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RESEARCH ON THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN POLISH SOCIAL SCIENCES: ACHIEVEMENTS, PERSPECTIVES AND SCIENTIFIC CHALLENGES OVER THE LAST TWO DECADES

Abstract:

In my paper, I would like to focus on the achievements of researchers studying the Jewish community and culture in Poland. In recent decades, there have been numerous publications in this area. It must be admitted that most of them are historical works. However, I would like to draw attention to slightly dispersed studies in the field of social sciences (sociology, psychology, pedagogy). Who are the researchers who deal with Jewish themes? What are the common and individual elements of their scientific approaches? Are all of these elements part of the discourse of research on the 'renaissance of the Jewish community and identity'? I would like to look at the explorations of both researchers connected with the Jewish environment and 'outsiders' (including young foreign researchers interested in Polish Jews). The scope of their research is therefore quite diverse and includes issues such as: building Jewish identity and institutional structures; religious life and the activities of religious and secular associations; relations with dominant culture; informal education, Jewish education and family upbringing.

Key words: Jews, social research, scientific achievements

**BADANIA NAD SPOŁECZNOŚCIĄ ŻYDOWSKĄ W POLSKICH NAUKACH SPOŁECZNYCH:
OSIĄGNIĘCIA, PERSPEKTYWY I NAUKOWE WYZWANIA**

Streszczenie:

W artykule chciałabym skupić się na analizie dorobku badaczy kultury i społeczności żydowskiej w Polsce. Ostatnie dekady przyniosły liczne publikacje z tego zakresu. Przeważają prace historyczne, ja jednak chciałabym zwrócić uwagę na nieco rozproszone prace badawcze z zakresu nauk społecznych (socjologii, psychologii, pedagogiki). Kim są badacze podejmujący tematykę żydowską? Co ich łączy, a co indywidualizuje podejście naukowe? Czy wszyscy wpisują się w dyskurs badań nad „renesansem tożsamości i społeczności żydowskiej”? Przy tym, są to zarówno naukowcy związani ze środowiskiem, jaki i prezentujący spojrzenie z zewnątrz (też młodzi badacze zagraniczni interesujący się polskimi Żydami). Zakresy ich badań są dość zróżnicowane, obejmują m.in.: kwestie związane z budowaniem tożsamości żydowskiej, struktur instytucjonalnych; życiem religijnym i działalnością stowarzyszeń religijnych oraz świeckich; relacjami z kulturą dominującą; edukacją nieformalną oraz szkolnictwem żydowskim, wychowaniem w rodzinie.

Słowa kluczowe: Żydzi, badania społeczne, dorobek naukowy

Introduction

Undoubtedly the year 1989 in Poland is a breakthrough for Jewish community in many aspects: institutional boom, identity revival, deassimilation of the young generation as well as numerous festivals and publications on Jewish themes. At present, three decades later, the Jewish community in Poland is undergoing a period of institutional stabilisation. Community leaders ensure that wide range of religious, cultural and educational institutions are provided, which are intended to develop the identity of different generations and strive to make their offers more appealing in order to attract new members. In the article I would like to focus on the analysis of the achievements attained by

the researchers of the culture and Jewish community in Poland. Recent decades have brought numerous publications in this field. Historical studies and documentation of pre-war cultural heritage prevail. A review of historians' work was carried out, among others, by: P. J. Wróbel¹, M. Wodziński² and S. Gąsiorowski³. A review of research centres can be found in the study of Edyta Gawron⁴.

However, I would like to draw attention to the somewhat scattered research work in the field of social sciences (sociology, psychology, pedagogy, ethnology). Considering the time-span of two decades, the publications are not numerous, nonetheless they have contributed to Jewish studies, and moreover they make references to one another. Apart from the leading names such as: Irena Hurwic-Nowakowska⁵, Konstanty Gebert⁶, Helena Datner⁷, Małgorzata Melchior⁸, August Grabski⁹,

¹ P. J. Wróbel, *Modern Syntheses of Jewish History in Poland: A Review*, „Studia Judaica”. Special English Issue 2017, pp. 117–130.

² M. Wodziński, *Studia żydowskie w Polsce wczoraj i dziś* [Jewish studies in Poland yesterday and today], „Studia Judaica” 2012 (1–2), pp. 49–75.

³ S. Gąsiorowski (ed.), *Studia żydowskie w Polsce – przeszłość, stan obecny, perspektywy. Studium selektywne* [Jewish studies in Poland – past, present, future perspectives: a selective study], Kraków 2014, pp. 201–216.

⁴ E. Gawron, *Jewish studies in postwar Poland*, „Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia” vol. 11 (2013), pp. 55–66.

⁵ I. Hurwic-Nowakowska, *Żydzi polscy (1945–1950). Analiza więzi społecznej* [Analysis of social bonds], Warszawa 1996.

⁶ K. Gebert, *Jewish Identities in Poland: New, Old, and Imaginary*, In: *Jewish Identities in the New Europe*, ed. J. Webber, London 1994.

⁷ H. Datner, M. Melchior, *Żydzi we współczesnej Polsce – nieobecność i powroty* [Jews in contemporary Poland – absence and returns. In: *Mniejszości narodowe w Polsce* [National minorities in Poland], ed. Z. Kurcz, Wrocław 1997.

⁸ M. Melchior, *Zagłada a tożsamość. Polscy Żydzi ocaleni na „aryjskich papierach”. Analiza doświadczenia biograficznego* [Holocaust and Identity. Polish Jews Saved with the Help of “Aryan Papers”. An Analysis of Biographical Experiences], Warszawa 2004, pp. 392–393.

⁹ A. Grabski, *Współczesne życie religijne Żydów w Polsce* [Contemporary religious life of Jews in Poland]. In: *Studia z dziejów i kultury Żydów w Polsce po 1945 roku* [Studies in the history and culture of Jews in Poland after 1945], eds. A. Grabski, M. Pisarski, A. Stankowski, Warszawa 1997, pp. 143–202.

Jerzy Tomaszewski¹⁰, Szymon Krajewski¹¹, attention should be paid to a group of young academic researchers to whom credit goes for making the research more detailed. They are the ones to whom I would like to dedicate my paper.

