzmacnianie procesu destygmatyzacji ex-dewianta jako warunek readaptacji społecznej", *Rocznik Komisji Nauk Pedagogicznych LVII* (2004), 145–155.

⁹ Carrol A.B. Warren, "Destigmatization of Identity: From Deviant to Charismatic", *Qualitative Sociology* 3 (1) (1980), 59–72.

¹⁰ Urban, "Wzmacnianie...", 145–155.

¹¹ Marek Konopczyński, "Współczesne kierunki zmian w pedagogice resocjalizacyjnej. Destygmatyzacja dewiantów i kreowanie alternatywnych tożsamości". In: *Resocjalizacja. Ciągłość i zmiana*, eds. Marek Konopczyński, Beata M. Nowak (Warszawa: Pedagogium, 2008), 69–86.

of specific phenomena¹². This plane will be presented in the paper, and the destigmatisation process will be related to the Volhynian social policy project implemented in 1928–1938 by Henryk Józewski which was *post factum* called the ‘Volhynian Experiment’.

Labelling Theory in a Discussion on the Polish-Ukrainian Relations

The social labelling phenomenon dates back to the period when human communities could determine certain designata describing ‘us’ and juxtapose them with ‘others’. The scientific, systematic studies on the role of social labelling in human interactions did not start, however, before the 1950s¹³. At that time, the scholars inspired by symbolic interactionism formulated a series of postulates which became the basis for the labelling theory.

The main theses of the labelling theory were created in America. Its development is linked with the concepts of a new generation of scholars in the second half of the 20th century, including Edwin Lemert, Erving Goffman, Howard Becker and Kai Erikson¹⁴. They departed from the conventional, mainly structural and functional interpretations of social deviations, formulating new, more radical concepts. When the main assumptions of the labelling theory were being formulated, the debate on deviation was dominated by positivist theories. It was assumed that deviation is an objective social fact and, consequently, the main emphasis was put on the finding of aetiological factors which would explain its creation and escalation¹⁵. Such an objectivist view of deviation was criticised by the authors of the labelling theory, and the criticism was spurred by civilisational changes in the United States at that time. These scholars identified with dissent movements, indicating that the functioning definitions of deviation reflect the prevailing power relationships¹⁶. Consequently, it is not possible to determine the aetiology of deviant behaviours as those are being built during interactions.

In addition, it was pointed out that the ‘interest groups’ are interested in influencing the perception of certain phenomena, and as a result the deviation reflects the phenomena which harm the interests of such groups. In this context, it is also indicated that the social control institutions do not perform the functions classically attributed to them, such as elimination of undesirable events. However, they

¹² Warren, “Destigmatization...”, 59–72.

¹³ Siemaszko, *Granice...*, 261–264.

¹⁴ *Ibidem*, 260–363.

¹⁵ Janina Błachut, Andrzej Gaberle, Krzysztof Krajewski, *Kryminologia* (Gdańsk: Arche, 2007), 44–49.

¹⁶ David Garland, *The Culture of Control* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2001), 65–68.

are actively involved in the process of defining the reality and promoting specific solutions. A meaningful example can be different positions concerning the control of trade and consumption of narcotics, where depending on the dominating rhetoric, the problem can be medicalised, with a simultaneous promotion of preventive and therapeutic measures, or penalised as a result of which the trade and consumption of narcotics is punishable (*war on drugs*)¹⁷. Being aware of the role of 'social auditorium' in the process of constructing certain meanings, it is also worthwhile to indicate the individual consequences of labelling. This problem was noted by Edwin Lemert, indicating the 'secondary deviation' phenomenon which is a negative consequence of struggling with an unfair label and as a result performing a deviant role¹⁸.

