

## TOWARD THE CREATIVE CLASS –THE CHALLENGE FOR THE INDUSTRIAL REGION

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**Abstract:** The introductory part of the article will concern the theoretical foundations of creative class and the history and specifics of the most important groups of Silesia, which decided about his shape and fate. In the second part the assumption about the enclave character of a creative class in Silesia will be confronted with the opinions of entrepreneurs, representatives of local authorities and experts involved in the research. Qualitative studies based on 100 in-depth interviews conducted in late 2010 to 2011 allowed to present specific phenomena related to the creation of creative class in Silesia. All studied groups of respondents recognize the existence of a class of professionals and active individuals who work at businesses and local communities. The process of creating a creative class takes place slowly in the form of enclaves in various towns or companies. Basing on the research it can be concluded that taking into account regional actor's attitude there is an opportunity for systematic further development of the region. However, respondents next to the major strengths of the region and alternative development trends indicate a series of obstacles and untapped potentials.

**Key words:** creative class, learning region, social capital, human capital, regional actors

### 1 INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid economic growth and increasing importance of knowledge development the analysis about the importance of individual social groups takes the form of deeper research. It is particularly important in the context of transition from industrial to post-industrial era in which knowledge plays the most important role. In this process, researchers saw the role of many important factors of social origin - such as social capital, human capital, networks, the level of social trust, regional climate and quality of life, culture of economic organizations and region. Particular attention is also focused on managers performing a crucial role in the process of change. They were observed, especially their way of functioning in organizations, their professional and private lives, their motivations and decisions undertaken and the consequences of those decisions.

Roomer (1990), one of the main leaders of the new growth theory, wrote: “The entire growth in living standards resulting from new discoveries. No savings, investment, tax system and political decision allow sustained economic growth. These phenomena have to join small and large innovations that are needed to create greater value from a fixed supply of natural resources”. Author notes that the basic factors of production are essentially limited. Innovations are therefore essential to explain the long-term economic growth. At present the world as well as the national economy are very closely associated with the generation, distribution and using of new knowledge. By Slovak economist Buček (2006), economic growth regions as well as the overall quality of life depends on the ability of regions to create new knowledge and new knowledge to evaluate commercially in the form of innovations.

The aim of this paper is to present the results of research on the changes taking place in the industrial region, which is the area of Silesia. Transformations taking place there are particularly noteworthy because of the dynamic processes associated with the change calculated from typical industrial to a diversified post-industrial economy. Increasingly, industries based on the knowledge of professionals are existing in the industries that grew alongside traditionally associated with this region. To understand best the nature of change it should be defined the central theme - which is creative class - and also present genesis of this class in Silesia and its current socioeconomic situation. In the second part of the paper will be presented assumptions of the study and the most relevant results. The summary shall indicate the chances of stable growth prospects for the creative class in the Silesia province.

## **2 FROM HUMAN CAPITAL TO CREATIVE CLASS – DEFINING MAIN ISSUES**

In the mid-twentieth century, economic development was increasingly linked to regional development. Underlying this development is creating a community conducive to the development activity, which presupposes the existence of adequate facilities, well-educated people, and specific nets between various regional actors (Nowakowska, Przygodzki and Sokołowicz, 2011). Important are not only essential skills of individual people, their accumulated knowledge, but also their openness for dialogue, compromise, cooperation, compliance standards and laws. These intangible qualities like the capacity of social groups, education, health and entrepreneurship is difficult to express as a financial value, however, their probable role in the economic development cause that researchers started to use in this context expression “capital” under the “physical” equivalent.

Economists willingly picked up the concept of human capital. They considered it as one of the key factors for economic growth. However, discussions are ongoing around that concept and its definition. Becker pointed on the relationship of the human factor, expressed by the degree of education related with increasing prosperity (Becker, 1990). While, Schulz studied this effect in the scale of country (Matura, 1999). Most frequently cited model of human capital refers to the reflection of Lu-

cas, who was a follower of Becker's thought. He linked the growth of economy with human capital. He stressed that not only the individual is responsible for building its value, but also that this value depends on the community and other persons (Matura, 1999). Specific knowledge and skills are transmitted between individuals, but also between generations. Thus, the level of human capital depends on the way of accumulating it. Human capital is also the variable that explains differences in regional development. Herbst made a review of the literature on this topic (Herbst, 2010). Cichy and Malaga examined minutely others considerations on models of human capital as a factor conducive to economic development (Cichy and Malaga, 2007). Differences even relate to the definition of the concept - as a resource or a stream. Capital can be a source of economic activity or only as a factor of facilitation. However, doubts arise ways of measure human capital. In research practice as the most common ways of human capital resources measure is resident population with higher or at least secondary education and the average number of years devoted for education by the people (Herbst, 2010). The concept of human capital does not fully explain differences between national economies, therefore economists, and sociologists are still looking for alternative ways to describe the role of men in a social and economic development.