This review article has been inspired by the following questions: What type of social science research has been conducted since the symbolic date of the systemic transformation? Can common research topics be found? What kind of community image emerges from the research? What challenges are researchers currently facing?

Achievements in Jewish Studies

Based on web and library queries, I have identified several main research topics: identity issues; characteristics of Jewish Communities; educational themes; family and transmission of Jewish values; the woman in Judaism; prejudice and anti-Semitism; Museum of the History of Polish Jews. The major part of the research among the analysed papers deals predominantly with the **identity issues**; namely, self-identification within the young generation, secular and religious identification, and intergenerational differences. This group of themes includes 19 papers¹². Almost all the researchers here focus on qualita-

¹⁰ J. Tomaszewski (ed.), *Śladami Polin: studia z dziejów Żydów w Polsce* [In the footsteps of Polin: studies on the history of Jews in Poland], Warszawa 2002.

¹¹ Sz. Krajewski, *Nasza żydowskość* [Our Jewishness], Kraków 2010; Sz. Krajewski, *Poland and the Jews: Reflections of a Polish Jewish Jew*, Kraków 2005.

¹² P. Kocoń, *Renesans religijny i kulturalny mniejszości żydowskiej w Polsce*, „Pisma Humanistyczne” no. 2 (2000), pp. 131–142. (Ph.D., Department of Public Management and Social Sciences, University of Economics in Katowice); M. Gudonis, *Constructing Jewish Identity in Post-Communist Poland. Part 1: Deassimilation without depolonization*. “East European Jewish Affairs” no. 1 (31), 2001, pp. 1–14. (M. A., Collegium Civitas in Warsaw); M. Gudonis, Jewish identity a matter of choice? The case of young Jews in contemporary Poland, „European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe” vol. 34, no. 2 (2001), pp. 132–143; J. Cukras-Stelałowska, *Młodzi Żydzi w Polsce: socjologiczna analiza tożsamości społeczno-kulturowej* [Young Jews in Poland. Sociological analysis of socio-cultural identity], „Etnografia Polska” t. 47, z. 1–2, 2003. (Ph.D., Faculty of Educational Sciences, Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń); M. Gudonis, *Particular-*

izing the universal: new Polish Jewish identities and a new framework of analysis. In: *New Jewish Identities: Contemporary Europe And Beyond*, eds. Z. Gitelman, B. Kosmin, A. Kovács, Budapest 2003, pp. 243–262; K. A. Szafrańska, *Młodzi Żydzi polskiego pochodzenia: dylematy i rozterki identyfikacyjne* [Young Jews of Polish origin: identification dilemmas], „Kultura i Społeczeństwo”, vol. 48, no. 1 (2004), pp. 97–122. (Ph.D., Faculty of Economics and Sociology University of Lodz); K. A. Szafrańska, *Młodzi polscy Żydzi i ich powroty do tradycji – ponowoczesne dylematy kształtowania tożsamości zbiorowej* [Young Polish Jews and their returns to tradition – postmodern dilemmas shaping the collective identity], In: *Wobec przeszłości. Pamięć przeszłości jako element kultury współczesnej* [In the face of the past. The memory of the past as an element of contemporary culture], ed. A. Szpociński, Warszawa 2005; M. Starnawski, *Emigracja „pomarcowa”: tożsamość społeczno-kulturowa w sytuacji diaspory* [After March 1968 emigration: the socio-cultural identity in the diaspora situation] In: *Współcześni Żydzi – Polska i diaspora. Wybrane zagadnienia* [Modern Jews – Poland and the diaspora. Selected issues], ed. E. Waszkiewicz, Wrocław 2007, pp. 114–154. (Ph.D., Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences University of Lower Silesia); A. Wójcik, M. Bilewicz, *Tożsamość Żydów polskich przełomu tysiącleci. Analiza badań ilościowych* [The identity of Polish Jews at the turn of the millennium. Analysis of quantitative research], In: *Etniczność, pamięć, asymilacja. Wokół problemów zachowania tożsamości mniejszości narodowych i etnicznych* [Ethnicity, memory, assimilation. Around the problems of preserving the identity of national and ethnic minorities], ed. L. Nijakowski, Warszawa 2009, pp. 75–88. (Faculty of Psychology, University of Warsaw); M. Bilewicz, A. Wójcik, *Does Identification predict Community involvement? Exploring consequences of Social Identification among the Jewish minority in Poland*. “Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology” no. 20, 2010, pp. 72–79; B. Ferro, *Young Jews from the Old Continent. Europe as a catalyst for identity reconciliation amongst Polish-Jewish youth*. In: *Europeans in-Between: Identities in a (Trans-)Cultural Space: Selected Texts Presented at the European Studies Intensive Programme 2011*, eds. L. Klein and M. Tamcke, Göttingen, pp. 85–99 (independent Italian researcher); G. Zubrzycki, *Religion, Religious Tradition, and Nationalism: Jewish Revival in Poland and “Religious Heritage” in Quebec*, “Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion” 2012, pp. 442–455. (Ph.D., Sociology Department, University of Michigan); T. Włodarczyk, *Świecka tożsamość polskich Żydów jako żydowska tożsamość alternatywna* [The secular identity of Polish Jews as an alternative Jewish identity], “Studia Europaea Gnesnensia”, no. 8 (2013), pp. 71–95. (PhD student at the Institute of Political Science, University of Wrocław); K. Reszke, *Powrót Żyda. Narracje tożsamościowe trzeciego pokolenia Żydów w Polsce po Holokauście* [Return of the Jew. Identity Narratives of the Third Post-Holocaust Generation of Jews in Poland], Kraków–Budapeszt 2013. (Doctorate in Jewish Education from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, a Diploma in Jewish Studies from the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies, and a Ma-

tive research into young Polish Jews, characterised by varying degrees of community involvement and personalised identification forms.