The aforementioned assumptions of the labelling theory indicate that the functioning of certain definitions of deviation depends on the interaction processes occurring in a given society. For this reason, this theory can be a convenient plane to analyse stereotypic attitudes in a given society. The Volhynian Experiment will be presented from this perspective, and the emphasis will be put on the potential to normalise the Polish-Ukrainian relations in the experiment implementation area. First, the ethnic and national relations in the Volhynian Voivodeship will be presented to show the necessity for systemic solutions aiming at the normalisation of interpersonal relations.

Ever since the establishment of the Second Polish Republic, the Volhynian Voivodeship had been characterised by a substantial civilisational backwardness and economic underdevelopment. A high illiteracy rate (in 1921, 25% percent of the population declared the ability to read, and only 15% in the rural areas¹⁹) required the establishment of a network of cultural and educational institutions practically from scratch. Demographic and ethnic issues also necessitated systematic actions to harmonise relations between the representatives of individual groups. The majority of the Voivodeship population were peasants, mainly Ukrainian, and the Jews and Poles dominated in the cities. As far as the ethnic composition is concerned, it is assumed that the Ukrainian population was the majority (about 70%), followed by the Poles (about 20%) and about 10% of Jews²⁰. Another characteristic feature of Volhynia were correct interpersonal relations. According to the observations of Henryk Józewski, the Polish-Ukrainian animosities were

¹⁷ Stanisław Wargacki, "Zjawisko paniki moralnej jako wyznacznik granic moralności", *Prace Naukowe Akademii im. Jana Długosza w Częstochowie. Pedagogika* 18 (2009), 7–20.

¹⁸ Maria Łoś, "Teorie społeczeństwa a koncepcje dewiacji". In: *Zagadnienia patologii społecznej*, ed. Adam Podgórecki (Warszawa: PWN, 1976), 151–173.

¹⁹ Włodzimierz Mędrzecki, *Kresowy kalejdoskop. Wędrówki przez ziemie wschodnie Drugiej Rzeczypospolitej 1918–1939* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2018), 227–228.

²⁰ Timothy Snyder, *Tajna wojna. Henryk Józewski i polsko-sowiecka rozgrywka o Ukrainę* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2008), 96.

not so strong in Volhynia²¹ as, for instance, in the neighbouring Galicia where Ukrainian nationalism was by principle anti-Polish and perceived the Polish state administration as a factor hindering the development of Ukrainian independence. As emphasised by the expert in ethnic issues in Central and Eastern Europe, Henryk Wereszycki, ever since the emergence of the Ukrainian nationalistic movement in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the Polish influences had been perceived as undermining the Ukrainian independence²². Such attitudes strengthened with time, for example as a result of 'national assimilation' carried out by the National Democrats in which strong Polonisation actions aimed at the loss of national identity by the Ukrainians²³.

On the other hand, the Volhynian Voivodeship was relatively free of nationalistic influences of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) which Józewski had noticed ever since he became the Voivode (Wojewoda), indicating that the Polish-Ukrainian relations in Volhynia were much more harmonious. The 'Sokal Cordon' was imposed to limit the tendencies jeopardising the unification of the two nations and isolate Volhynia from nationalistic ideas from Galicia. In terms of Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation, Józewski's views originated from romantic premises that the two nations were naturally very close to each other, which cannot be said about the Russo-Ukrainian or German-Ukrainian relations. Józewski took this view during his young years in Kiev where he witnessed a harmonious coexistence between the Poles and Ukrainians²⁴. We should not be overoptimistic, however, about the correct Polish-Ukrainian relations in Volhynia because they were more complex and streaked with a centuries-old aversion. The historians underline that as early as in the 17th century – as a result of the Sarmatism ideology emphasising the superiority of the Polish nobility and the development of serfdom in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth – the religious tolerance was over and the repressions against the Rusyn²⁵ population began²⁶.

A combination of factors typical for Volhynia, such as the numerical superiority of the Ukrainian population, the absence of strong national conflicts and Józewski's romantic views about Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation (Józewski was a supporter of Marshal Józef Piłsudski and shared his ideas of a multiethnic

²¹ Henryk Józewski, *Zamiast pamiętnika* (Paryż–Kraków–Warszawa: Instytut Literacki Kultura, Instytut Książki, 2017), 176–178.

