



What do old guys say to community? – some ideas from polish perspective

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OLD GUYS SAY YES TO COMMUNITY
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DEJAVNEJŠA UDELEŽBA STAREJŠIH
MOŠKIH V SKUPNOSTI
Zaključna konferenca, Ljubljana, 11. maj 2019

Overview:

- **Masculinities and**
 - **Place attachment**
- in the light of the Project
- Old Guys Say Yes to Community**
- (2 categories elicited)

Old Guys Say Yes to Community

April – September 2017



Interview conductors	The No of the INTERVIEWS	Including focus groups
Researchers	(50)= 14 + 20 + 16	(4) Lower Silesia District /LSD/, Central Part of Poland /CP/,
Students of University of Wrocław,	29	----
Students at Collegium Da Vinci,	10	----
Phd students /mixed university groups WROCLAW, POZNAŃ	10	----
Alltogether	99	4

The methodology

The Polish team, researchers and students from Universities (Wrocław, Poznań) have done 99 interviews with older men all in 5 municipalities/communities in Poland located in different parts of the country (North-West, Lower Silesia District, Central Part). The research data were largely collected by means of guided interviews. The individual open narrative-biographical interviews (F.Schütze, 2012a, 2012b, Rosenthal, 2010) were based on the topics that were framed earlier in the questionnaires.

Two ways of analysis:

Firstly, after collecting the questionnaires we follow the method of open coding and selective/focused coding based on Glaser's grounded theory (Glaser, Strauss 2009, Konecki, 2000, 2009). The thematic categories were elicited and then the data was enriched by a collection of individual interviews.

The interviews were analysed applying Fritz Schütze interview technique (1976, 2012) and heremeneutical case reconstruction procedure elaborated by Gabriel Rosenthal (1993, 2010).

The context of the research and the aim

This presentation is based on the data collected by Polish team in the project Erasmus + “Old Guys say Yes to Community” conducted by four partners from Slovenia, Estonia, Portugal and Poland since 2016-19.

The aim is to present some insights into Polish older men social experience, to show the diversity of living in Polish communities considering its socio-cultural background.

The research questions are:

- What do old guys (really) say to community?
- What do they contribute to the society in the light of collected data?
- What is important for them from their life experience and aging perspective?
- What is expected of ‘being a man’ from a biographical and ageing perspective?
- Why is „place attachment” such a strong category mentioned by the generations of 60,70,80?
- How do place attachment moderates their activities?

Masculinities in the context of ageing

- As we age, we become (more) invisible and even ‘genderless’.
- Older adults are often portrayed as ‘the others’, as unproductive and problematic for society.
- Ageing is not uniformly experienced across the spectrum of one gender – there is not one pattern of masculinity: studies on masculinity: Pierre Bourdieu (1998) „Masculine domination” (symbolic violence) and Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) reformulate the concept of hegemonic masculinity (Gramscian notion of hegemony) in terms of **plurality of masculinities**.
- In different cultures, the social positions of the genders differ - the pattern of older men’s masculinity is as diverse as their life experiences and is connected with the cultural, historical, educational and social background -
 - - specific gender identities shaped by changes in the relationships between men and women that affect the dynamic nature of gender (Calasanti, 2004).