The titles of the works already indicate a certain research trend. For example, Marius Gudonis in *Constructing Jewish Identity in Post-Communist Poland. Part 1: Deassimilation without Depolonisation* conducted twelve semi-structured interviews (eight with the young Jews born between 1970 and 1980). According to his research, young Polish Jews manifest an intragroup differentiation based on the division between secularity and religious orthodoxy: “The crucial point here is that only internal differentiation allows these people to feel more Jewish without feeling less Polish. We arrive, therefore, at a fascinating paradox given the legacy of Polish national identity as an enduring exclusive ethnic category rather than an inclusive political one: it is by differentiating oneself from other Jews, that one strengthens one’s own sense of Jewishness”¹³. He also described pluralistic forms of Polishness in our society, in the paper *Particularising the Universal: New Polish Jewish identities and a New Framework of Analysis*. As a result of this process he noticed that: “Young Polish Jews feel both Polish and Jewish at the same time. They are unwilling to set clear-cut boundaries which separate them from ‘the rest’. They want to feel in

sters in Cultural Studies from the University of Wrocław, Poland); J. Lorenz, *Counting as one. Moral encounters and criteria of affinity in a Polish Jewish congregation*, „HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory” no. 5(2) 2015, pp. 51–81 (Ph.D., Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology Department, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań); J. Lorenz, *Shades of closeness: Belonging and becoming in a contemporary Polish Jewish Community*. In: *Boundaries, Identity and Belonging in Modern Judaism*, eds. M. Diemling and L. Ray, Routledge 2016, pp. 63–75; G. Zubrzycki, *Religion, Religious Tradition, and Nationalism: Jewish Revival in Poland and “Religious Heritage” in Quebec*, „Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion” 51 (3) (2012), p. 442–455. 19; G. Zubrzycki, *Nationalism, “Philosemitism,” and Symbolic Boundary-Making in Contemporary Poland*, “Comparative Studies in Society and History” 2016, pp. 66–98.

¹³ M. Gudonis, *Constructing Jewish Identity in Post-Communist Poland. Part 1: Deassimilation without depolonization*, “East European Jewish Affairs” no. 1 (31), 2001, p. 11.

same way distinct in relation to other Poles, yet without feeling completely different”¹⁴.

This thesis is confirmed by the quantitative research done by Michał Bilewicz (Post-doctoral degree in 2013) and Adrian Wójcik (PhD), with their sample consisting of people of various ages. They concluded that ‘Polishness’ seems to be an important part of the Polish-Jewish ethnic identity. The Jewish identity is slightly dominant – respondents prefer Jewish to Polish identification in their self-definition¹⁵. In turn, Italian researcher Barrio Ferro in the article *Young Jews from the Old Continent. Europe as a Catalyst for Identity Reconciliation amongst Polish-Jewish Youth* has carried out a comparable qualitative research on young members of the Krakow’s Jewish Community Centre. He points to the complex identification processes of young people of Jewish origin and the emergence of ‘cosmopolitan’ options that go beyond the ethnic criterion¹⁶. Identifications of Jewish youth can also take on post-modern forms, when the establishment of a socio-cultural identity encompasses its individualised, conscious design and free experimentation with group affiliation¹⁷.

In her fascinating book *Return of the Jew*, Katka Reszke indicates the phenomenon of the appearance of the “unexpected generation” of young Jews. Due to the fact that the third generation was brought up

¹⁴ M. Gudonis, *Particularizing the universal: new Polish Jewish identities and a new framework of analysis*. In: *New Jewish Identities: Contemporary Europe And Beyond*, eds. Z. Gitelman, B. Kosmin, A. Kovács, Budapest 2003, p. 256.

¹⁵ M. Bilewicz, A. Wójcik, *Does Identification predict Community involvement? Exploring consequences of Social Identification among the Jewish minority in Poland*, “Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology” no. 20, 2010, p. 72.

¹⁶ B. Ferro, *Young Jews from the Old Continent. Europe as a catalyst for identity reconciliation amongst Polish-Jewish youth*. In: *Europeans in-Between: Identities in a (Trans-)Cultural Space: Selected Texts Presented at the European Studies Intensive Programme 2011*, eds. L. Klein and M. Tamcke, Göttingen, p. 95.

¹⁷ See: K. A. Szafrńska, *Młodzi polscy Żydzi i ich powroty do tradycji – nowoczesne dylematy kształtowania tożsamości zbiorowej...*, p. 60 and J. Cukras-Stęłagowska, *Młodzi Żydzi w Polsce: socjologiczna analiza tożsamości społeczno-kulturowej*, p. 265; E. Banasiewicz-Ossowska, *Tożsamość społeczno-kulturowa młodych Żydów wrocławskich* [The socio-cultural identity of young Jews from Wrocław], „Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej” no. 1 (24), 2016, p. 63.

without experiencing the heritage of the Jewish home, the process of achieving coherent identification is particularly difficult here. Similarly, she also offers the image of young people who have attempted to build a hybrid Polish-Jewish identity¹⁸. The processual character of the salvation of Jewish identity, based on returning to tradition and culture, the need for remembrance and the pursuit of fellowship, also emerges from the narrative interviews by Katarzyna Anna Szafrńska¹⁹.

On the other hand, the studies by Cukras (2003), Bilewicz and Wójcik (2010) and Reszke (2013) reveal there also to be a notable involvement of the young generation in organizational activities, a strong need of affiliation and a sense of responsibility for the future condition of the community. I have already divided this identity research area into three symbolic categories, which emerged during the analyses of the studies cited. These are: dynamic and individualised identity, cultural nostalgia for the Past, flexible ethnic boundaries²⁰.

Query also discloses a certain evolution of interests (from attempts at general approach to the various forms of the identity of the young generation of Jews to a detailed research on). For instance, the Lower Silesian secular environment in Poland after 1989 (Włodarczyk 2013) or the role of non-Jews in the Jewish community which, according to the Wrocław ethnologist Jan Lorenz (2015, 2016), has not been studied so far. Lorenz claims in *Polish Newcomers to Jewishness: A Reflection in the Wake of the Revival* that: “Polish *gerim*, proselytes, with or without formally or socially recognized Jewish ethnic ancestry have become a prominent group, in numbers and influence, among members

¹⁸ K. Reszke, *Powrót Żyda. Narracje tożsamościowe trzeciego pokolenia Żydów w Polsce po Holokauście* [Return of the Jew. Identity Narratives of the Third Post-Holocaust Generation of Jews in Poland], Kraków–Budapeszt 2013, p. 261.