In the mainstream of sociological studies appeared the concept of social capital, which foundations created Bourdieu and Coleman. They underlined important role of interpersonal relations, principles of cooperation and trust in economic development. Social capital, like human capital, raises many definitional problems and associated with convenient methods of measurement. For econometric purposes, it can be only measured attendance in local elections, number of associations and foundations per 1 inhabitant (Herbst, 2007). Therefore, initially social capital was studied mainly by sociologists, but in recent years, the level of social capital is the subject of tests and measurements of the World Bank (Bartkowski, 2007). The concept of social capital refers to social institutions conducive to business. About trust, that reduces transaction costs and risks of doing business wrote also Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 1997). Often cited is the social capital theorist - Putnam, who critically evaluate contemporary model of everyday life because of the low intensity of regular contacts and social cooperation. In his view, this could lead to lower levels of social capital (Bartkowski, 2007). This interpretation may be criticized because of the lack of understanding for specific life in large cities and intensive work of the best-paid professionals. It could be possible that classic ways of understanding and measurement of social capital do not fit into urban reality (Florida, 2003).

It could be said that human capital and social capital were considered as one of the main factors in foundations of social development. On this classical approach, also Florida based his deliberations. However, his researches were focused on the measurement of creative class activity. International corporations play important role in this process because of large adaptation skills in different environments. Ability to adapt to the new environment, while the diffusion of improved organizational and management practices, along with a package of necessary knowledge - has a very positive impact on local industry. This translates into improving the qua-

lity of products obtained basing on local opportunities. Competition is under positive pressure, but powered by natural movement of personnel as carriers of knowledge. Knowledge transfer follows and concerns best practice production, management and training. Imported foreign investments are the cause of reducing political opposition because of expanding job market in place of previous unemployment. The key issue, which Florida analyzed, was to explain reasons for differences in regional development. He also searched for sources of creative class mobility and factors that decided about their settling in a particular place (Klincewicz, 2010). Florida in almost every paper emphasizes that about dynamics of the city and region decides creative class. It consists of educated people, generating innovation, stimulating economic growth, interest in intense participating in the culture. R. Florida divided creative class into two main groups: core of creative class and creative professionals. The core of creative class are primarily scientists, engineers, academics, writers, poets, artists, actors, designers and people connected with the entertainment and architects. However, creative professionals work in knowledge-intensive industries, such as high-tech industries, financial services, and related health care as well as in company management (Florida, 2002).

In addition to this term, Florida proposes a model in the form of the triad: technology – talent – tolerance. The presence of all 3T in a particular place and in the same time determines generation of creative centers focusing creative class. This class now becomes a factor deciding about possibilities of development of the city, region, country, and world. Analyzing the most creative American city - and especially San Francisco, Boston, Washington, Austin and Seattle - Florida noticed that nowadays for creative people such comforts of civilization as highways, shopping malls, stadiums are no longer sufficient. They are looking for new attractions, which now becomes high quality cultural services and varied opportunities of entertainment. They avoid traditional corporate community centers and clusters of the working class (Florida, 2005). However certain risks for creative class may be unavailability of housing in cities such as New York and Boston, where price pressure forces artists and other representatives of the creative class to move elsewhere. Also unfavorable is unequal regional development, city sprawl and environmental destruction, increased stress and anxiety caused by a lack of social security. Florida refers this concept of creative class and creative cities to the concept of learning region, which is completely constructed model taking into account various dimensions. He refers to hard data of quantitative research, uses indicators based on economy and demography. His analysis met with criticism, but also became the inspiration for further research using other methods.

