

Chapter 1



The Day the Pope Came to Town

On May 21, 1995, Pope John Paul II came to town. I had been living and conducting research in Żywiec for almost nine months. Excitement had been building for weeks, ever since the pontiff announced that he would have a “private” visit to Żywiec, meaning that only town residents would be allowed on the main square while he was speaking. Everyone had an explanation for why the pope had picked Żywiec: it was close to his birthplace (the town of Wadowice), and he was very ill, so most of the explanations had to do with his coming home one last time before his death. But why Żywiec rather than Wadowice? The two towns are not that much different in size (about twenty-four thousand people), and more or less the same distance from the county seat (Bielsko-Biała), where he was celebrating mass that morning. For that matter, he could have gone to Oświęcim (otherwise known as Auschwitz), another nearby town of similar size, and made a different kind of symbolic statement.

The deciding factor in many townspeople’s minds was that the town of Żywiec lies at the heart of the Żywiec region, a place with its own claims to a particular regional identity, that of the Żywiec Góralś.¹ By some estimates, the Żywiec region makes up about half of the county of Bielsko, all lying in the Żywiec Hills foothills of the Tatras Mountains. There are several different groups of Góralś, all living in

the mountains bordering Poland, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia, and the Góral identity as a whole is accepted by other Poles as a distinct regional-ethnic identity. Because Pope John Paul II was born in Wadowice, which is within the Żywiec region, and also grew up within the Góral area, he is seen by these primarily Catholic Góral as a native son who attained the highest honor possible by becoming pope.² Also, because Żywiec is the center of the Żywiec Góral region, many townspeople felt that the pope was showing that he was a real Góral by coming to Żywiec, symbol of his homeland, possibly for the last time before he died.

In the weeks before John Paul II came to town, extensive renovations were done to prepare for his arrival. Buildings facing the route he would take were repainted. A huge stage was constructed on the main square, and several kiosks were moved to make room for it. Half-bombed-out buildings, left to decay after World War II, were bricked and boarded and painted. All the Catholic churches in town handed out tickets for the event, and every resident living on the main square was interviewed by special security forces and given a list of security requirements. (A more cynical resident told me that this was “just like when the First Secretary came through.”) These security measures, along with other aspects of the pope’s visit, were hot topics of gossip in the town for months before the visit. Town residents told me about the security requirements they had been hearing about: there would be a policeman at every window looking out onto the square, families would not be able to look out of their own windows, people would not be allowed to move in and out of their houses during the pope’s visit, and no guests would be allowed to stay with families who lived on the square during the visit.

A newly built traffic roundabout was interpreted by many residents as being created especially for the occasion. “The smallest rondo in the world,” as it was called, became the town joke. In a town in which until recently there was only one traffic light (there were now three), the idea of a traffic roundabout seemed a ridiculous pretension. (The mayor, as we will see later, had a very different justification for the building of the rondo.) Pictures of the pope and flags flying the colors of the pope (yellow and white), the Polish nation (red and white), and the Virgin Mary (blue and white) crowded every window, fence, and signpost in town.³

When the big day finally came, I went out with all of my neighbors to see the Holy Father drive through the neighborhood. We waited for an hour and were finally rewarded by the sight of the popemobile cruising by. We waved and snapped pictures, and the town’s moun-

tain horn players, dressed in full Góral costume, played a special Góral horn salute on our very corner as the pope passed. None of us had been so lucky as to obtain tickets for entrance to the cordoned-off main square (which were free to town residents, but limited in number and distributed through the Catholic churches in town to their members) or to the apartment block where he would supposedly be stopping for a papal visit. (I heard various stories that they were free, and also that some people were selling them at high prices to both town residents and out-of-towners). So, we retired to our houses to try to tune in the festivities on television. The TV showed us a packed, cheering throng on the main square, waving papal flags and pennants with the word "Żywiec" printed on them, with many Żywiec residents wearing "traditional" Góral costumes.

After the pope had finished his speech, I left my neighbors and, with camera in hand, went out to see if I could get some pictures of the crowds leaving the main square. As three helicopters buzzed overhead, carrying the pope, his car, and other dignitaries back to the Czech Republic, I photographed some of the street vendors as the jubilant waves streamed past. One elderly woman, whom I knew slightly, was decked out in beautiful old-fashioned clothing and posing for some photographers. Her costume was what is touted as the "traditional" Góral dress for townswomen in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: a white blouse with laced bodice, long petticoats and skirt with an intricate lace apron, and thick, knitted woolen socks with leather slippers tied on with leather thongs. It is likely that her mother wore such clothing for holidays when this woman was young, and she herself probably had worn a child's version of this outfit for special occasions. Although I do not normally take photos of people, I decided that I would ask her for permission because she was already posing. She nodded pleasantly and posed for me to take a snapshot, then sighed sadly and said to me, "Everyone wants to take a picture." Shocked that I had done something inappropriate, I tried to apologize, but she brushed it off and then commented, "People should know what Góral look like." The crowd from the main square and the vendors selling papal paraphernalia were dispersing, so after this encounter I headed home to rehash the day's events with my landlady, puzzling over the woman's remarks.