¹⁹ K.A. Szafrńska, *Młodzi polscy Żydzi i ich powroty do tradycji – ponowoczesne dylematy kształtowania tożsamości zbiorowej...*, p. 59.

²⁰ J. Cukras-Stelągowska, *Identity and negotiation of boundaries among young Polish Jews*. In: *Boundaries, identity and belonging in modern Judaism*, eds. Maria Diemling and Larry Ray, Routledge 2016.

of Jewish religious congregations, Orthodox and Progressive alike”²¹. In 2016, Geneviève Zubrzycki in *Nationalism, “Philosemitism,” and Symbolic Boundary-Making in Contemporary Poland* analysed Jewish-centred initiatives sponsored by state institutions, NGOs and bottom-up civic projects, everyday individual practices, has also conducted twenty-two weeks of fieldwork in Krakow and Warsaw and over sixty in-depth interviews with key actors and representatives of institutions involved in major Jewish related initiatives and activities²². She draws attentions to the growing philosemitism in Polish society and noticed that it is “related to the attempt by specific political and social groups to build a pluralistic society in an ethnically and denominationally homogenous nation-state”²³.

The other popular research area in Jewish studies is the **characteristic of Jewish Communities**²⁴. In entitling her article *Polish Jewish*

²¹ J. Lorenz, *Polish newcomers to Jewishness: A reflection in the wake of the revival*, In: *Becoming Jewish: New Jews and Emerging Jewish Communities in a Globalized World*, eds. N. Fisher and T. Parfitt, Newcastle 2016, p. 177.

²² G. Zubrzycki, *Nationalism, “Philosemitism” and Symbolic Boundary-Making in Contemporary Poland*, “Comparative Studies in Society and History” 2016, pp. 71–73.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 98.

²⁴ C. A. Rosenson, *Polish Jewish institutions in transition. Personalities over Process*, In: *New Jewish Identities: Contemporary Europe And Beyond*, eds. Z. Gitelman, B. Kosmin, A. Kovács, Budapest 2003, pp. 263–290. (University of Michigan); I. Kuźma, *Współczesne życie organizacyjne i wspólnotowe łódzkich Żydów* [Contemporary organisational and community Jewish life in Lodz] In: *Spółeczność żydowska i niemiecka w Łodzi po 1945 roku* [Jewish and German community in Lodz after 1945], eds. A. Lech, K. Radziszewska, A. Rykała, Łódź 2010 (University of Lodz, Poland, Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of Culture, Faculty of Philosophy and History, Post-doctoral degree in 2016); H. Dolata, *Problematyka identyfikacji narodowej oraz postrzeganie relacji polsko-żydowskich* [The issue of national identity and the perception of Polish-Jewish relations], Part of the Master’s thesis, written in the Department of Sociology of Culture, University Adama Mickiewicza in Poznan, under the direction of prof. dr hab. Marian Golka (2014). Available from: <http://poznan.jewish.org.pl/index.php/Zydzi-wPoznaniu/Tozsamosc-poznanskich-Zydow.html> [10.08.2018]; S. Singer, *Odnowa kultury żydowskiej w polskim społeczeństwie* [Renewal of Jewish culture in Polish society] „Zeszyty Naukowe DWSPiT. Studia z Nauk Społecznych”, no. 7 (2014), pp. 39–54. (Independent re-

institutions in Transition. Personalities over Process, Claire A. Rosenson shows internal transformation in three main Jewish organisations and some tensions lying between them: the Lauder Foundation, the Union of Jewish Religious Congregations and TSKŻ (Social and Cultural Association of Jews in Poland). Other works direct our attention to Jewish local communities, especially Communities in Wrocław and Łódź. I intend to take a closer look at the texts which, in my opinion, reflect the diversity of research approaches.

Agnieszka Krawczyk sets the research in the theoretical context; as one of the function of associations, she begins by characterising all Jewish organizations in Łódź. She then presents the structure of the Community of Łódź, its religious mission and educational functions. According to the author, the Community serves as a binder bringing together all Jewish organisations of Łódź. The Jewish associations address their activities both to their own members and people of Jewish origin from other cities, as well as to the entire Łódź community²⁵.

searcher); A. Krawczyk, *Łódzkie organizacje niemieckie i żydowskie w kontekście teorii stowarzyszeń* [*German and Jewish Organizations In: Łódź in the Context of the Theory of Association*], "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego Prace Etnograficzne" 2015, vol. 43 (2), pp. 155–170. (PhD student, Department of Educational Research University of Łódź); E. Banasiewicz-Ostrowska, *Życie religijne i jego organizacja w gminie żydowskiej we Wrocławiu*, [Religious life and its organization in the Jewish community in Wrocław] „Roczniki Teologiczne”, vol. 42 (9), 2015, pp. 173–190. (Ph.D., Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology at the Faculty of Historical and Pedagogical Sciences, University of Wrocław); E. Banasiewicz-Ossowska, *Tożsamość społeczno-kulturowa młodych Żydów wrocławskich* [The socio-cultural identity of young Jews from Wrocław], „Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej” no. 1 (24), 2016, pp. 53–63; 8. A. Wilczura, *Inkluzywność oparta na wartościach religijnych w edukacji społeczności żydowskiej w Polsce na przykładzie działalności Stowarzyszenia Żydowskiego Cukunft* [Inclusion based on religious values in the education of the Jewish community in Poland on the example of the Cukunft Jewish Association's activism], In: *Między ekskluzją a inkluzją w edukacji religijnej* [Between an exclusion and inclusion in religious education], eds. M. Humeniuk and I. Paszenda, Wrocław 2017, 247–264 (M.A., Jagiellonian University)

²⁵ A. Krawczyk, *Łódzkie organizacje niemieckie i żydowskie w kontekście teorii stowarzyszeń* [*German and Jewish Organizations in Łódź in the Context of the Theory of Association*], "Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego Prace Etnograficzne" 2015, vol. 43 (2), pp. 155–170.