By Rylander (2009), universities and regional tertiary institutions have been assigned a significant role in the execution of regional development, since knowledge, skills, and creativity are crucial to the creation and maintenance of efficient innovative systems. Central governments have increasingly been allotting higher priority to applied research and increasing cooperation between the business sector and universities. The same author shows “the experience industries” contain the 15 following industries: Architecture, Art, Computer games, Design, Experience-based Learning,

Fashion clothing, Film production, Gastronomy, Literature, Marketing communication, Media, Music, Performing arts, Photography and Tourism. The term “experience” was intended to shift focus away from strict industrial customer perspective. That shift was carried out in order to redirect a new policy, which emphasizes the importance in knowledge economy.

### **3 HISTORICAL, ECONOMIC, AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS FOR UPRISING CREATIVE CLASS IN SILESIA**

It is difficult to undertake a review of opportunities for creative class uprising in Silesia, without full awareness of the historical, economic, and social conditions, which took place especially since the acceleration of industrialization in the XIX century. Exactly rapid industrialization influenced fundamentally on the local labor market. This region occurred to be rich in resources needed in the world, so primarily technical inspection staff, engineers, representatives of other professions began to flow there. They were called “agents of change” - immigrants from Germany and the UK, relatively well educated, having the know-how on modern technologies. They occupied the highest positions in the organizational structures, passed new standards to the local population, especially in their approach to work. Differences between inhabitants of the region primarily concerned religion, because the populations of immigrants were generally Protestant or Jewish religion, while the local population was mostly Catholics. In the second half of the XIX century in Katowice was already a synagogue and a Protestant church. Local people belonged mainly to working class, which strengthened the division of the inhabitants of this region. At the end of the XIX cities in Silesia are equipped with running water, sewerage, and lighting - initially gas, electric later. Development of the railway was a reason to facilitate social mobility.

At the beginning of the XX century in Katowice was almost two thousand Jews, who developed a small trade and services. Increasingly, they invested in real estate, mills, soap factory, leather goods. The end of World War I is the period of the plebiscite and the Silesian uprisings, so that ultimately a significant part of Silesia was allocated for Poland. There were some obstacles to further development like lack of proper education of candidates for government jobs and slow assimilation of the local population to the Polish language. It was a reason why the population of Silesia in the first years of belonging to the Polish state, felt discriminated. Immigrants from other areas of Poland were treated as a threat to the labor market; they had another - alien - culture. During World War II Germans wanted to break the union of Upper Silesia and Poland. This area was treated as a part of Germany. Post-war Polish authorities have shown a complete lack of understanding in the case of signing Volksliste by Silesians. This led to the formation of extremely negative stereotype of the Silesian. They were often arrested and deported to forced labor camps in the Soviet Union. Their property often was taken over by immigrant representing new government bureaucracy. Again, the main barrier to occupy managerial and

clerical positions was education, past, regional identity. Nevertheless, the 50th and 60th was again a period of rapid industrialization. Representatives of the imposed communist regime - newcomers from whole Poland - decided to expand heavy industry on a large scale. Communist ideology officially supporting the working class has strengthened this process. Colonial approach to the region of Silesia has not promoted education between local inhabitants. The Silesian University of Technology started in 1945, initially in Krakow, and then with problems in Gliwice; University of Silesia in Katowice was founded in 1968. The entire communist period is a time of intensive migrations from the village, a massive influx of rural population to urban and industrial centers. In many cities, were created entire suburbs for newly arriving workers. Newcomers and existing residents have formed isolated enclaves. Effects of aggressive industrial economy and the socialist ideology were difficult for everyone.

In the early 90's appeared a deeper and more rational reflection on the strategic approach to a long - term operation for that devastated region. Transformation of all spheres of social life began from the form of enclave, which expressed itself in several dimensions: problematic, territorial and social. Problematic dimension concerned artificially restrained desire for knowledge, which has exploded with multiplied force. There began to appear many private universities, which quickly managed human potential. On the other hand, Silesia started to experience problems with the declining profitability of industrial plants and mines. It gave rise to many social consequences. It caused a need for a comprehensive restructuring of the mining and other industries. The territorial dimension of transformation is expressed precisely in the collapse of some cities and degraded industrial areas. This situation began to improve with the possibility of using EU funds just before, and especially after the accession to the European Union. Then gradually began to appear professionals capable to gain capital for specific investments. They work both in local government and in enterprises. The turn of the century XX and XXI is also a change of administrative borders of the voivodship and increasing the investment of multinational corporations. Automotive industry giants such as General Motors, Fiat and Isuzu have drawn new investors and given hope to build an alternative to the failing of heavy industry. 1/10 of foreign capital, which had invested in Poland in the 90's, invested in Silesia. It has been 3 billion \$ mainly in the automotive industry. It caused migrations of foreign specialists and new personnel.