Some studies on men's lives, learning and well-being

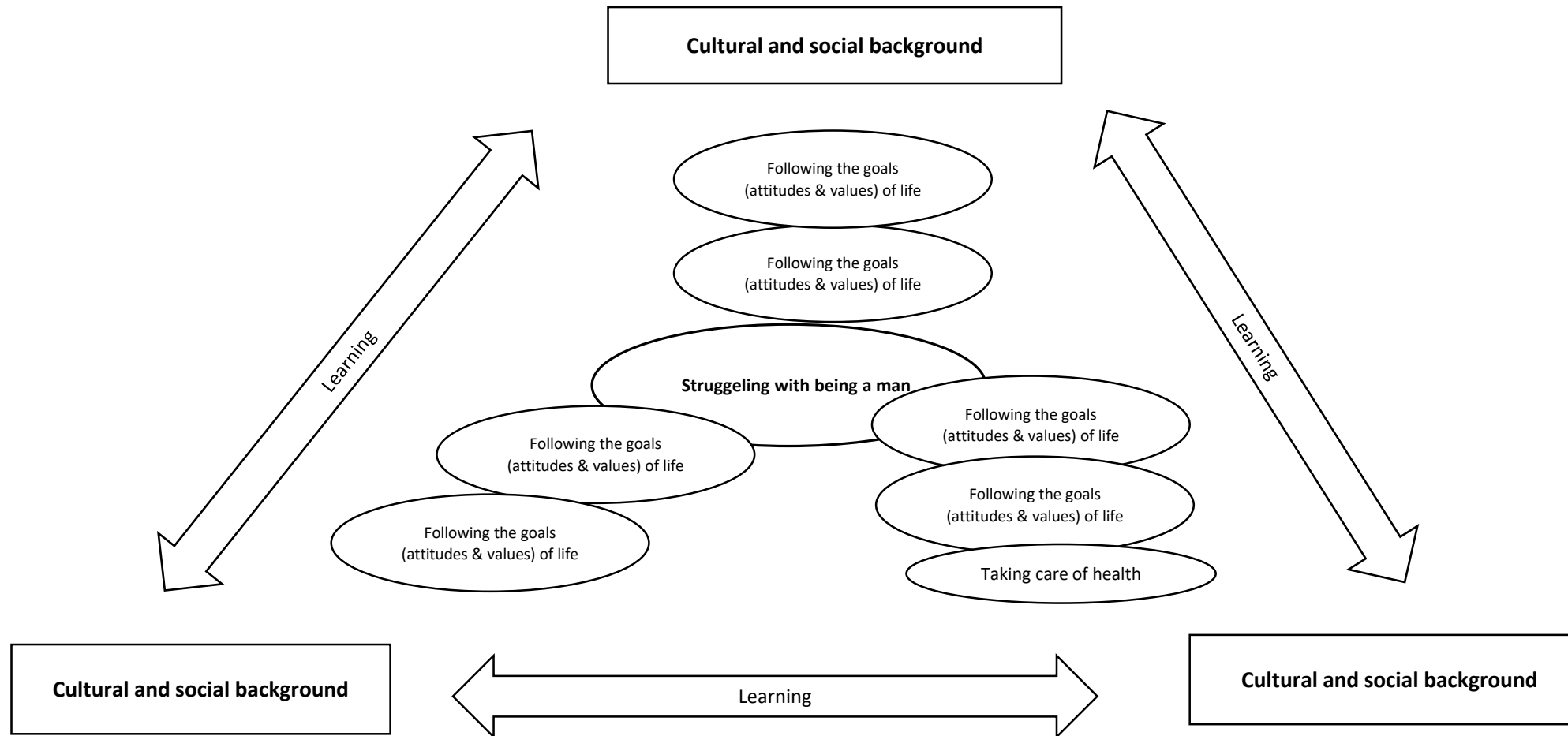
- research on men's lives by **the Harvard Study of Adult Development Harvard**. This longitudinal research project of adult health and well-being, beginning in 1938 has closely examined the lives of more than 700 men, and in some cases their spouses (Vaillant, 2012). [Harvard Study of Adult Development](https://www.adultdevelopmentstudy.org/) <https://www.adultdevelopmentstudy.org/>
- project **Older men, music and well-being**, part of research school Successful Ageing at Örebro University, Sweden, music is an integral part of men's lives, much more than just an activity (Lindbland, 2018)
- Grundtvig Learning Partnership in EU LLL Program 'Older Men as Active Learners in Community – **OMAL** (Slovenia, Portugal, Estonia, Malta) (2012-2014) (Formosa Fragoso & Jelenc Krašovec, 2014).
- **Research on Men's Sheds** – learning can have significant, positive impact on men lives - Australia, (Golding, 2011, 2015, 2015a); New Zealand, Ireland, Scandinavia (Helene Ahl, Joel Hedegaard & Barry Golding, 2017).
- Research (2017) – **Men's Study Tour in Australia and New Zealand members of ELOA** - ESREA network; together with **Adult Learning Australia and Federation University Australia** i **ACE Aotearoa in New Zealand** - collaboration between researchers from Europe, Australia and New Zealand – prof. **Sabina Jelenc Krašovec**, prof. **Bernhard Schmidt-Hertha** and prof. **Barry Golding**