Aleksandra Wilczura has prepared an informational article on the contemporary Jewish community: she enumerates festivals, publications, Jewish associations, educational institutions and lists rabbis. In the following section she presents a reporting narrative of the activity of Cukunft in Wrocław. The author is a co-creator of this organisation. She defines the objective as “the restoration of the secular Jewish life in Wrocław and independent creativity in developing an educational and socio-cultural offer targeted both at the Jewish community of Lower Silesia (mainly persons of secular stance and being independent from any other Jewish organisation) and the non-Jewish community interested in Jewish history and culture”²⁶. Wilczura presents the religious and cultural values which aspires to take action as well as the most important initiatives which, according to the author, respond to the needs of the Jewish community and inclusive civil society.

One article which is kept in the same vein is the one by Ewa Banasiewicz-Ostrowska, which is a description of the Community based on reports of informants and observation. It also points out the Community’s problems where the revival of religious practices emerges slowly, but young people also become involved and undergo conversion. There is also a problem for some older Jews regarding participation of non-Jewish in religious services and participation of women. The selectivity of religious practices and the state of their preservation results from the upbringing in mixed families in which Jewish holidays were most often not celebrated entailing that the knowledge about Judaism and Jewish culture was not passed on; this is a consequence of the middle and younger generation losing their roots²⁷.

²⁶ A. Wilczura, *Inkluzywność oparta na wartościach religijnych w edukacji społeczności żydowskiej w Polsce na przykładzie działalności Stowarzyszenia Żydowskiego Cukunft* [Inclusion based on religious values in the education of the Jewish community in Poland on the example of the Cukunft Jewish Association’s activism], In: *Między ekskluzją a inkluzją w edukacji religijnej* [Between an exclusion and inclusion in religious education], eds. M. Humeniuk and I. Paszenda, Wrocław 2017, pp. 247–264.

²⁷ E. Banasiewicz-Ostrowska, *Życie religijne i jego organizacja w gminie żydowskiej we Wrocławiu*, [Religious life and its organization in the Jewish community in Wrocław] „Roczniki Teologiczne”, vol. 42 (9), 2015, pp. 173–190.

The second text by the same author is a collection of in-depth interviews with 10 people born in the 1980s and 90s which constitutes a presentation of preliminary research results, a research report. It involves young Jews from Wrocław born into mixed families and so living at the meeting point of two cultures in having dual identification. They consciously emphasise their Jewish identity and origin, but also their ties with Poland and Polish culture. Due to the fact that the young Polish Jews come from assimilated families, they are deprived of Jewish role models. However, through the contact with the Community – their identification has begun to fill with positive content²⁸. Moreover, a part of her Master's thesis, Helena Dolata highlights the important role of Jewish society in Poznań, especially for Jews raised in Catholic or atheist homes²⁹.

On the other hand, Sara Singer characterises Jewish organisations in Poland and points to the image of the Wrocław Community, which establishes a brand but is also as a tourist attraction of Wrocław. The Community is not a straight continuation of the pre-war German Community; today it vacillates between orthodoxy and liberalism. According to the author, more and more young people make their way to the synagogue and Jewish life really exists. The Community as the centre of the Four Temples District may become one of the greatest Wrocław attractions. S. Singer perceives the activity of the Community as an example of participation in the socio-cultural life of Polish society³⁰.

²⁸ E. Banasiewicz-Ossowska, *Tożsamość społeczno-kulturowa młodych Żydów wrocławskich* [The socio-cultural identity of young Jews from Wrocław], „Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej” no. 1 (24), 2016, pp. 53–63.

²⁹ H. Dolata, *Problematyka identyfikacji narodowej oraz postrzeganie relacji polsko-żydowskich* [The issue of national identity and the perception of Polish-Jewish relations], Part of the Master's thesis, written in the Department of Sociology of Culture, University Adama Mickiewicza in Poznań, under the direction of prof. dr hab. Marian Golka (2014). Available from: <http://poznan.jewish.org.pl/index.php/Zydzi-wPoznaniu/Tozsamosc-poznanskich-Zydow.html> [10.08.2018], p. 1.

³⁰ S. Singer, *Odnowa kultury żydowskiej w polskim społeczeństwie* [Renewal of Jewish culture in Polish society] „Zeszyty Naukowe DWSPiT. Studia z Nauk Społecznych”, no. 7 (2014), pp. 39–54.

The third direction in Jewish studies is through **educational themes**. Currently, there are few school institutions in Poland. The number and nature of kindergartens, primary and middle schools who do not fairly reflect the way of how the Jewish community in Poland develops. My previous studies are of diagnostic character – both informal and formal Jewish education in Poland. The book *Tożsamość w dialogu: Polacy i Żydzi w szkołach Fundacji Ronalda Laudera* contains a monograph on two Jewish school complexes: the Lauder-Morasha Private Kindergarten, Private Primary School No. 94 and Private Middle School No. 22 in Warsaw and the Lauder-Etz Chaim Primary School and Middle School in Wrocław. It also presents the rich identity potential of their graduates.

These schools constitute a borderland in the socio-cultural sense (as a place of intergroup contact) and in the personality and cultural sense (as a place of formation of an individual's new culture). The everyday co-existence of children of various ethnic origins in classrooms creates a natural intercultural space³¹. Moreover, various forms of informal education (including local Sunday schools and youth clubs) are complementary for or alternatives to schools. These institutions are particularly important in cities where there are no Lauder schools. Informal education is a crucial element of upbringing the young people of Jewish descent³².

I would also like to draw attention to Joanna Antonik's paper titled *Contemporary, informal Jewish education in Poland – SWOT analysis*³³. The research was carried out among eight people active in the Jewish

³¹ See: J. Cukras-Stelągowska, *Tożsamość w dialogu: Polacy i Żydzi w szkołach Fundacji Ronalda Laudera* [Identity in dialogue. Poles and Jews in the schools of the R. Lauder Foundation], Toruń 2012.

³² J. Cukras-Stelągowska, *Szkółki niedzielne wobec potrzeby rewitalizacji żydowskiego życia w Polsce* [Sunday schools and their role in revitalization of Jewish life in Poland], In: *Edukacja alternatywna w XXI wieku* [Alternative education in XXI century], eds. B. Śliwowski, Z. Melosik, Kraków, pp. 283–292.