²² Henryk Wereszycki, *Pod berłem Habsburgów* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Wysoki Zamek, 2015), 60–64.

²³ Piotr Cieplucha, "Prometeizm i koncepcja międzymorza w praktyce polityczno-prawnej oraz dyplomacji II RP", *Studia Prawno-Ekonomiczne* XCIII (2014), 39–55.

²⁴ Józewski, *Zamiast...*, 194–205.

²⁵ The term refers to the Orthodox, East Slavic people living in areas historically belonging to Kievan Rus. In the Polish and Russian nomenclature, this term referred to the Ukrainian population.

²⁶ Anna Reid, *Pogranicze. Podróż przez historię Ukrainy 988–2015* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 2016), 51.

federal state) was a good ground to conduct the experimental Volhynian policy. The policy was based on a mutual respect and egalitarian consideration of the interests of the Polish and Ukrainian populations. These activities show a conception to alleviate the mutual animosities which conforms to the assumptions of the labelling theory within which global actions are taken to eliminate the so-called *recognition gap* as an indication of prejudice and inequality between the individual groups²⁷.

An Outline of the Volhynian Experiment in the Destigmatisation Process Categories

The review of the basic theses of the labelling theory did not include an issue related to the destigmatisation process, namely the restoration of the state in which individuals or groups are treated in normative categories. The destigmatisation phenomenon has received much less attention in the literature on the subject matter, which partly results from the fact that the social labelling related to 'status degradation' is much more common than the reverse process, whose final stage is the normalisation of originally stigmatised individuals and groups. A deeper insight into and a promotion of the destigmatisation process is fruitful from a practical point of view. As already mentioned in the introduction, the destigmatisation issue was conceptualised in the Polish resocialisation thought by Bronisław Urban²⁸ and Marek Konopczyński²⁹. The assumption of the Polish authors is that the destigmatisation process is started as a result of heroic efforts by the stigmatised entities who are trying to change their dominant deviant status to the normative status. Such conceptualisation of the destigmatisation process assumes that during the resocialisation process an individual is equipped with skills and competences allowing them to participate effectively in the society and at the same time giving grounds to perceive their own identity in a positive light. Such an approach to the destigmatisation process is characteristic of the labelling theory in which the interactions are analysed in the microscale, with face to face contacts.

It should be noted, however, that such optics leaves out another, equally important plane of the destigmatisation process, occurring in the meso- and macroscale, where the perception of certain phenomena and groups changes as a result of actions by social movements³⁰. Examples are feminist movements changing

²⁷ Michèle Lamont, "Addressing Recognition Gaps: Destigmatization and the Reduction of Inequality", *American Sociological Review* 83 (3) (2018), 419–444.

²⁸ Urban, "Wzmacnianie...", 145–155.

²⁹ Konopczyński, "Współczesne...", 69–86.

³⁰ Warren, "Destigmatization...", 59–72.

the socially acceptable gender roles or movements fighting for equal rights of the black population³¹. Awareness increases as a result of actions taken by social movements, which creates a basis for equal treatment and favours the inclusion of previously marginalised groups. In this context, Michèle Lamont distinguishes a number of steps that need to be taken to narrow the 'recognition gap' which is an expression of the prejudice in the society. The basic step is the promotion of positive attitudes towards stigmatised groups which takes place with the participation of community leaders, experts, people with authority whose role is to unmask the ubiquitous stereotypes and prejudice. Changes in law and public policy are also important as they allow an egalitarian functioning of all individuals³².