Polish context of study on men and masculinities in Poland

- Less studies on the learning activities of older men in Poland.
- Men are less visible in formalised educational activities offered by organizations such as Universities of the Third Age and/or Senior Clubs.
- Men's Sheds have also been established in Poland, Warszawa, Słupsk and Wrocław – perspective for research in the future
- Polish society, there are two overlapping paradigms of masculinities: a traditional one - captures masculinities as dominating, aggressive and specialised and 'new/modern' one - emerges from the postmodernist perspective, characterizes the man are cooperative rather than dominant and capable of expressing emotions and desires (Chmura-Rutkowska, Ostroch, 2007).

The formation of older men's biographical learning

(Malec-Rawiński, 2019)



Struggles with being a man

- The struggles with being a man relate to constructions of masculinity - the clash between two models of masculinity – traditional and modern (visible in analyses of two biographical interviews – Jan, 72 and Mark, 73).

Example – Mark’s case: his masculinity was questioned by members of his family. Both in his professional and private life, Mark has struggled between the two paradigms of masculinities. He grew up being a young researcher and lecturer, husband and a father in society where the traditional paradigm of masculinity dominated. As a head of the family, he worked hard to become the successful researcher and academic and thus he anchored himself to work.

- Maybe the quality of relationships does matter to masculinity too? Being accepted as a husband, a father, a friend, a leader of the band can engender the feeling of equality and satisfaction with life, and in turn perhaps issues of masculinity are not so important.

Family – 'family is the most important in my life' (Jan, 72)

- Building and taking care of relationships with the family members appeared fundamental for men.
 - The health of significant others (wives, children, siblings, and friends) influenced the men's own well-being, and their handling their own health problems.
- parallel findings with the Harvard Study of Adult Development results (Vaillant, 2012). That research showed that people in the strongest relationships were protected against chronic disease, mental illness and memory decline – even if those relationships had many ups and downs. The amount of relationships does not matter as much as the quality of them (O'Connor, 2016).

Enjoying hobbies

- Hobbies are an important part of life. They are a kind of engine that provides sustenance for life. After retirement, hobbies become more valuable, for the men when they have more free time.
- **Example – Jan’s case** - analyze of his biography shows how music, was essential; he noted that:
‘music fulfil[s] me’ ... making music in old age is the best for your memory, to exercise your memory and to avoid dementia ... in old age man could have no reason to exist, not accept himself and music helps no to fall into nothingness’.
- Similar findings of the project *Older men, music and well-being* show, music is an integral part of men’s lives, much more than just an activity. Men described music as a part of their identity:
“It helps them to regulate their moods, makes them relax or cheer up and helps them to be in touch with and to develop their emotional lives. Music also facilitates the creation of social bounds, and strengthens these men’s relationships” (Lindbland, 2018, p.103).

Conclusions

Masculinities and Polish Old Guys:

- men are struggling more with masculinity than with ageing,
- hobbies make them active, busy,
- they avoid talking about health problems,
- family is important part of their life (proud of children or/and grandchildren),
- they prefer following the leader while taking up some activities,
- the activity of old men is determined by the need of being heard, not being voiceless,

Some concepts of space, place attachment, memory & actions – Martina Löw (2000/2018) and Scannell & Gifford (2010)

„Place attachment” as a sociological concept in a new interpretation – **Martina Löw (2000/2018)** -

a relational concept of space which emerges in the **interplay between objects, structures and actions**.
Her concept:

- encompasses social structure,
- the material world of objects and bodies,
- the symbolic dimension of the social world;

This innovative view on the **interdependency of material, social, and symbolic dimensions** of space also permits a **new perspective on architecture and urban development**.

„**Place attachment**” – fundamental dependence of humans on **ecosystems** for well being and health (**Scannell and Gifford, 2010**); based on ethnography, human ecology, demography, sociology, forestry, economics, cultural anthropology, urban studies, human geography and environmental psychology.