THEMES: CLASS, IDENTITY, AND GLOBALIZATION IN ŻYWIEC

The community of Żywiec had something that made it special in Poland—the Góral identity. This identity, which was the subject of

contention in the postsocialist era, was intimately linked to responses to political and economic change. For some people, the Góral regional-ethnic identity provides a sense of local autonomy from outside forces, and a sense of identity that gives weight to arguments to avoid global capital and focus instead on regional economic ties. Others disagree, believing that the community needs global capital for development, and they express this belief in part through arguments that the Góral identity is part of tradition but not relevant to contemporary political and economic issues. An important finding of this study is that class position was a major determinant of one's views on the relevance of Góral identity. Exploring this relationship between class and identity allows one to understand the point of view of the frustrated woman in Góral dress, and the story of the pope's visit provides a context within which to introduce important actors who attempt to construct differing Góral identities in this community.

Poland was facing escalating economic difficulties and social tension. The problems Poland's government had experienced in implementing policies for a shift to an entirely market economy were, in part, a result of the conflict between the assumptions underpinning government policy and patterns of lived experience familiar and available to the vast majority of the Polish people. This disjuncture led to a steep decline in popular support for politics in general and the national government in particular. In Żywiec, it also led people to feel more distant from the national government, and more in need of local solutions to their problems. One local resource on which they could draw was the regional-ethnic identity, Góral. This process of declining nationalism and increased importance of other identities is a much debated aspect of globalization, on which this project sheds some light.

An examination of Żywiec's responses to political and economic change in previous eras suggests that it is not unique to the postsocialist era that Góral identity had been used as a resource for mediating the community's relationship with states and economic systems. In both the pre-World War I period, when Żywiec was part of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire, and the socialist period, from the end of World War II up to 1989, Góral identity seems to have been linked to ways of negotiating the preferred relationship among the community, the state, and community economic strategies. By falling back on the meaning of their past during times of change, Żywiec's have been able to create new strategies for dealing with transition, while at the same time reinterpreting the meaning of their past to better serve their present needs. This is in no way an uncontested process, however. The class politics of recreating this identity, and the implications for

Żywiec's visions of postsocialist politics and economics, is the major focus of this book.

The primary process explained in this book is how class conflicts shape claims to group identity. This is not to say that class is the only determinant of identity process, but that it is an important one in this case. Class dynamics in the postsocialist era split the elites in Żywiec roughly into two groups—one favoring “globalization,” attempting to involve foreign investors in town businesses, and the other favoring “regionalism,” a more insular economic strategy involving increasing ties with neighboring towns across the nearby Czech and Slovak borders. The second group justified regionalism by invoking the Góral identity as a meaningful contemporary category, which tied the region together regardless of national borders. In contrast, the first group claimed that the Góral identity was a thing of the past, and that modern residents should look outward, especially outside the nation, for economic help. Ironically, both results of class politics involve a pulling away from nationalist politics, bolstering other claims on identity—regionalist or pan-European. What happened in Żywiec is a concrete example of a general trend: the contemporary spread of transnational capital and a growing, global cultural system of symbols and meanings pull in two directions, toward global (suprastate) systems of meaning, politics, and economics, and toward particularist (intrastate) backlashes. Whether called postnationalism (Matustík 1993), neonationalism (Wicker 1997), or simply a change in how nationalism functions (Llobera 1994), these processes “do not reinforce the ideological constructions called nation and state, but actually undermine them by pulling ahead of them on a trajectory of their own” (Wicker 1997, 32). Contrary to the strawman argument that postnationalism would mean that the nation-state is no longer meaningful in any sense, from an instrumentalist viewpoint it seems likely that the strength of nationalism will fade as the state plays a smaller role in the fate of the community, and other kinds of identities will gain salience. And in fact, the Żywiec case is one in which nationalism simply is not an ideological card that is played. No one there is trying to create a separate state (the idea of a separate Góral political homeland would be humorous to them), but no faction invokes the Polish state as useful or meaningful in their attempts to create a viable economic future for the community. National economic policy is designed to force communities, businesses, and individuals to be self-sufficient—with radical effect.

I began this research by doing semistructured interviews with individuals about how they were adjusting to these economic changes,

primarily in terms of their personal economic strategies, and how their political outlook might be changing. I asked them about the kinds of adjustments they were making at various levels—nuclear family, kin group, local organization, business, or community—because most individuals do not have the resources, inclination, or opportunity to make purely individual decisions about economic strategies. The interviews were designed to shed light on a set of related questions: How do people in Żywiec respond to the effects of political, economic, and cultural changes at the level of class? How have class categories been maintained or reworked through the changes that led to socialism and the changes away from socialism? And how are class, identity, and globalization currently being articulated in contexts of local, national, and global power? The results formed a picture of how important class reproduction, fractioning, and formation were in the current debates over the community's future and over conceptions of the current identity of the community. The answers to these questions also challenge our views of the political economy of postsocialism in the former Eastern Bloc.