In this text the Volhynian Experiment will be presented with due consideration of its potential to reduce the 'recognition gap'. Firstly, it is worthwhile to indicate new ideas which were the foundations of this experiment because even to contemporary observers it seemed curious and often incomprehensible. Undoubtedly, we can assume that the experiment was initiated by Henryk Józewski who showed a great deal of own initiative. The solutions which were implemented at the time reflected his egalitarian ideas and the philosophical system presented in the book *Opowieści o istnieniu (Stories of Existence)*. In this system, the reality governing the fate of individuals and nations is inscrutable, impossible to be fully grasped in a logical cognitive framework. Referring to the Volhynian policy, he writes that "the Polish-Ukrainian relations, what is between Ukraine and Poland, is known and decided by the imponderables of Poland and the imponderables of Ukraine"³³. The author indicates the existence of elusive forces which govern the human fate. Józewski, who loved theatre and propagated it in Poland's eastern regions, presents a metaphorical image of these forces using the theatre as an example.

Such is the Theatre of Existence and Happening of the human world – the world of social reality and ourselves. We know we are taking part in it, we are in it, but we also know that our human imagination – a spectator's imagination – is not capable of comprehending the Performance. We can comprehend it only to a certain point. Regardless of how much we can comprehend, we know for sure that we cannot leave the Performance, we cannot disentangle ourselves from it³⁴.

For Józewski it was obvious that the fate of the Ukrainian and Polish nations was reconciliation. Józewski developed such a view – as mentioned earlier – during his formative years in Kiev where he witnessed a harmonious coexistence

³¹ John I. Kitsuse, "Coming Out All Over: Deviants and the Politics of Social Problems", *Social Problems* 28 (1) (1980), 1–13.

³² Lamont, "Addressing...", 419–444.

³³ Józewski, *Zamiast...*, 196.

³⁴ Piotr Mitzner, "Konspiracje Henryka Józewskiego". In: Józewski, *Zamiast...*, 5–18.

between the Poles and Ukrainians. In addition, he was convinced that Volhynia was the perfect place to implement such a reconciliation policy as it was not permeated with nationalistic ideology as, for instance, eastern Lesser Poland³⁵.

Staying in Volhynia as a military settler in 1924–1925, Józewski witnessed close and familiar contacts between the Poles and the Ukrainians. He returned to active politics after the May Coup in 1926 when, as a staunch Pilsudskiite, he was initially the Head of the Prime Minister's Office, then returned to Volhynia in 1928 to serve as the Voivode, with a six-month break between December 1929 and June 1939 when he was the Foreign Minister³⁶. In order to understand the Volhynian policy, it is necessary to refer to the basic ideas promoted by the Sanacja movement. Contrary to National Democracy, who were proponents of the Polonisation of ethnic minorities in the Second Republic, i.e. so-called 'national assimilation'³⁷, Sanacja rather favoured a federal state in which individual minorities would have a considerable autonomy. This concept historically referred to the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, with interpenetrated cultures of individual ethnic groups. For Józewski, this concept seemed feasible in Poland's easternmost regions (Kresy) where various ethnic groups had coexisted for centuries, so it was a natural step to reinforce the correct relations and organise joint public and cultural life under Polish patronage. This concept assumed the 'state assimilation' with a simultaneous stimulation of the emerging national awareness of the Ukrainians³⁸. Of course, the stimulation of national awareness among the minorities had practical goals, mainly the weakening of the Soviet Union. This task was carried out by Prometheism³⁹, a movement which, by supporting separatist tendencies in the Soviet-dominated nations, attempted to weaken and destabilise Russia from within⁴⁰. Józewski was an advocate Prometheism, particularly in relation to the Ukrainian population. He knew that the growth of the Ukrainian national awareness was inevitable, but wanted to avoid a situation which took place in eastern Lesser Poland where the independent Ukraine project was strongly anti-Polish⁴¹. Instead, he favoured an anti-Russian alliance with the Ukrainian state, similar to the agreement (the Warsaw Agreement [1920])

³⁵ Mędrzecki, *Kresowy...*, 106–155.

³⁶ Józewski, *Zamiast...*, 10.

³⁷ Cieplucha, "Prometeizm..." 39–55.

³⁸ Ibidem.