Person, Psychological Process and Place (PPP) – a **multidimensional concept including** the variety of approaches to a place sense of culture and place knowledge – for people and communities through generations;

Ecosystem represent natural space for living, working and defining themselves;

Generation born, living and working at the same place/region/district

Age	Lower Silesia District (LSD) Association 2011	Central Part of Poland (CP) Website 2009
60 +	V	V
70 +	V partly resettled	V
80 +	Resettled	V



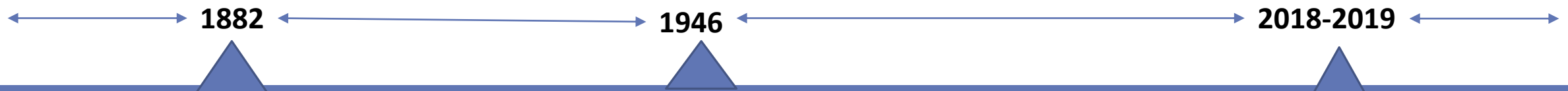
Two different historical periods inspire actions :

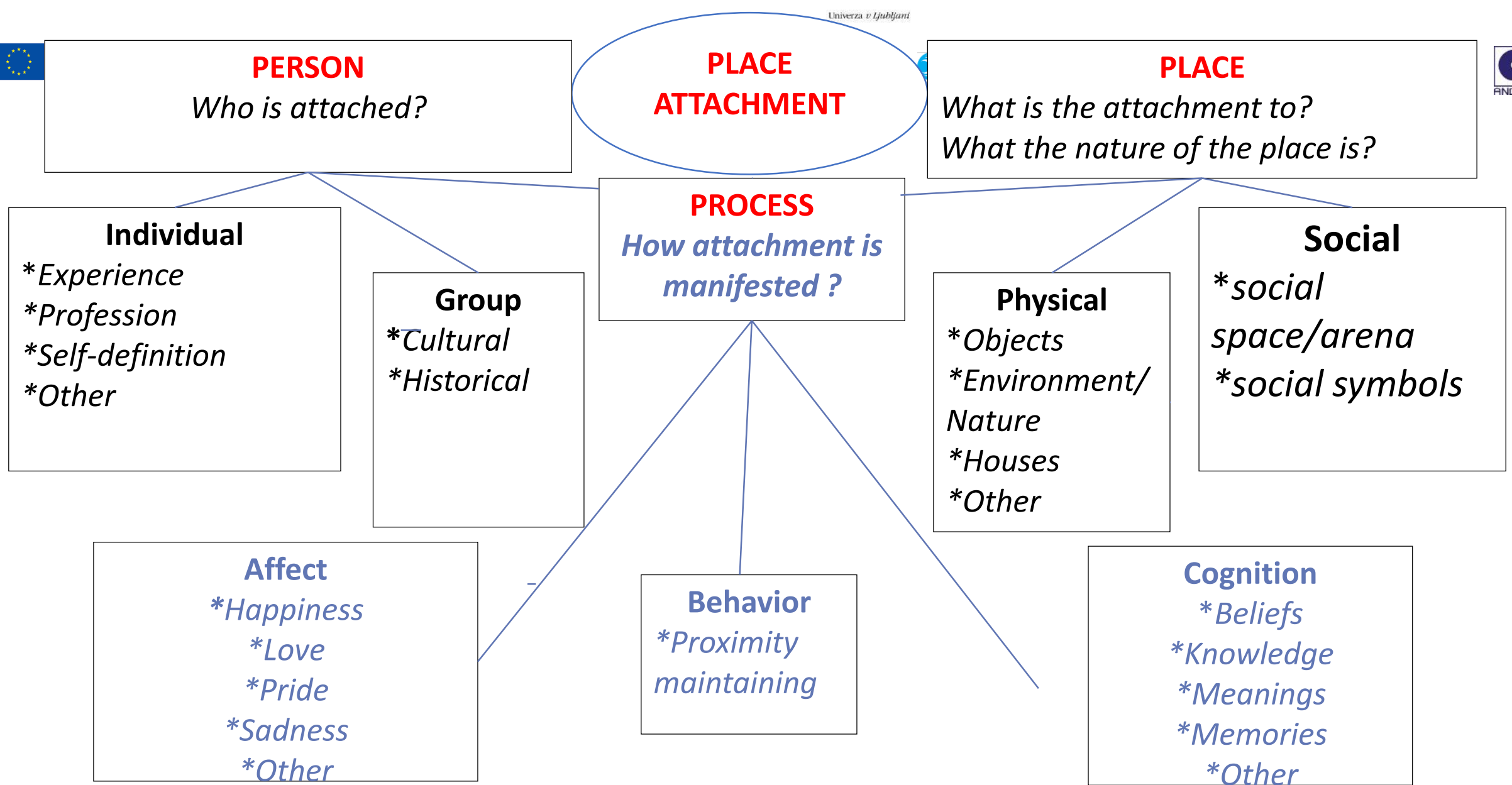
1. 1939-45(CP)
2. 1882; 1946 (LSD)