I suspected that the reality of the “transition to capitalism” in provincial communities was out of sync with national reports and Western expectations of a rapid and easy change toward individualism, the main building block of liberal capitalist modernity. This was indeed what I found. As the current transition to decentralized economic and political structures in Poland proceeds, it is increasingly evident that the benefits of this transition are distributed unevenly. Provincial communities suffer at the expense of urban centers for a number of reasons. Foreign investors and in-country capital sources are more likely to invest in large cities that have well-developed infrastructures, so expansion of existing businesses and creation of large new enterprises and joint ventures happens more in cities. Existing enterprises in smaller cities and towns have a lower profit margin, due in part to a lack of infrastructure, and so are more likely to be liquidated during the privatization process. This last means that unemployment will rise most in the very places where new businesses are least likely to open. It also plays into a circular process in which the national government attempts to make the economy more cost-effective by cutting infrastructural support, such as railroad service, in places that “don't need it” because industry is shutting down there. As the socialist landscape is reworked into capitalist geography, areas outside the major cities increasingly and disproportionately suffer.

Many Poles in provincial communities thus feel abandoned or betrayed by the national government and new economy that had given

them such high hopes in 1989. They are left on their own to puzzle out ways to support themselves and their families, and to overcome these new obstacles of high unemployment, high inflation, decreasing infrastructural connections, and little or no support from outside sources. In the process, most people draw on their own past experiences and the traditions of their communities to come up with survival strategies. They do not have the resources that would allow them to open their own businesses or move to cities, the new way of doing things promoted by government and international development policies. Responses such as migrating to big cities to find jobs, which might be expected in the First or Third Worlds, are not viable strategies for most people in Eastern Europe, as I will explain.

An important factor in the responses of some people in this community to these problems is a defensive regionalism connected to the Góral regional-ethnic identity. As I discuss in chapter 2, the region around Żywiec historically has been passed back and forth among various nations in Central Europe, and thus has been the object of many different policies of nationalist politics and economics. Even after the region returned to Poland in the post-World War I era, it has been subject to the Nazi occupation, a socialist regime tied to the Soviet Union, and current attempts to integrate into the capitalist system. Each successive wave of changes has brought attempts by governing states to blur or eliminate this regional identity. Some Góral have resisted these attempts and entrenched their identity at each stage, because that very identity has helped them to process and mediate the community's relationship with each successive incursion. This identity affected strategies (economic, cultural, and political) at the family, local organization, and community level.

Before I ever came to Żywiec, I had heard from Poles living in other regions that Żywiec residents were Góral—that they spoke the Góral dialect and embodied a number of stereotypes, such as being less educated, rowdier and more ready to fight, fiercely independent, and generally ornery. I was told that I wouldn't be able to understand these people because the Góral dialect was so different from standard Polish.⁴ On my initial visits to Żywiec, however, I discovered that I had no trouble understanding the few people with whom I spoke. I saw some few pieces of artwork and furniture in the Góral style, but I chalked it up to romanticization of the traditional. Only after several months of living there, I realized that I had difficulty understanding some people because they used certain idioms and grammatical aspects that were different from standard Polish, code switching between the Góral dialect and Polish. (This was certainly a relief to figure

out!) At the same time, I was attempting to make sense of various statements that people made to me about who “real” Żywieceners were, and who I should be interviewing for my project. When people asked me who I was interviewing in Żywiec, I usually asked them who they thought I ought to be interviewing—a serendipitous question, as it turned out. Some people inquired whether I was interviewing only “town residents,” because in their opinion the “real traditional Żywiec folk” lived on the outskirts of town. Others informed me that the real Żywieceners were those who lived in the main town, who had a family history there and relatives who been merchants or artisans prior to World War II (Żywiec residents call it simply “the War”). Still others thought that I should go beyond the bounds of the town to interview people from various parts of the Żywiec region, but I was not sure exactly where that region ended (neither were they) or what it meant to them. It was only several months into my project that someone actually used the term “Żywiec Góral” to me, and I began to pay more attention to whether people were implying the Góral identity when they said Żywieceners.⁵ I started to put the pieces together and developed an idea of how and why this identity is important to various groups of people in the community.

The Góral identity is not important to every Żywiec resident: its strength of appeal is based in large part on how useful people find it, and class position is important in understanding its potential usefulness (or uselessness, or even disadvantages). I found that some people in Żywiec were repositioning and entrenching the Góral identity in attempts to improve their own situations by exerting influence over the economic choices of local businesses, the community, and one another. I call this group of people the “prewar elite”; they are currently in conflict with an emerging class I call the “neocapitalists.” Identification with this regional identity is also a response to their own political feelings about national leadership. Some self-folklorized⁶ markers of this identity, such as ostensibly traditional dress and crafts, or the dialect being used by people who normally speak standard Polish, are intentionally adopted by members of the prewar elite to reinforce their meaning of Góralism and their social claims to authority in the community. Other markers, such as speaking the Góral dialect mixed with standard Polish, or cultural rootedness in the geographical place where Góralism is a way of life, are implicit markers that are reworked as other aspects of people’s lives change. For example, some Góralis who moved to Kraków and Warsaw founded chapters there of the Friends of the Żywiec Region (FZR [*Towarzystwo Miłośników Ziemi Żywieckiej*]), an organization whose importance will

become clear later), and Góral's who moved to some foreign countries can purchase the *Żywiec Gazette*, the local monthly newspaper, through Polish-owned businesses abroad.