³⁹ Prometheism was a political and intellectual movement bringing together nations which the Soviet system was imposed on during the interwar period. By strengthening the independence tendencies of individual nations, the goal of the movement was to weaken the Soviet Union. The Promethean movement coordinated the work and materially supported the activities of some émigré governments.

⁴⁰ Paweł Libera, "Polski prometeizm. Jak ewoluował i jak z nim walczoneo?," *Pressje* 22/23 (2010), 89–97.

⁴¹ Snyder, *Tajna...*, 70–93.

between Semen Petlura and Józef Piłsudski in the early days of the Second Polish Republic.

To summarise, the foundations of the Volhynian policy resulted partially from Józewski's personal views that Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation was possible. Józewski believed that mutual animosities between the two nations were temporary and superficial and could be alleviated by an appropriate political project. The other important factor affecting the Volhynian policy was a broader Polish state project, a federation in which individual nations would have a substantial autonomy. There were of course practical reasons behind this project, as Sanacja saw the Soviet Union as the main threat, and the alliance of smaller Central and Eastern European nations could be a real counterweight to Russia's imperialist intentions.

In connection with the ideas which formed the foundation of the Volhynian Experiment, specific solutions will be presented, taking into account their normalisation potential. Social organisations associating Polish and Ukrainian population were the apple of Józewski's eye. When he became the Volhynian Voivode, there usually were separate organisations for Poles and Ukrainians, and these organisations were often nationalistic and exclusive. This was the reason for the 'Sokal Cordon' which was to limit the influence of ideas coming from the eastern Lesser Poland, mainly from Lviv, on the social organisations in Volhynia⁴². One of the experiment's flagship organisations was the Volhynian Rural Youth Union (WZMW), formed after the disbanding of two competing Polish organisations – 'Siew' and 'Wici'. According to sources, in 1937 the Union had about 7,500 members, of which 5,700 were Ukrainians and 1,600 Poles⁴³. The mission was "working in the spirit of respect for national identity, getting to know each other and developing own spiritual virtues"⁴⁴. In addition, the Union carried out educational activity within Folk Universities, including agricultural vocational training, and published the youth magazine 'Młoda Wieś' ('Young Village')⁴⁵. Another field of Volhynian policy was reorganisation of the cooperative movement. The Lviv-based RSUK (Ukrainian Cooperatives' Audit Alliance) was replaced with the Cooperative Union 'Hurt' dedicated to the Polish and Ukrainian population. The inclusive character of the cooperative was expressed by all documents, leaflets and brochures published in Polish and Ukrainian. The national parity was in place in the composition of the Board⁴⁶. Education was another important area of the Volhynian policy. The utraquist (bilingual) system was put in place in the Volhynian education from 31 July 1924, however school plebiscites were often used by the Ukrainians for anti-state demonstrations and for escalation of ethnic

⁴² Jan Kęsik, "Henryk Józewski – polityk (1892–1981)", *Niepodległość i Pamięć* 10/1 (2003), 161–177.

⁴³ Mędrzecki, *Kresowy...*, 263.

⁴⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁴⁵ Józewski, *Zamiast...*, 241.

⁴⁶ Mędrzecki, *Kresowy...*, 261.

disputes. Consequently, Józewski steamrolled the abandonment of plebiscites, which were discontinued in 1933. Instead, he proposed a bicultural system which involved two school types: homogeneous Polish and ultraquist. Teaching the Ukrainian language as a subject in Polish schools was an innovation⁴⁷.

The above-mentioned examples of the Volhynian policy show a potential in terms of improvement – and hence normalisation – of social relations. It is also worth emphasising that normalisation is related to the phenomenon of social inclusion, very important from the pedagogy point of view, which is understood as removal of barriers hampering the full participation of specific individuals or groups in the society⁴⁸. Although launched more than ninety years ago, the project still resonates in modern public policy solutions, for instance the UE's Horizon 2020 project which includes a number of guidelines for social inclusion of broad groups in the European community.