At the same time, free market economy has developed other directions - engineering, electronics, military, energy, information technology, medical services. The social dimension of transformation expressed especially through that process of creating enclaves of professionalists. They are becoming the foundation for the emerging creative class. The regional economy is still dominated by mines - 60 mines produced 91.2 % of coal mined in Poland - and steel mills (18 mills). Basing on the report "Regional development in Poland" issued by the Ministry of Regional Development in 2009, it can be said that Silesia in 2007 spent a major expenditure for innovation activities - it was 5.4 billion PLN, representing 26.7 % of all expenditure on innovation activities in Poland. The highest rates of innovation reported in the pro-

duction of medical, precision, and optical instruments (55.7 %), food and beverages (51.7 %) and IT (49.2 %). Statistical data seems to be rather optimistic so it shows there is a chance for rising of the creative class. The whole process has an enclave character and it begins from the small towns newly starting to build their identity no longer on the basis of a functioning coal mine nearby, but based on people taking their affairs into their own hands.

#### **4 METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

Research was done under ministerial project “Industrial region as a region of the learner - the sociological determinants of changes on the example of Silesia.” Analyses have included 100 interviews with decision makers, free experts, and entrepreneurs from three sectors of the economy. In each of five groups of respondents was carried out 20 interviews. It was taken into account in four subregions of the voivodship which eventually gave over 25 interviews in each subregion. Researchers mainly have investigated opinions about the quality of cooperation between the major partners of the region, opportunities for the emergence of the learning region, and factors of promoting the development of the region. Totally, it has been done 60 interviews conducted among the regional companies and 40 interviews with regional policy makers and experts representing mainly business support institutions. The qualitative method and interview technique used in that research gave respondents freedom of unlimited opportunity to comment on specific thematic blocks.

#### **5 MAIN RESULTS – DECISION-MAKERS, FREE EXPERTS, AND ENTREPRENEURS ABOUT THE CREATIVE CLASS**

At the beginning, it should be stressed that in the original assumptions research in the group of entrepreneurs it was taken into account the division into three sectors of the economy: agriculture and the mining industry, industrial production and service sector with particular emphasis on the modern services such as medical services, information or other requiring specialized knowledge. Already after the first few interviews it became clear that such a division is not adequate to social reality. Many companies also do business in a service activity and production, or - more interestingly - for example, mining and training. All results of this research will be presented in according to the sector.

In the first sector, some interesting statements were obtained from the owners of farms. They were talking in tone of regret. Although there has changed a lot in the last decade mainly due to the European Union, their basic problem is their excessive attachment to the land and also environmental disintegration. They play unfair with each other, do not have trust to others, and still are thinking in terms of welfare state. An example of such comprehensive statement illustrates this phenomenon:

*“Prices should go up. Farmers should get together in larger groups of producers. Farmer should be automatically protected. In another case, farmers can do nothing. It is difficult, because you have to Invest: buy fuel, machines.... There is one guy who buys the land; I think that it is funded by Germany. He buys, gives more money, and buys everything. (...) He gets huge subsidies from UE, because he has a big farm. He can also change the profile of this production.” (Farmer, 56y.).*

Lack of confidence and risk aversion are not conducive to development, but we can see that there are changes in agriculture in the direction of large farms, which simply will be managed by the rich knowledgeable farmers. Farmers stressed that changes are visible - especially in the field of continuous training by owners of farms. This is necessary to obtain grants from EU. More and more often farmers need not only experience and knowledge about new machines but also management skills and readiness for risk.

Interviews between personnel managers of coal mines gave many interesting notes. It occurs of course that traditional thinking about mines as a part of first sector of economy is not quite appropriate. This is a common and obvious that the way they extract coal has nothing to do with the traditionally understood mines. They indicate on use of more and more advanced technologies. Personnel directors of mines willingly talked about the functioning of the creative class in the Silesia voivodship. They do not see a clear basis to definitely conclude that such a class exists. They pointed some groups - or even institutions - around which such a class could potentially create.