³³ J. Antonik, *Współczesna, nieformalna edukacja żydowska w Polsce – analiza SWOT* [Contemporary, informal Jewish education in Poland – SWOT analysis], "Psychologia Wychowawcza" no. 7 (2015), pp. 135–149. (MA, Faculty of Philosophy, Jagiellonian University).

circles, volunteers or workers. Being part of a master's thesis, its aim was to explore and describe the issues of informal Jewish education in contemporary Poland. According to Antosik, the informal education was selected for the research due to the specific situation of the Jewish community in Poland. The author describes summer camps, student youth organisations, Moishe House, periodic Limud conferences and Jewish Community Centres, along with Bereszit, the Open University, Hanukkah and the Pesach Bus.

Among the positive aspects of informal education are: providing knowledge and creating experience, equalising chances for children and adults from smaller towns, reaching people from outside the Jewish community, integration and enabling mutual understanding, accessibility of forms and content, no rigid division into organisers and participants and building a community based on positive values. The negative aspects of informal education include: too many initiatives, difficulties in reaching participants, unequal access to education, a lack of specialists and a coherent vision of informal education and low support from municipal institutions³⁴. In conclusion, the author notices the importance of informal education and sees the opportunities for community development mainly in the development of education.

Another important but still rare issue in the study is **family and transmission of Jewish values**. Here we can find a few papers about transmission of Jewish traditions and models of upbringing in a Jewish family. The first text *Tradycje i wzorce wychowanie w rodzinie żydowskiej* makes comparisons within three generations of several Jewish families from Krakow³⁵. Due to Kopytek's article, each subsequent Jewish generation departs more and more from religious traditions and rituals. In contrast, in the paper *Meandry tożsamości mniejszości żydowskiej w Polsce* we can read about one Jewish family. Bożena Pactwa and Anna

³⁴ Ibid., s. 141–144.

³⁵ See: E. Kopytek, *Tradycje i wzorce wychowanie w rodzinie żydowskiej* [Traditions and models of upbringing in a Jewish family] „Państwo i Społeczeństwo” VI (2), 2006. (BA thesis, Faculty of Family Sciences, Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw).

Domagała recalled three generations, three biographies and three ways of constructing Jewish identity through narrative interviews³⁶.

Another research study focuses on mixed families. Wójcik and Bilewicz³⁷ emphasise the forms of identities and involvement of Polish Jews having different ancestral situation (paternal Jewishness, maternal Jewishness, both-parents Jewishness, converted). They ask in the project: Are Jews raised in religiously/ethnically mixed families less identified with the Jewish community? Are converted Jews less or more active in their communities? Is maternal ancestry related to higher religiosity?³⁸ It is interesting that Jewish people with mixed family origin identify more strongly with their in-group.

They also tend to engage more into Jewish community activities³⁹. To put it into perspective, in my two articles I adopted the question of shaping the identity of children raised in mixed families. In the light of three European reports, I hence answered the question of whether it constitutes cultural enrichment, confusion or exclusion for an individual⁴⁰. This is a newer research field in Poland, only just developing, drawing inspiration from European research on mixed marriages.

³⁶ See: B. Pactwa, A. Domagała, *Meandry tożsamości mniejszości żydowskiej w Polsce. Trzy pokolenia rodziny żydowskiej w Zagłębiu Dąbrowskim* [Meanders of the identity of the Jewish minority in Poland. Three generations of the Jewish family in the Dąbrowa Basin], In: *Status mniejszościowy i ambiwalencja w społeczeństwach wielokulturowych* [Minority status and ambivalence in multicultural societies], eds. J. Mucha, B. Pactwa, Tychy 2008 (the authors' affiliation: Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Silesia, Katowice).

³⁷ See: A. Wójcik, M. Bilewicz, *Beyond Ethnicity – the role of coming from a mixed-origin family for Jewish identity. A Polish case*, In: *Hybride Identitäten des Jüdischen. Gemischte Familien und patrilineare Juden*, eds. L. Wohl von Haselberg, Berlin 2014, pp. 133–145.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 133.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 142.

⁴⁰ J. Cukras-Stelągowska, *Małżeństwa mieszane w społeczności żydowskiej: aberracja czy norma społeczna?* [Mixed marriages in the Jewish community: an aberration or a social norm?], „Wychowanie w Rodzinie”, vol. 14 (2016); J. Cukras-Stelągowska, *Kulturowe wzbogacenie, zagubienie czy wykluczenie? Konsekwencje wychowania w żydowskiej rodzinie mieszanej w świetle europejskich raportów* [Cultural enrichment, confusion or exclusion? Consequences of upbringing in

Another theme which has been explored to a smaller extent is **the woman in Judaism**. This approach is being developed by a researcher Katarzyna Czerwonogóra (M.A., European Viadrina University/Adam Mickiewicz University), a member of Czulent Krakow. This is an internal perspective. The article *Odrodzenie żydowskiej społeczności w Polsce z perspektywy kobiet* based on few interviews with Jewish women emphasises women's roles, female and male spaces, women's opinions on the traditional division in the synagogue, as well as the issue of female emancipation. It highlights the contribution of women and the spheres dominated by them: education, lay organisations, volunteering and social welfare⁴¹.

A separate research trend in Polish social sciences is **prejudice and anti-Semitism** developed by the most well-known sociologist from University of Warsaw, Ireneusz Krzemiński⁴² and the Centre for Research on Prejudice run by M. Bilewicz at the Faculty of Psychology,

a mixed Jewish family in the light of European reports], "Edukacja Międzykulturowa" no. 1 (2018).

⁴¹ K. Czerwonogóra, *Odrodzenie żydowskiej społeczności w Polsce z perspektywy kobiet* [Jewish revival in Poland from the perspective of women], <https://europa.uni.academia.edu/KatarzynaCzerwonog%C3%B3ra> [accessed: 1.08.2018]. Her other publications on this topic: *Jak feminizm zmienił naukę? Wpływ teorii feministycznych na uprawianie refleksji akademickiej – na przykładzie własnych badań nad społecznością żydowską* [„How did feminism change the science? The influence of feminist theories on practising academic reflection – on the example of her own research on the Jewish community] In: *Współczesne nurty badawcze młodych naukowców* [Contemporary research trends of young scientists], eds. D. Czajkowska-Ziobrowska and M. Gwoździcka-Piotrowska, Poznań 2012; *Były Żydówki, są Żydówki – kobiety żydowskie w Polsce na przykładzie Krakowa* [There were Jewish women, there are Jewish women – Jewish women in Poland on the example of Kraków] In: *Ponad granicami. Kobiety, migracje, obywatelstwo* [Across the borders. Women, migration, citizenship], eds. M. Warat and A. Małek, Kraków, 2010.