Despite the optimistic premises and initial success of the Volhynian Experiment, we need to analyse the reasons for its failure, of which the most painful manifestation was the 1943 disaster⁴⁹. The initial months of the experiment achieved a spectacular success; a network of joint social, economic and cultural institutions was established as a result of administrative actions. "Proswity" and ZRUK cooperatives were eliminated as they were considered germs of nationalistic, anti-Polish Ukrainian political thought⁵⁰. However, despite the administrative solutions, the Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation still remained half-hearted. The "Sokal Cordon" and other administrative measures which were to isolate Volhynia from nationalistic influence from eastern Lesser Poland led only to the official elimination of anti-Polish institutions, causing the political activity to go underground. During the interwar period, the support for Ukrainian nationalism in Volhynia was growing, particularly in the rural areas. In addition, the poor economic situation deepened the negative attitudes towards the Polish state. The 1929 depression took a heavy toll on Volhynia and kept a significant part of the population in poverty until 1935, thwarting Józewski's efforts to improve social conditions and equalise the living conditions of the entire voivodeship population. The result of dreadful economic situation was the Kovel Uprising in 1932 and peasant strikes in 1936 with the participation of mostly the Ukrainian population⁵¹.

The failure of the Volhynian Experiment should also be analysed from the point of view of Ukrainian historiosophy. The general assessment of the Polish

⁴⁷ Kęsik, "Henryk Józewski...", 161–177.

⁴⁸ Dan Allman, "The Sociology of Social Inclusion", *SAGE Open* (2013), 1–16.

⁴⁹ Between 1943 and 1945, members of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army massacred thousands of Poles throughout Volhynia, a region that was in Nazi-occupied Poland and is part of present-day Ukraine. Polish historians say the death toll could be as high as 100,000, while Ukrainians say it's between 20,000 to 30,000.

⁵⁰ Kęsik, "Henryk Józewski...", 161–177.

⁵¹ Mędrzecki, *Kresowy...*, 244–245.

policy towards ethnic minorities in its eastern voivodeships is negative. The prevailing view underlines the imperialistic and chauvinist approach of the Polish authorities and indicates that the exacerbation of Polish-Ukrainian relations was caused by attempts of forced assimilation as exemplified by 'pacification' in 1930, persecution of the Orthodox population or support for Polish settlements in eastern Lesser Poland and Volhynia. In the case of the Volhynian Experiment, Ukrainian historians formulate two different assessments. Some scholars indicate that Józewski's policy was an attempt to normalise national relations, and the Voivode was perceived as an advocate of reconciliation. There are also dissenting views, according to which Józewski's policy was one of the forms of assimilation of the Ukrainian population as a result of which the Ukrainian education was eliminated and the cultural life was limited. In this context, the criticism focuses on the increased number of teachers of Polish origin and the reduced teaching of the Ukrainian language as an extra subject which imposed Polish culture on the Ukrainian children⁵².

Summary

An attempt to describe the Volhynian Experiment from the point of view of a reactive parading (labelling theory) allows for a deeper understanding of the essence of the destigmatisation process and highlights the social factors hindering this process. The experiment was intended to normalise the Polish-Ukrainian relations. Its foundations were, on one hand the private convictions of Henryk Józewski, who believed in the Polish-Ukrainian agreement, and on the other hand the Volhynian policy was conditioned by a wider strategic project which involved a federal state. To this end Polish foreign policy aimed at an alliance with neighbouring countries and nations mainly to counteract the Russian threat. The so-called 'state assimilation' was an important part of this policy and involved respecting the cultural differences between the ethnicities and religious groups who were Polish citizens. This resulted in an original and innovative political project in those years. The innovativeness is clearly seen when we compare the policies towards minorities implemented in other countries in that period. Such solutions as Germanisation by Prussia or Russification by Russia were commonplace and aimed at eradicating the minority cultures⁵³. Against such a backdrop, the Volhynian Experiment is a particularly interesting solution and a subject of analyses also for the social sciences.