*“Chamber of Commerce is such an institution, where we met such a people, and they exchanged views. They wonder about the future, but these leaders have no possibility of decision-making. I think the local government could use such an initiative. The idea is that, there should be more of these companies. You could then create the appropriate economic trends.” (Personnel manager of mines, 36y.).*

Others pointed to some communities based around the foreign investors that are likely to grow thanks to these professionals:

*“It all depends on the human personality. In Rybnik, we have the substitute for the creative class. There are many companies - foreign investors. There are various things that have happened or are taking place in Rybnik: the cabaret festival, various cultural events. There is an academic center - University of Economics, University of Technology, University of Silesia. But even Tychy - a rapidly growing city that is trying to create something.... This is not a poor region. We achieve the highest income. It must be more attractive. It could be even better. Silesia is stereotypically perceived, but here you earn much and there is really so quietly with the creative class.” (Personnel manager of mines, 56y.).*

The statements of these respondents prove that the foundations for the emergence of creative class are being formed. They noticed specialists in the communit-

ies; cities are beginning to worry about investors and residents. Respondents do not indicate reasons for the lack of a creative class in Silesia. Some trends are visible with equal strength - on the one hand, the certain groups of professionalists are created, but on the other hand, there are some groups interested in maintaining the status quo.

Entrepreneurs from industry sector showed a large reserve in their opinion about creative class. Most speakers focused on a group of professionalists:

*"We do not have creative class, we have some selective segments of the economy, where one can say there's the creative class, or specialists with their ideas. These are only fragments. It would be better to use them and create conditions for their migration in our direction - looking for innovative staff. (...) These people can create hope for the realization of ideas; I do not find it anywhere else. Weak side of Silesia is PR and it causes bad climate. Silesia has to work on better image, clearer. What I observe, there is no such image." (Industry entrepreneur, 60y).*

Entrepreneurs certainly see many knowledge specialists who are dispersed in many factories, but they do not have a common consciousness. Additionally, they stressed the role of regional animosities and internal divisions in the voivodship:

*"Rybnik is practically closed in the Rybnik. For example Gliwice and Rybnik - these are two separate worlds. Within Silesia, you can now find such a group of people who has such a sense of Silesian affiliation .... And it is quite strong. There is still mental boundary lingering between Katowice and Sosnowiec. I have never thought it is still alive, but you can see, it is still lingering. When talking about development of Silesian voivodship - a few people could be found, but for Rybnik - much more." (Industry entrepreneur, 32y).*

Some of respondents noted the fact of living specific individuals who are potentially core of creative class:

*"In the scale of the region, I think we have a creative class. In our region there are many persons connected with culture, art, science, and industry. They are associated with this region. They owe much to this region. I think that these people are so connected with the region that they want to live in this region. Nevertheless, it is important that the region should support them. In fact, there is no common awareness of this group. They are broken down immediately. They are individuals." (Industry entrepreneur, 45y).*

All these divisions show that it is easier to find active people on the local than regional level.

Presented opinions confirm that - with adequate external conditions created by the decision makers responsible for the region - it is likely to raise the creative class from quite a narrow circle of specialists. Entrepreneurs see positive changes, but try to be quite critical and objective in their assessments. Their attitude to change is practical but also quite optimistic.

*"I think Silesia has changed very strongly, not only the mining and metallurgy. I remember from my childhood that most fathers of my colleagues went to work*

*in the mines. It was the best job. Perhaps these past factors still have some influence, but there is a new generation and it is changing for the better. (...) There are completely different industries, most of it is the automotive industry, it is a transportation company cooperating with companies from abroad - is probably a good sign.” (Industry entrepreneur, 37y.).*

They see some personality traits as a potential threat, which are not particularly territorially cumulated. However, it has been clearly identified by respondents:

*“The main feature of the Polish nation is the envy. These are the people who break with jealousy and destroy those who want to become leaders. They do not develop the group, but they break them. Any types of initiative, chambers of commerce, or some scientific circles, are destroyed.” (Industry entrepreneur, 60y.).*

Respondents of industry sector are very real people staring at social reality. They pointed out rather on a group of specialists involved in the production as a potential creative class. However, – in their opinion - the potentially active persons concentrate in the smaller towns of local importance. The sphere of their activity does not exceed 50 km.

Representatives of service sector focused on local business. It was difficult for them to define their creativity. Respondents perceive it through their own experience, but also actions and their own observations.