To understand the social crosscurrents of this complex factor in townspeople's responses to the post-1989 political and economic changes, I had to explore what "being Góral" meant to different parts of the community, in both the past and the present. The "town" version of being Góral in Żywiec is certainly a more objectified identity than it is among those who live in outlying rural districts, which were formerly separate villages and have recently been incorporated into the town. Both Góral speech characteristics, varying from differences in pronunciation to distinctly different vocabulary and grammatical structures, and artistic traditions, such as knowledge about the production of traditional Góral instruments and possession of Góral-style furniture, are more likely to be found in the rural areas. Yet the emphasis on community identification with "Góralness" is being promoted by a group of local cultural and political elites (the prewar elite) centered in the town proper. Likewise, the push to consider the identity part of the traditional past is championed by individuals with links to global capital (the neocapitalists). Thus, the identity as conceptualized by any member of the population is in dialogue with different external forces, depending on who that person is and how they are connected to groups outside Żywiec.

The anecdote about the pope's visit to Żywiec provides a framework within which I can illustrate the interaction of the major actors of this community and show how class drives claims to identity. Central to understanding several aspects of this anecdote, and the major theme of this book, is the conflict between the prewar elite and the neocapitalists over which group should have the authority to shape a Żywiec community strategy in the postsocialist era. This conflict links the fate of the Góral identity to the role of local and global business in the community. Ultimately, these conflicts involve questions about the relationships among the local community, the Polish state, and the global economy, which result in the growth of postnational identity processes. Understanding the ways in which the Góral identity is used by the two opposing elite groups in town helps in understanding the subtexts of globalization, ethnic revitalization, and class formation that are present in everyday life and are given concrete public shape in major community events. In the next section, I reexamine Pope John Paul II's visit from the point of view of three group actors who play key roles in town: the prewar elite, the Żywiec Brewery, and the neocapitalists. This closer reading illuminates the "behind the scenes"

significance of class formation, ethnic resurgence, and postnationalism during the event.

The Prewar Elite

My conversation with the woman I photographed on the day of the pope's visit still stands out in my mind. Some important pieces of information that helped me make sense of it include the facts that she was not speaking in Góral dialect, that she lives in town rather than in a rural area, and that she is involved with the FZR in town, an arts and folklore group whose membership is predominantly made of up of prewar elite. People who have lived in the main town speak standard Polish and have largely lost the Góral dialect over the last one hundred years. This is particularly true of the prewar elite, because they were small business owners or managers of Habsburg businesses in the prewar period—the town elite who had business relations with outsiders who spoke standard Polish or German. A few older people who live in the large apartment complexes known as “settlements” retain the dialect, but their children quickly learned a more standard version of Polish. People in the outlying areas of town, however, tend to have been farmers much more recently in their families' histories, and they have retained Góral speech characteristics, even if they do not speak completely in dialect. The members of the FZR, the Żywiec Culture Club, and other artistic, cultural, and folkloric groups in town come primarily from the prewar elite, the more cosmopolitan main town residents. These groups are very active in trying to promote Góral arts and crafts among the residents and in organizing folk festivals and exhibitions. Together, the groups constitute a solid power block of upper-class town residents who retained much of their social status through the socialist era, a process I explain in detail in chapter 3.

Prewar elites' construction and use of who and what is Góral conforms to Polish ethnographers' vision of traditional Góral culture—a self-folklorizing, romantic view frozen in the early twentieth-century costume, rural lifestyle, and defining dialect. At summer folklore festivals, for example, ethnologists from universities are brought in to advise Góral dance and acting troupes and to judge the festivals. This folkloric view permeates the community to such an extent that individuals who in fact do incorporate characteristics of the Góral dialect into their speech and maintain small farms on the outskirts of the town sometimes don't consider themselves to be “real” Góral if they do not know Góral dancing or crafts.

These members of the prewar elite embody and privilege certain markers of Góral history that could be easily discarded—dialect for writing purposes, dress on occasion, and folklore—over other Góral characteristics such as farm life and actual incorporation of the dialect into everyday speech. This vocal and influential group of townspeople maintains that Góralism is rooted in community solidarity against the outside, for example, in regional autonomy from the national government or resistance to Western popular culture and Americanization. In promoting this ethic of solidarity, they also attempt to use it to discipline and control individuals (local and national politicians) and businesses that they believe are not doing enough to help the community.

My interpretation of the actions of the woman who was dressed in Góral finery hinges on her involvement in the various cultural groups in town that were interested in entrenching this identity and my understanding of her as one of the prewar elite. In my interviews with members of these groups, they suggested that by focusing on being Góral, and remembering the community's history, the community will be better able to weather the homogenizing cultural and economic effects of capitalist transformation. It soon became clear to me that a similar strategy had been used during times of political and economic transformation in the community: during the socialist period to distance the community from communism, during the World War II Nazi occupation to maintain community morale in the face of devastating attacks, and, before that (up to 1919), during the feudal period and Austrian partition. Thus, I argue that this recent response to policies of capitalist transformation is part of a historical pattern of relying on the local identity in instrumental ways to mediate colonizing forces, and in the same process, redefine the identity.

I would suggest that this particular woman was exasperated with the other residents' emphasis on the anomaly of her wearing of Góral costume, because her intent was to make a statement that the Góral identity is a given for everyone in the community. Wearing a beautiful traditional costume reflected her class status as well, because she was certainly part of the prewar upper class in Żywiec. More important, it was clear from the particular style of costume she wore that she was an upper-class resident, because there is not a standard traditional dress; dress differs by class and occupation as well as by gender, age, and, for women, marital status. The prewar elite are in key positions to construct, manipulate, and monopolize the cultural capital invested in Góral identity in an attempt to control the changes wrought by national programs on their community and in their families.