Place of living - 60 + are the people, who most of their life spent in one or two villages/towns; most of them were born at the place where they still live now; Some left the place for a secondary school and came back.

Proffesion/jobs, place of working – most of 60+ had the same job before retirement, most of them worked at the same factory/corporations/ administration board for all their life.

Presumption: Non-mobility used to be a habit for the avarage member of local community of the age over 60 in that case „place attachement” it matters.





The tripartite model of place attachment (Scannell and Gifford 2010) modified for the study of fishers' attachment to fishing places

By Garavito-Bermudez and Ludholm, 2017, p. 632).

„Place attachment”, memory & - individual & groups social actions (CP) www.androvia.pl

GALLERY - documents sources (witnesses, other "evidence for existence");

STORIES of one's own history - Refreshing the memory of the local heroes of different Times;

PASSION - strengthening family ties, discovering the secrets of family stories for themselves, deeper understanding;

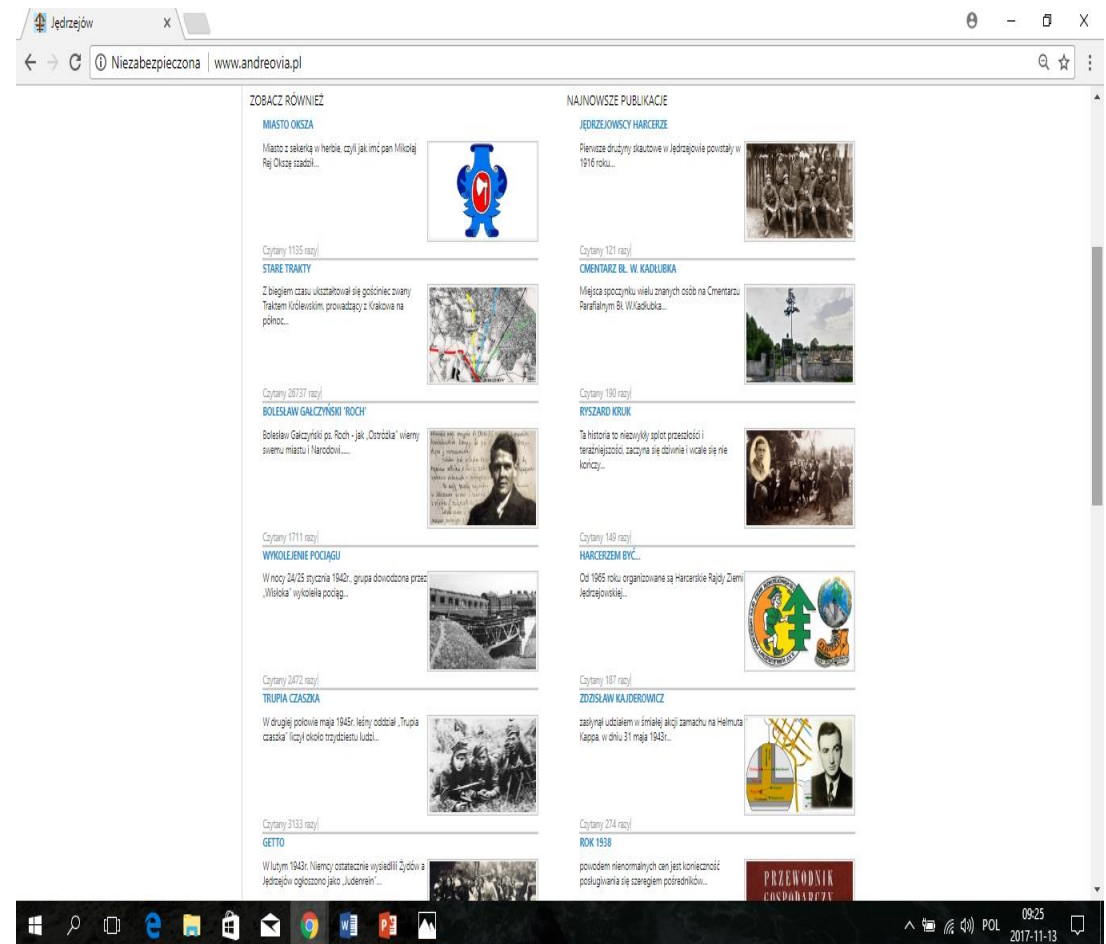
MISSING members of families found;