*“We talk about the region and Żory, I'll tell you yes, I know that the president of Jastrzębie and Rybnik from childhood, the president of Żory - long enough ... so the relationships are unique.” (Service sector entrepreneur, 60 y.).*

Respondents often referred to the activities of local government leaders, pointing to the authorities. This is the best proof that the most active persons are concentrated around the cities in which they act.

*“I think there is such a group, because as I compare it with other cities of Upper Silesia. Żory is such a green island, like Poland in Europe at this time. Żory are lucky to authorities.” (Service sector entrepreneur, 60 y.).*

These contacts are the most common and most effective:

*“You can see that everything changes in the region. Therefore, you can see that there are people who deal with problems and take care about the city. They are creative, or their advisers are creative. People make the changes, even architecturally.” (Service sector entrepreneur, 37 y.).*

The creative class rises also through different informal associations and occasions:

*“Companies from Raciborz, Rybnik and Wodzislaw started meeting each other for the common beer. The idea was not to fight with each other but cooperate. We met once a month and so it began. It is now such an informal group and there we exchange experiences. There is a group called ASK and it is an association of art-related here in Raciborz. These are the various associations that might create such a creative class.” (Service sector entrepreneur, 29y.).*

Respondents observe talented groups, but they cannot specify exactly who would belong there – probably mainly specialists from specific industries. Active persons do not necessarily operate at a high level in the region, sometimes these are local initiatives. The region's strength is a commitment to local values and traditions. It is also the reason why experts want to work here. An interesting statement one of respondents shows the case of refusal to move to another company outside the region:

*“One of our surgeons left us some time ago. He rented an apartment in Krakow - he was a young guy. He settled there and now is a leader. However, once he called me that he wanted to come here, we went together for dinner, I showed him anything - did not do any secrets. He made proposals to go to Krakow to our boss of block. He also proposed another. They all refused. They feel connected with Silesia. Earnings are good. The level of work is good. They are close to the house - we all live within 50 kilometers. They feel connected with the region. The proposal to move to Krakow was not attractive to them. This organization, technology – it is not everything, because you still get along. Our doctors have a chance. Here you feel safe.” (Service sector entrepreneur, 62y.).*

Affection to place - the family and his company is particularly characteristic for that region.

Entrepreneurs do not have a definite opinion about the creative class - do not feel her actions at the scale of the region. Creative class can develop in conditions of tolerance. Talent and technology are already at a good level. Entrepreneurs pointed to a number of strengths that have Silesia. These are undoubtedly location, population, economic structure oriented on manufacturing and services, low unemployment. Among the most frequently mentioned alternative industries, they mentioned medical, information technology and automotive industries. They also notice non-standard production in the region, such as the manufacture of chocolate, milk slot machines, or sophisticated services such as hairdressing for dogs or aesthetic medicine.

The interviews with regional decision makers were specific, because they focused primarily on their areas. We can see that a perspective wider than just their own city is much more far from their reality. Creative class did not raise specific associations. Their statements often toured around examples of institutionalized groups of people working for the development of the region or city. This is well illustrated by the following quote:

*“Comes to my mind only the cluster, and what the cluster attempted to do, also exhibitions of business are an opportunity for such meetings. It sometimes has such a regional dimension. We often arrange it with Czech partners in Karvina. (...) We have conferences from time to time, where some people are very active, including our boss of department of environmental protection.” (Decision maker, 51y.).*

Others respondents stressed the important determinants of the changes leading towards the creation of creative class:

*“In this question we have certain assumption that Silesia is in fact a typical working-class region. It is believed that Silesian is a man who works and works and works, but when it comes to management – it is not necessarily his strong side. I would like to reject such thinking. (...) If Silesian parliamentarians are beginning to talk about Silesia, they begin to fight for his cause; they say it harder and louder... If we started to fight for the autonomy of Silesia, ... I see these positive changes because we begin to speak with one voice of Silesia, regardless of whether we are from the right or left side of political scene.” (Decision maker, 54y.).*

Regional decision makers do not indicate the existence of creative class, but they rather stress the role of professionals, individuals from different communities. They distinguish single persons, who are active and very professional. It is obvious that these people care more about their interests, and not some social groups. Large companies have some potential and these trained staffs have something to transfer to other employees. In some way, this process has an influence on communication in the city. Generally, regional policymakers have always talked about actions that are taken for the development of the city:

*“It is important to have a vision, and our president of the city has something like this. (...) Ideas that come out from these creative people are quite original, such as a martial art, dance or other movement activities. These people meet with each other, talk... They exchange these ideas. This is evident also in the whole region.” (Decision maker, 32y.).*

Policymakers cannot clearly indicate group of people resistant to change. In their opinion, it all depends on individual character. Some of them noticed actions of ecologists, which were judged negatively. In addition, spontaneous group of inhabitants protesting against certain actions were negatively perceived. Decision makers underlined the important role of trust between entrepreneurs, regional authorities, and inhabitants. Policymakers are aware of the need to create stable conditions for business development. It makes them to focus on the perspective of the surrounding communities.