Globalization, International Capital, and the Żywiec Brewery

The global political economic system within which Żywiec is situated has prompted many changes in the town since the 1989 decisions to move away from the previously existing socialist system. One major player in this process is the Żywiec Brewery, which produces the best-selling beer in Poland, Żywiec Beer. Discussing the actions of the brewery and the reactions of town residents to the evolution of the brewery sheds light on the process of globalization in this community and the place of both class and identity in reactions to globalization.

The Żywiec Brewery has been around in one form or another for several centuries. In the late nineteenth century, when Żywiec was under Austrian rule, a branch of the Habsburg family made Żywiec a summer home. They built two small castles, and purchased and expanded the brewery and several other enterprises. They stayed even after the reconstitution of Poland after World War I, finally leaving Żywiec for good when the Nazi front came through during World War II. According to older members of the community, many of whom remember the Habsburg period as a golden age for Żywiec, the family always took care of the community and used brewery proceeds to support the workers. This fit in well with the historical construction of a community sense of morality attached to industry in Żywiec.

The Żywiec Brewery was one of the first enterprises in Poland to be privatized after 1989 as part of the Polish Privatization Plan, and it is widely touted as a success story—an example of the triumphal ideology that capitalism will inevitably “win” in Eastern Europe. Its profits are good, the stock is steady, and with the changing of national law on foreign ownership in 1994, the Heineken Brewery Company was allowed to purchase 25 percent of the stock.

Local residents see a different side of the story: the Żywiec Brewery is currently a primary target of anger in Żywiec. Before 1989, the brewery employed around two thousand people, but as a result of intensive capital investment in mechanization, it employed fewer than eight hundred in 1994–95, and over one hundred more were laid off in 1997. Since its privatization in 1991, benefits such as health care, child care, a kindergarten, sports activities, vacation arrangements, and help obtaining winter potatoes and coal have been slashed or eliminated. Brewery donations to the town library and cultural activities have dropped, except for large-scale activities that will bring international exposure or result in profit from beer sales, such as the Polish Góral and International Folklore Festival. There is widespread resentment—expressed through rumor, jokes, angry stories about un-

employment, constant requests from community groups for brewery funds, and statements of currently employed workers—that the brewery seems to have turned its back on the community. The brewery has set up a special requests fund in an attempt to distance itself from the process of handing out funds for sponsorship of various community activities. The idea was that town groups would all apply to this fund for money, and thus the bureaucratization of funding would show people that money was given out on the basis of merit, and there was a limited amount to be given out. Community groups, including the town council, see this fund as far too small in proportion to the perceived resources of the brewery, and also inappropriate because it does not recognize the moral economy of the town—the personal relationship between the town and brewery, and the necessity of dispensing help through affectual ties.

Currently, many people in town see Heineken as the moving force behind the changes in the relationship between the brewery and the town. The new marketing department (the Poles borrow the English word but pronounce it with the accent on the second syllable) is often spoken of with derision, as the puppets through which Heineken's will is done (as in "those marketing guys don't care about this community, they only care about profits"). These results of privatization and globalization are clearly something most Żywiec residents with whom I spoke would like to do without.

The brewery is also tied to the idea of Góral identity. For more than a hundred years, the Żywiec Brewery has used Góral images and the Żywiec name in its advertising and marketing strategies, from the dancing Góral couple on the label to hiring costumed Góral bands to play in grocery stores during promotions. The town council and cultural organizations have begun to use this identification with Żywiec and Góral against the brewery, threatening to give sponsorship of major events such as the huge summer Polish Góral and International Folklore Festival to another brewery. The objective is to pry more money out of the brewery for various town projects, including sponsorship of the festivals. A different but related control issue is that the brewery wants sole rights to the name "Żywiec" for its products and is negotiating with the town council for this. This was spurred by the use of the name by a new and very successful mineral water producer (Żywiec Zdrój mineral water) in a nearby town, which irritates the Żywiec Brewery now that it too is marketing its own brand of flavored mineral waters (Żywiec mineral water). (The town council's response was to propose a tax on the brand name "Żywiec" for all products that are sold other than locally, which the brewery would be able to absorb

because of sheer size. Needless to say, this is not an acceptable compromise to the brewery.) The brewery is using this Góral imagery and name, which has cultural meaning in Poland, and thus has to fight with the town over what that meaning is and how it can be used.

The reverse side of this issue is that the brewery still has substantial economic power in town. Most of the time, it is the first choice for sponsorship of community events, and it holds a commanding position in negotiations for excellent product placement when the town of Żywiec gets publicity. By pouring on enough money, it can try to leverage issues such as the trademark of the Żywiec name. Thus, flags that bore the name Żywiec in the trademark style of the brewery appeared on the town square during the pope's visit. However, the town was able to stall the brewery on the issue of trademarking, while at the same time acquiring money from the brewery, so this strategy of passive resistance was standing the town in good stead in the mid-1990s.