KNOWLEDGE - architectural details, interesting places, cultural decoding;

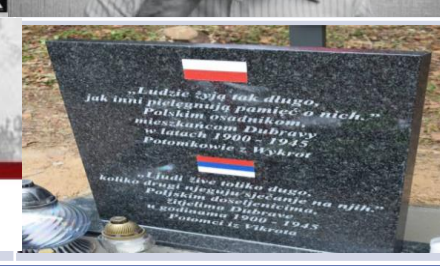
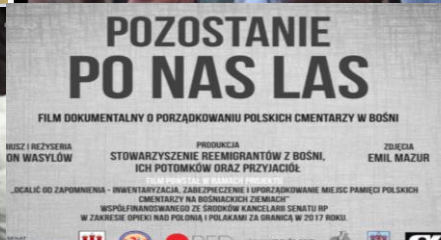
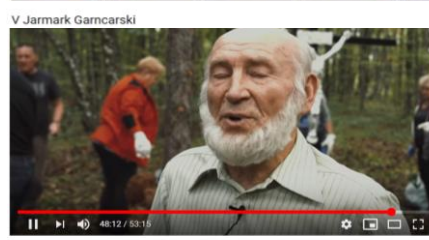
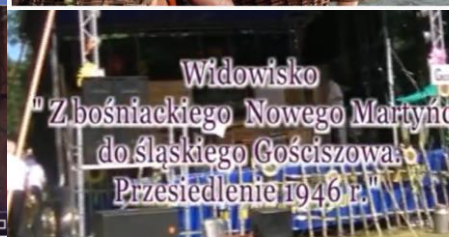
DISCUSSIONS – on line and face to face - negotiating and (re) interpreting objects, facts;

PUBLICATIONS (amateur's and expert's), local stories, anecdotes, memory games, riddles, genealogy education;

REGULAR INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS (every 5 years; Poland, Germany, Australia, Canada members/users)



Back to Galicia XIX/XX - Bosnia 1946 - Poland 2011-19 (LSD)



Selected results of „place attachment” of individuals & groups in local communities

- **A grass-rooted individual initiative of setting up a website/an association** has turned into a collective activity that goes beyond the borders of the county as well as the country.
- This initiative, unexpectedly for the creators themselves, **combines the individual interests of the inhabitants with the goals set in the local development strategy** including local governments.
- **Local government is involved in initiatives** proposed by local actors and reinforces their actions without imposing or interfering their initiatives.
- **The educational potential of the website/associations actions** grows with its existence and cannot be identified because the "co-moderating" of the website may involve its users, who not only propose new issues but also motivate informal learners by "creating" their own forms of documenting, for example, the history of life, the collection of the oldest, family photographs, indication of information sources, knowledge sharing and negotiation. **The association and website influence all local institutions and private people.**

Thank you for listening!

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