⁴² I. Krzemiński, *Żydzi – Problem prawdziwego Polaka* [Jews-the True Poles problem], Warszawa 2015, pp. 220; also: M. Bilewicz, I. Krzemiński, *Anti-Semitism in Poland and Ukraine: The belief in Jewish control as a mechanism of scapegoating*, "International Journal of Conflict and Violence" no. 4 (2010), pp. 234–243.

“where social psychologists and sociologists work together on topics related to stereotypes, prejudice, racism, discrimination and other issues pertaining to intergroup relations”⁴³. The Centre’s research is currently far beyond the Jewish subject matter, oscillating around the attitudes of Poles towards other national and cultural minorities, the Muslim community in Poland, refugees and immigrants.

Other social issue concerns the opening of the core exhibition and the activity of the **Museum of the History of Polish Jews Polin**. In *Działalność Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich*, Jewish politician and co-founder of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews, Jerzy Halbersztadt explains the idea of creating the Museum and the social message to the Poles and Jews. The paper *Zdecydowanie żydowskie, wyraźnie polskie... Strategie narracyjne twórców Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich Polin* aims to establish a framework of discursive narratives about the concept of the Polin (among the Creators of the Museum). In contrast, another work written by Kamil Kijek, a historian and sociologist from Taube Department of Jewish Studies (University of Wrocław), is titled *Dla kogo i o czym? Muzeum Polin, historiografa Żydów a Żydzi jako „sprawa polska”* and reflects the main threads of the ongoing debate around the core exhibition of the Museum⁴⁴. A less popular social sub-

⁴³ See: www.cbu.psychologia.pl (access: 1.08.2018). Other works e.g.: M. Bilewicz, *Czy kontakt Polaków z Żydami zmniejsza antysemityzm?* In: *Różni razem*, ed. J. Żyndul, Warszawa 2008; M. Bilewicz, M. Winiewski, Z. Radzik, *Antisemitism in current Poland: Psychological, religious and historical aspects*, “Journal for the Study of Antisemitism”, no. 4 (2012), pp. 801–820.

⁴⁴ J. Halbersztadt, *Działalność Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich* [Activity of the Museum of the History of Polish Jews], In: *Konferencja Mniejszość żydowska w Polsce – mity i rzeczywistość* [Jewish minority in Poland – myths and reality], Warszawa 2010; J. Cukras-Stelągowska, *Zdecydowanie żydowskie, wyraźnie polskie... Strategie narracyjne twórców Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich Polin* (Definitely Jewish, explicitly Polish... Narrative strategies of the founders of the Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews), „Kultura–Społeczeństwo–Edukacja” no. 1, 2017; K. Kijek, *Dla kogo i o czym? Muzeum Polin, historiografa Żydów a Żydzi jako „sprawa polska”* (For whom and about what? The Polin Museum, Jewish historiography, and Jews as a “Polish cause). “Studia Litteraria et Historica”, no 6 (2017), <https://doi.org/10.11649/slh.1363>

ject is a ban the ritual slaughter in Poland⁴⁵, but it is interestingly to note that in recent years, both topics were widely presented and discussed in Polish socio-political space.

Who are the researchers dealing with Jewish issues? What are their main scientific interests?

They are researchers (usually PhD students, or doctors) with various affiliations (Krakow, Torun, Poznan, Lodz, Katowice, Wroclaw, Warsaw), regarding which we find mainly individual works (exception: M. Bilewicz's team). Although episodic research is dominant, one may notice the cyclical nature of interest in Jewish themes by several authors – it could be said that having conducted research for over a dozen years, some of them have grown up alongside the young generation of Jews in Poland (Bilewicz, Czerwonogóra, Cukras-Stelągowska, Gudonis, Lorenz, Wójcik, Zubrzycki). Moreover, researchers undertake up strictly Jewish themes or place them in a broader context of intercultural education.

For the most part, this is qualitative research (biographical interviews, observation), except for studies on anti-Semitism and stereotypes (Bilewicz, Krzemiński, Wójcik) and identity in mixed families (Bilewicz, Wójcik). They are usually Polish researchers (not directly connected with the Jewish circles, as well as young participants of Jewish life – Jewish culture, trainees of Jewish education, working with the Jewish institution) prevail. Less frequently – foreign researchers (often having Polish-Jewish roots) – here the specificity of the Polish context in the European background comes into play, with corresponding attempts at comparative analysis (e.g. Rosenson 2003, Ferro 2011). Among the titles, the articles in scientific magazines dominate: 1) well-known Polish journals such as: “Kultura i Społeczeństwo”, “Pisma Humanistyczne”, “Etnografia Polska”, “Studia Europaea Gnesn-

⁴⁵ J. Cukras-Stelągowska, *Wokół debaty nad ubojem rytualnym w Polsce: analiza dyskursów publicznych* [Around the debate on ritual slaughter in Poland – analysis of public discourses], “Społeczeństwo i Polityka”, no. 4 (45), 2015.

ensia”, “Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego Prace Etnograficzne”, “Roczniki Teologiczne”, “Zeszyty Etnologii Wrocławskiej”, “Zeszyty Naukowe DWSPiT. Studia z Nauk Społecznych”, “Psychologia Wychowawcza”, “Państwo i Społeczeństwo”, “Kultura-Społeczeństwo-Edukacja”, “Studia Litteraria et Historica”, “Społeczeństwo i Polityka”, “Wychowanie w Rodzinie”, “Edukacja Międzykulturowa”; 2) less frequently but also in prominent English-language journals: “East European Jewish Affairs”, “Journal of Community&Applied Social Psychology”, “Comparative Studies in Society and History”, “Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion” “HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory”, “Journal for the Study of Antisemitism”, “European Judaism: A Journal for the New Europe”. Furthermore, the authors have issued chapters in books (in Polish publishing houses or foreign publishers). Unfortunately, so far very few individual books have been published.