Just as the Góral images attract buyers to the beer, the beer attracts people to the Góral. At least a part of the fun in going to a folk festival in Żywiec is buying the beer made there. So, although alternate sponsorships lose product placements for the brewery for publicity purposes, and there might be some shame attached (though I could detect little sign of it among the brewery workers or management), the brewery will certainly continue to profit from its use of the Żywiec name and Góral imagery.

International Exposure, Economic Links, and the Neocapitalists

If the prewar elite class and the Żywiec Brewery are the first two actors, the third is the emerging elite class of neocapitalists, a group that included the mayor, the town council, and local managers of international businesses. The neocapitalists were a group in formation in the mid-1990s—some came from prewar elite families, others emerged onto the local political scene after 1989. This class was attempting to convince itself and others, via a discourse of development that includes various promotional pamphlets, videotapes, and newspaper advertisements, that Żywiec is “modern” and thus able to support foreign capital investments and tourism. The mayor of Żywiec, for example, told me that the extensive repainting and renovations in Żywiec were not just for the purpose of honoring the pope, but also to look good for the international exposure the Holy Father would bring. Several national and international news organizations were covering the papal visit—in the mayor's own words, “the whole world will be watching us on that day”—so people all over the world would

know that it was a great place to be a tourist, to relocate one's business, and to invest. The rondo, he said, was actually to ease the traffic flow through Żywiec and to help all the tourists. Any claims that the rondo was constructed solely for the pope were pure fantasy, according to the mayor. Żywiec is, in fact, on a main road to newly opened border-crossing points with Slovakia and the Czech Republic, and there has been an increase in traffic, which led to the repaving of several roads, installation of traffic lights, and construction of a new road that bypassed the downtown area so that traffic would not be tied up.

The number of tourists who actually stop in Żywiec to enjoy its scenic castles, museums, and hiking and boating venues is small, but the town council and most residents believe that tourism could become a real economic force in Żywiec. For tourists to be attracted to Żywiec, however, they feel that there must be a blend of "old world" charm and folklore with modern tourism facilities. The town council ordered that the roadwork and rondo construction be sped up to complete it in time for the papal visit, so that people around the world would see that Żywiec is pleasant enough for vacationers and developed enough to handle modern needs. I later discovered that the town had also hired a film company to film and edit the papal visit in videotape form, to be available both to residents, through the town hall and local churches, and to tourists at festivals and in town museums. This partnered another promotional videotape about Żywiec made the year before, which was designed to increase tourism and business investment.

Where did the resources come from to do all of this work? Partly from the town budget, but a large donation was made by the brewery. In return, the brewery stipulated, the town was to look more favorably on its request for the trademark rights to the town name (which it still had not received in 1997), and was also to allow product placement—the display of the Żywiec Brewery logo during the papal visit where it would be sure to be broadcast by television crews. The Żywiec pennants given out for people to wave on the main square displayed only the name of the town, but this is also the name of the beer, and the pennants were printed in the stylized manner associated with the brewery's logo. This savvy technique allowed international television exposure for the brewery and looked appropriately patriotic, without causing worries about seeming impious during the papal visit. It also provided television cameras with an "appropriate" blend of folklore (people in Góral outfits, a Góral chorus to entertain the pontiff) and the modern (freshly painted buildings, a newly erected scaffolding for the pope's mass, the Żywiec logo recalling the town's modern industry)

to symbolize the town's links to the past, present development, and vision of the future.

The neocapitalists had the advantage of holding major political positions in town, allowing them to set the stage to show off their version of Żywiec: the modern town with strong international investment. The prewar elite had their own version of what should happen: the papal visit should be a time to show off the unique cultural history of the Żywiec region, which gave them claims to authority in the community. It is interesting that nonelites in town seemed unmoved by the political stagings of either group. After a wave of initial excitement when the visit was announced, people became disenchanted by the demands on time and patience that all the reconstruction, repainting, and rehearsals required. Soon they became bored or antagonized and began to talk to me about the event not in terms of anticipation, but of anger. One woman, who had a daughter celebrating her First Communion that year, was annoyed that she was required to take time off from work to bring her daughter to the festivities, where First Communion celebrants needed to appear in special costumes. The kiosk where another woman worked was moved to a less desirable location, because it was placed exactly where a huge outdoor altar was to be built. Because the kiosk was now out of the hustle and bustle of the main square, she was afraid that it would be shut down after the pope's visit. At a pig-slaughtering I attended shortly before the pope's visit, the construction, road paving, and new rondo for the visit were hot topics of conversation among the adults. As one man exclaimed, with money being spent that the town could not afford, security precautions annoying everyone, and the whole thing being blown out of proportion, "it's just like when the First Secretary [an important communist politician] came to town." Though when I questioned nonelites about why the pope would choose to come to Żywiec, they almost without exception replied that it was probably because he had grown up in Wadowice and was from the Żywiec region, few of the nonelites followed this up with spontaneous remarks about importance of the Góral identity, as the prewar elite did.