Most experts represented business support institutions, development agencies, technology parks, and business incubators. Their responses show that most of them - just like the previous group - have doubt about the existence of the creative class. They have usually talked about the existence of a group of specialists, well-educated people working at the local level in towns, or even organizations, taking care of special interests, and acting with local government, for example, when preparing important documents. One of the experts said:

*“Frankly, I do not know. I suppose there is an informal group of people, experts from different institutions that collaborate on the development strategy and wider.” (Expert, 31y.).*

In some interviews, there might have been an impression that tons of grief raised because of various obstacles, particularly related to the nature of politics. This

is well illustrated by the following statement indicating the number of significant determinants of the whole region:

*“Creative class, of course, it could be. In my experience, however, that the party and politics here are mixed. If we enter the province level, it is unfortunately obvious that politics plays a big role and some things do not overlap. The same applies to various development agencies. Region is not promoted as a whole one region in the European Union. I miss such a good strong provincial strategy. We live in the agglomeration, which is divided.” (Expert, 39y.).*

Disintegration of the region seems to be a problem not for the first time. Perhaps it can be seen the best from the perspective of an expert. Their statements can be concluded that the creative class develops from a small community, but to build a group at the regional level political barriers need to be removed. Once again, these respondents – like the previous ones - indicated rather professionals with excellent knowledge and specific individuals as a group potentially being a creative class in the future. There were many statements precisely indicating such a phenomenon - as the large number of highly qualified specialists. Some respondents have indicated specific occupational groups such as architects, designers and doctors - specialists. Experts pointed to similar barriers in the development of the creative class as respondents from others group. Received opinions draw a picture of the informal interest groups - on the one hand – especially politicians who control their electorate in accordance with the electoral calendar, and on the other hand - officials who prove to everyone that they are essential. Experts prefer to talk about regional cooperation than to evaluate it. They did not want to change their position. There were also statements indicating a need to broaden people's awareness, which seems to be the core problem of development in this specific region.

## 6 CONCLUSIONS

The topic of the creative class is relatively new and little studied. The main difficulties are associated with used methodology. So far, the most appropriate method concern statistical data, but it does not fully reflect that phenomena. Florida's research - although he used the specific indicators - did not indicate beginnings of the creative class. His description did not give guidance to counteract emerging threats. Such problems can be investigated using a qualitative approach.

In - depth interviews conducted using only the main questions allowed to show the biggest problems of regional development: the disintegration of local communities, civil disturbance, isolation of professional groups, not appropriate relationships between various actors in the region. Five groups of respondents took part in this research - regional policy makers, experts, and entrepreneurs from three sectors of the economy - services, manufacturing, agriculture, and resource extraction.

All these respondents emphasized that the situation in region has changed a lot mainly due to the European Union. Many farmers are conscious that their level of education and risk - taking are very important for their farms. During the last two

decades significantly changed also conditions for conducting coal extraction. This process caused appearing new high-qualified specialists. There are also some new institutions, associations and communities around which the creative class could start to build. Entrepreneurs stressed the fact of living in these region specific individuals who are potentially core creative class. Unfortunately, they feel limited to influence the reality associated with the local government and decisions at national level. The area of the region is very diverse culturally and historically. All respondents emphasized the main strength of that region which is affection to local values and traditions and also local initiatives. The majority indicated the activity of local leaders at the local level. Regional decision makers and experts mostly focused on matters that concern them directly. Although there could be noticed a significant increase in professionalism of local decision makers – it should be noted that they are afraid of group of ecologist and spontaneous groups of demonstrators. Policymakers are aware of the role of entrepreneurs and that they are responsible for creating the favorable conditions for business. In experts opinion the creative class develops from a small community, but to build a group at the regional level it needs to break down political barriers.