The scope of research is quite varied, including, inter alia, issues related to creation of Jewish identity and institutional structures; religious life and the activity of religious and secular associations; relations with the mainstream culture; informal education and Jewish school system, upbringing in the family and social roles, as well as gender issues. Identity issues, institutional development and Jewish revival are definitely the most contentious topics amongst them.

In most texts, the time boundary of ‘89 and the “rebirth of community” are emphasised. Czerwonogóra claims that the 1989 transformation created an institutional framework for unhampered education, religious and cultural activities and representation of minorities, which were used by a group of people identifying themselves as Jews and Jewesses⁴⁶. Wilczura also argues that:

Studies on contemporary Jewish life in Poland assume that the fall of communism in 1989 gave rise to a dynamic development of the Polish Jewish community, referred to as the *Jewish Revival*. This unique phenomenon in Poland is evidenced by the lively religious and cultural activity of Jewish religious communities and the functioning of several dozen Jewish associ-

⁴⁶ K. Czerwonogóra, *Odrodzenie żydowskiej społeczności w Polsce z perspektywy kobiet...*, p. 1.

ations and foundations of secular character, as well as many Polish institutions dealing with the popularisation of the history of Polish Jews, including over fifty different festivals, feasts and meetings with Jewish culture, organised cyclically throughout the country⁴⁷.

In the same way, Zubrzycki lists the signs of revival in *Religion, Religious Tradition, and Nationalism: Jewish Revival in Poland and "Religious Heritage" in Quebec*:

The renewed popularity of klezmer music, the dramatic proliferation of Judaica bookstores and Jewish cuisine restaurants (most of them non-Kosher), the governmental sponsorship of "virtual shtetls," the emergence of Jewish studies programs at multiple universities, the opening of new museums and memorials, the routinization of artists' and public intellectuals' artistic engagements with Poland's Jewish past and Polish-Jewish relations more broadly, as well as the growing number of conversions to Judaism are other indicators of this phenomenon⁴⁸.

Some academics consider this only an apparent revival in accordance with the number of initiatives undertaken and proliferation of institutions and festivals. For instance, Wilczura raises questions about the framework and limitations of revitalisation: What kind of revitalisation are we experiencing? And about identification issues: Who is a Jew – the people registered in institutions, declaring so in a register or maybe also remaining outside the institutional life? And yet, according to Wilczura, the demographic data for 2017 does not seem optimistic. Hence, the Polish Jewish community remains a rapidly ageing minority with a negative natural population growth⁴⁹.

Related to these are other issues, Antonik addressed more problems: the community requires more professional educators; there are still only a few Jewish schools; Judaism and Hebrew studies are mainly

⁴⁷ A. Wilczura, *Inkluzywność oparta na wartościach religijnych w edukacji społeczności żydowskie...*, pp. 247–248.

⁴⁸ G. Zubrzycki, *Religion, Religious Tradition, and Nationalism: Jewish Revival in Poland and "Religious Heritage" in Quebec*, „Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion” 51 (3) (2012), p. 447.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 247–249.

chosen by non-Jews and the impact of Judaism on Jewish life is on the decline⁵⁰. The researchers have also listened to the voice of their interlocutors who remained cautious in their forecasts⁵¹. Finally, Szafrńska asks whether postmodern (often unstable) identity constructions of young people with Jewish roots will give the community the chance to survive in the future?⁵² Generally speaking, more critical judgement of this very revival has prevailed over the past two decades.

Admittedly, there is an increasing number of Jewish Studies in Poland with elements of the diagnosis of the environment, Jewish Communities, cultural institutions, schools and kindergartens descriptions, etc. I argue that research is becoming more and more targeted (e.g. at the analyses of growing numbers of institutions, including the secular ones, narrative research on identity, educational diagnoses, discourse analyses).

Perspectives and Scientific Challenges

To recapitulate, after analysing all of the papers, I have already indicated the main research challenges:

1. Researchers' consolidation and interdisciplinary cooperation. Although a PTSŻ (Polish Society of Jewish Studies) exists, nevertheless an attempt should be made to isolate the subject of modern era in Jewish Studies;
2. More intensive relationship with the European Jewish Studies;
3. A wider presentation of research results of young scientists during international conferences is necessary. One can already notice significant progress; for example the conference *Analysing Jewish today: perspectives from a new generation* organised in Berlin – gathered two participants from Poland in 2010; three pre-

⁵⁰ J. Antonik, *Współczesna, nieformalna edukacja żydowska w Polsce – analiza SWOT ...*, p. 136.

⁵¹ E.g. P. Kocóń *Renesans religijny i kulturalny mniejszości żydowskiej w Polsce...*, pp. 139–141; K. Reszke, *Powrót Żyda. Narracje tożsamościowe trzeciego pokolenia Żydów w Polsce po Holokauście...*, pp. 146–202.

⁵² p. 71.

agents in 2013; seven speeches in 2017 and the conference took place in Warsaw. This year *The XIth Congress of the EAJS 2018* was organised at the Jagiellonian University.

There is still an absence of qualitative research on family models which are currently being formed by the so-called “unexpected generation”. We also know little about the levels of religious identification, religious practices and the upbringing of children in the spirit of Judaism within this generation. Hence, researchers should pay attention to the youngest generation’s strategy of building its national, ethnic and religious identities. More detailed (perhaps quantitative) surveys should be conducted to evaluate the cultural and educational offers created for the Jewish community. A good starting point is the SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis carried out by Antosik. Surprisingly, not many researchers are interested in the issue of gender in Judaism, which is an extremely popular topic in Western Jewish studies.

In this respect it should be noted that the progress of the community stipulates further research and is dependent mainly on the inhibition of migratory tendencies (including the young academic researchers). Jewish leaders and academics should thus take account of the cultural and social potential of young Jewish people in our country. Despite the dissemination of scientific results through the Internet, the risk of blurring, fragmentation and marginalisation of research on the modern diaspora in Poland remains in place, which is what this community certainly does not deserve.

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