THE SPECTER OF THE COLD WAR AND THE TRANSITION FROM SOCIALISM

The reactions of these townspeople need to be understood as rooted in their hopes and fears about their own futures and the futures of their families and the Żywiec community in the particularly unsettled

era referred to as “the transition.” But trying to understand reactions to the papal visit solely in terms of a transition from socialism to capitalism leads to a number of problems. By making socialism our baseline era, we miss out on important social links to the more distant past. Ideologies of transition championed by consultants and policymakers stress the importance of supporting particular kinds of social actors (for example, entrepreneurs) over others (reactionaries or traditionalists), because these actors will help move the transition forward (toward capitalism). This is a rather flat portrayal of social actors, lacking a contextualized understanding of their histories and goals. It also requires a particularly shallow notion of political, economic, and social change to suppose that we know what the endpoint of a transition from socialism will look like, as if a radical break from the past would be either possible or predictable. The privileging of this kind of conception of the transition from socialism is rooted in an outdated paradigm in which the Cold War dominates analysis of Eastern Europe, and it is linked to modernization theories in Western social science.

Anthropologists frequently refer to gatekeeping concepts in discussing the significance of place in constructing theoretical paradigms. Following Arjun Appadurai (1986), a gatekeeping concept is one associated with a given region of the world, which is taken to stand for that region and becomes the only legitimate lens through which to view it. Appadurai outlined the implications for anthropological theory:

From the start, the ethos of anthropology has been driven by the appeal of the small, the simple, the elementary, the face-to-face. In a general way, this drive has had two implications for anthropological theory. The first is that certain forms of sociality (such as kinship), certain forms of exchange (such as gift), certain forms of polity (such as the segmentary state) have been privileged objects of anthropological attention and have constituted the prestige zones of anthropological theory. The second result has been that the anthropology of complex non-Western societies has, till recently, been a second-class citizen in anthropological discourse. This second effect involves a kind of reverse Orientalism, whereby complexity, literacy, historical depth, and structural messiness operate as disqualifications in the struggle of places for a voice in metropolitan theory.

Yet this characterization of the role of complex traditional civilizations in anthropological theory is too simple and conspiratorial. The fact is that the anthropology of complex

civilizations does exist, but in a peculiar form. In this form, a few simple theoretical handles become metonyms and surrogates for the civilization or society as a whole: hierarchy in India, honor-and-shame in the circum-Mediterranean, filial piety in China are all examples of what one might call gatekeeping concepts in anthropological theory, concepts, that is, that seem to limit anthropological theorizing about the place in questions, and that define the quintessential and dominant questions of interest in the region. (1986, 357)

I argue that for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, the primary gatekeeping concept in American social science since World War II has been the Cold War. Some results of this have been an emphasis on politics as the defining object of Eastern European studies and the privileging of political science for the setting of research agendas. The Cold War became the *idée fixe* of thinking on the Eastern Bloc, thereby setting up the notion of the transition as the natural, or essential, object of current social science investigation once the Cold War was perceived to be ending.

This Cold War paradigm led Western social scientists to privilege state-level politics as the main frame through which the Eastern Bloc was viewed, so that the primary subject with which anthropology is concerned, culture, was believed by many to have been wiped clean by that monolith, communism. Thus, class, ethnicity, religion, and other hierarchies of power that would interest anthropological political economists were officially pronounced dead by the Communist Party. However, information about the Eastern Bloc had clear strategic importance, and thus was the bailiwick of many political scientists. One impact of this set of circumstances was that many Eastern Europeanists in anthropology and sociology virtually abrogated responsibility for setting their own research agendas, turning instead to political science and economics (Verdery 1996, 7). Getting past the Cold War paradigm will allow us to more fruitfully explore the realities of present experiences in the Eastern Bloc and will force us to rethink Cold War constructions of history and the relationships between the First, Second, and Third Worlds.

Certainly it is important to think about state politics and economics, which have an enormous impact on everyday life, and many valuable studies concerned with these concepts have shed a great deal of light on what life was like under socialism. Nevertheless, the current prevalence of "transitionology," the study of privatization, national elites, and civil society, eclipses other kinds of subjects in the Eastern Bloc. In the postsocialist era, the current gatekeeping concept for Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union is that of the transi-

tion. Other concepts, such as civil society and nationalism, tend to fall easily under the umbrella of the transition paradigm. As Abraham Brumberg states,

“Transition” is one name of the game. Another is the question, “Will Russia make it”? Both invite trouble, because both are based on dubious propositions: that the current period in post-Soviet history is by definition transient, with a clearly distinguishable point of departure and a discernible time of completion, and that the end of this process is either ‘normality’—that blessed state of prosperous capitalism, democracy and enlightened relations with the outside world—or a backslide into a barbarism even more chilling than that of the past. (1996, 29)

I do not mean to suggest that the former Eastern Bloc is not experiencing change, but rather that the popular and scholarly construction of the transition as a particular type of change with a predetermined outcome has teleological elements that are intricately linked to the construction of the Cold War paradigm. The transition paradigm assumes that the Eastern Bloc will be transformed through the adoption of the free market in exactly the same ways that the Third World was, so that the former centralized economies will soon fit neatly into the capitalist world system, and fifty or more years of socialist history will be a historical fluke with no residual effects. Just as the Cold War was thought to wipe out presocialist history and social structures, so the transition will erase all vestiges of Soviet-era imposition. We need to get away from these gatekeeping concepts, reconsidering not just the current conceptualization of Eastern Europeanist anthropology, but challenging the entire paradigm of the Cold War and how it affected our conceptualization of issues affecting the Eastern Bloc. I would also challenge anthropologists to look at the privileging of the First World–Third World split, because I see this as flowing directly from the Cold War paradigm. Cold War rhetoric drove elimination of the Second World from discussions of the global economy and culture in the First and Third Worlds.