In summary reflections, it should be emphasized that the creative class slowly rise in various towns and companies. The process takes place in the form of enclaves that causes that it is incompatible, and thus less visible. The main obstacles are the low level of cooperation and trust. This raises the need to change the mentality of the people. Respondents are aware of huge strengths of the region and main obstacles. Considering, however, several obstacles mentioned by interviewees, this development would not be as dynamic, as it could be. There is urgent need to reach an agreement between all regional actors.

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## Kreatívna trieda – výzva pre priemyselný región

### Resumé

Téma kreatívnej triedy, kreatívnych pracovníkov je relatívne nová a bádateľmi málo študovaná. Hlavným problémom výskumu kreatívnej triedy sa javí metodika jej štúdia. Pri výskume kreativity sa veľmi ťažko získavajú relevantné štatistické údaje, ktoré by umožnili postihnúť tento jav. Podľa Floridu, jedného z lídrov tejto výskumnej témy, je vhodné využívať kvalitatívne prístupy a metódy bádania. Hlboké rozhovory s použitím iba hlavných otázok nám umožnili spoznať najväčšie problémy regionálneho rozvoja Horného Sliezska: rozpad miestnych komunit, občianske nepokoje, izolácia jednotlivých profesných skupín, zlé vzťahy medzi rôznymi aktérmi v regióne a iné. Výskumu sa zúčastnilo päť odlišných skupín respondentov, regionálni politici, tvoriví pracovníci a podnikatelia z troch sektorov ekonomiky - služby, priemysel a poľnohospodárstvo a ťažba surovín.

Všetci títo respondenti zdôraznili, že situácia v regióne sa veľmi zmenila hlavne kvôli vplyvu Európskej únie. Mnoho farmárov si je vedomá, že úroveň ich vzdelania a riziko podnikania, sú veľmi dôležité skutočnosti pre ich hospodárstvo. Počas posledných dvoch desaťročí sa výrazne zmenili aj podmienky pre ťažbu uhlia. Tieto a ďalšie procesy podmienili „objavenie sa“ nových vysoko kvalifikovaných špecialistov, kreatívna trieda. Vznikli aj niektoré nové inštitúcie, združenia a komunity, okolo ktorých sa kreatívna trieda začala združovať a rozvíjať. Podnikatelia zdôraznili skutočnosť, že osoby žijúce v tomto starom priemyselnom regióne sú špecifické a majú v sebe „zakódovaný“ potenciál kreativity. Bohužiaľ ich aktivity obmedzuje vplyv reálneho života spojený s miestnou vládou a rozhodovaním na národnej úrovni. Výhodou regiónu je, že toto územie je kultúrne a historicky veľmi rozmanité.

Všetci respondenti zdôraznili hlavnú silu regiónu, ktorou je náklonnosť k miestnym hodnotám a tradíciám, a takisto veľmi aktívne miestne iniciatívy. Určitým problémom je podľa respondentov úroveň rozhodovania miestnych politikov v záležitostiach, ktoré sa priamo dotýkajú aj kreatívnych pracovníkov. I keď aj v oblasti regionálnej politiky bol zaznamenaný v uplynulom období výrazný nárast profesionality, je potrebné poznamenať, že rezervy tu stále sú. Politici sú si vedomí úlohy pod-

nikateľov a aj kreatívnych pracovníkov a vedia, že sú zodpovední za vytváranie priaznivých podmienok pre podnikanie.

Záverom je potrebné zdôrazniť, že kreatívna trieda sa pomaly vytvára a jej vplyv narastá v rôznych mestách a v celej spoločnosti. Tento proces prebieha najskôr vo forme enkláv a tak je pochopiteľné, že spočiatku je menej viditeľná. Medzi hlavné prekážky jej výraznejšieho uplatnenia patrí nízka úroveň spolupráce s ostatnými aktérmi v regióne a dôvera. To vyvoláva potrebu zmeniť mentalitu miestnych ľudí. Respondenti sú si vedomí obrovskej sily kreatívnej triedy v regióne a aj hlavných prekážok jej uplatnenia. Vzhľadom k tomuto je možné očakávať, že vývoj a vplyv kreatívnej triedy bude postupne dynamickejší. Existuje totiž naliehavá potreba dosiahnuť dohodu medzi všetkými aktérmi v regióne v prospech rozvoja kreatívnej triedy.