⁵² Julita Komosa, "II Rzeczpospolita we współczesnej historiografii ukraińskiej", *Studia z Dziejów Rosji i Europy Środkowo-Wschodniej* LIV (1) (2019), 193–222.

⁵³ Norman Davies, *Boże igrzysko. Historia Polski* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2010), 579–628.

The paper presents the potential of the Volhynian policy in terms of normalisation of the ethnic relations. It is worth emphasising that individual solutions, such as joint Polish-Ukrainian youth organisations or joint cooperatives, had the potential to start the destigmatisation process which manifests itself by the disappearance of prejudice and ostracism between the individual groups. The first phase of the experiment brought about a significant success – the new solutions worked, new bicultural institutions could cause a positive change, reducing the mutual antagonisms. However, the factors hampering the destigmatisation process were not eliminated. Particularly important here was the prejudice of the state administration towards the Ukrainian population, as exemplified by forced pacifications in the earlier period. On the other hand, the attempts to weaken the attractiveness of nationalistic – in principle anti-Polish – movements failed.

Analysis of the potentials and sources of the failure of the Volhynian policy offers an opportunity to express the premises that allow a better understanding of the destigmatisation process dynamics. The source of prejudices and ‘labels’ is a sense of fear⁵⁴. Fearing that they will lose their position, valuable resources or freedom, people create a stereotypic and hostile image of others. It takes a great deal of effort and an active involvement of both parties to change that image. This element was lacking in the Volhynian policy, or it was implemented only half-heartedly. Aside from reconciliatory actions, simultaneously or in the not so distant past, there were brutal pacifications of the Ukrainian population which undoubtedly increased the mistrust of the whole project. There is a hypothesis in the Ukrainian historiography that the Volhynian policy was nothing more than an assimilation in disguise⁵⁵. Another factor which beyond doubt hindered the destigmatisation process was an indoctrination of the Ukrainian population by the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) which significantly helped stabilise the anti-Polish feelings, simultaneously thwarting the efforts made within the Volhynian Experiment.

The experiment confirms the thesis by Kai Erikson that the negative labels are durable and very little susceptible to modification. It also proves that the destigmatisation process is a long-term one and requires a number of integrated actions. Consequently, the actions aiming at the elimination of the “recognition gap” should be conducted permanently, on all planes where the inequality and discrimination can be diagnosed.

⁵⁴ Philip Zimbardo, *Efekt Lucyfera. Dlaczego dobrzy ludzie czynią zło?* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2008), 25–45.

⁵⁵ Komosa, “II Rzeczpospolita...”, 193–222.

Proces destygmatyzacji w ramach eksperymentu wołyńskiego Henryka Józewskiego

Streszczenie: W naukach społecznych i humanistycznych kwestia naznaczenia społecznego stanowi istotną płaszczyznę analizy, dzięki której pełniej można zrozumieć sposób funkcjonowania człowieka w grupie. Prace w ramach teorii naznaczenia społecznego rozwijane są począwszy od lat 50. XX wieku, głównie w Stanach Zjednoczonych. Przy czym w polskiej myśli resocjalizacyjnej również teoria ta spotyka się ze znacznym zainteresowaniem. Z perspektywy procesu readaptacji szczególnie istotne wydaje się odwrócenie naznaczenia społecznego, czyli uruchomienie procesu destygmatyzacji. W niniejszym tekście rozważania o specyfice destygmatyzacji odniesiono do projektu wołyńskiej polityki społecznej realizowanej w latach 1928–1938 przez Henryka Józewskiego, która została określona mianem eksperymentu wołyńskiego. Celem eksperymentu była normalizacja stosunków polsko-ukraińskich, które w okresie II Rzeczypospolitej były napięte.

Słowa kluczowe: Henryk Józewski, eksperyment wołyński, destygmatyzacja, teoria naznaczenia społecznego

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