Thus, this project is not concerned with the Transition—the idea that there is a single process occurring in the Eastern Bloc that will move the countries there away from socialist government and economics and toward democracy and capitalism. The Transition, with a capital *T*, does not exist. There is no one process in Eastern Europe, or even in Poland: there are many different processes, many different kinds of changes. There is no inevitability to the process. The reforms that

national politicians and Western advisors have put in place may result in some form of democracy and capitalism, or then again, they may not. As with so many things, it depends on the definitions of the terms, and it depends on where the definer stands in relation to these processes.

Of course, there are many transitions occurring presently in the Eastern Bloc, and 1989 was a watershed year for those transitions. However, this does not mean that every research project needs to be structured by the notion of the Transition, a unidirectional, evolutionary concept in which the beginning point is socialism and the end-point is a capitalist industrial democracy. It does not mean that every research agenda situated in present-day Eastern Europe or the former Soviet Union needs to flow from the standpoint of the political, economic, and cultural changes taking place there, without linking these to other global matters as well.

This project is concerned with class processes and an ethnic identity that predate socialism, were maintained during the socialist era, and continue to be relevant in the postsocialist era. I seek to answer the questions of how class processes are related to the maintenance of the identity, in the past and under current conditions of globalization. I also seek to understand how the various classes, and the community as whole, have been constituted in relation to the nation-state in several historical eras: the feudal era, in which Żywiec belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire; the socialist era, during which Żywiec, like the rest of the Eastern Bloc, was subject to Soviet socialism; and the postsocialist era, in which the Polish state is attempting to integrate into supranational entities such as the European Union and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

CHAPTER OVERVIEWS

The structure of this text is designed to introduce the town of Żywiec and its residents in a way that builds, chapter by chapter, to answer the questions of how people in Żywiec have been responding to political-economic transitions, past and present, socialist and capitalist, and what these responses tell us about the relations of class, identity, community, and nation-state in several different historical periods. I first set the stage with a discussion of the political-economic history of the community vis-à-vis the nation-state and then follow with a history of class structures in general and the elite classes in particular. Next, I explore nonelite, family-level economics and politics and how these are related to the elite classes and community strategies. This

leads to a description of community-level politics and economics in the socialist and postsocialist eras. Each of these pieces contains a theoretical thread that contributes to the whole argument. Finally, I weave these threads together in a discussion and reconceptualization of the intersection of local, national, and global political economy, traditionalism and modernity, and local identity.

In chapter 2, then, I take up the specific history of Żywiec. Drawing on original historical manuscripts from the town, I show the development of Żywiec and its town industries until the end of World War II. I describe the effects of the German occupation during World War II on the town's industry and some of the socialist era changes in the town's geographical size, population, and trades. I consider the questions of how the community has been affected by its relations with the several nation-states that have engulfed it, and where the postsocialist transition is taking the town and townspeople in the contemporary era. Understanding how the Góral regional identity maps onto the Polish national identity requires an understanding of how Góralism has been shaped by the particular political and economic history of this region of Poland, and how Góralism has shaped the response of Góral to colonizing forces and other national identities in the past. Chapter 2 thus explores the interaction of Góralism with feudal colonial powers, and the continuing moral economy of Góralism in socialist Poland. I show how town businesses grew up amidst a Góral community ethos, and changed from feudal to small-scale capitalist to socialist within that ethos. The introduction of large-scale international capitalism in Żywiec is breaking larger enterprises away from the community and interfering with small, community-based businesses, a point I take up again in chapter 4.

Chapter 3 covers the history of the changing social structure of power in Żywiec, describing its class structure in the present era and previous eras. It shows how members and descendants of members of prewar power networks have been using the regional-ethnic identity of Góralism as a currency of authority under socialism and are attempting to continue this strategy of traditionalism in the postsocialist era. They are attempting to recreate the prewar authoritarian social power structure and, further, parlay their positions within this affectual authority structure into "modern," bureaucratic positions. Historically, I also explore the influences of the former Communist Party and the Solidarity movement in Żywiec, showing how members of these organizations have been absorbed into the new power structure. In the postsocialist era, I analyze the emergence of a new elite class, the neocapitalists, who are primarily the go-betweens and beneficiaries of

international capitalist investments in Żywiec. This new elite class is in direct competition with the prewar elite, in the sense of both moral authority in the community and access to economic resources. I consider the concepts of traditionalism and modernity as cultural idioms through which these two elite classes, prewar elites and neocapitalists, maneuver and manipulate to characterize themselves, through various arguments, as the “true” inheritors of authority in Żywiec. This chapter focuses on the power structure of the upper class in Żywiec and is a counterpart to chapter 4, which discusses nonelite individual and family strategies without consideration of community-level power relations.

Chapter 4 explores the way in which economic strategizing for nonelite individuals, of peasant and worker classes, depends on family strategies and networks and is influenced by a felt sense of Góralism that is distinct from the folklorized Góral ideology used by both of the elite classes in Żywiec. This is a continuation of processes that were at work during the feudal and socialist eras in Poland generally, and Żywiec specifically, and continue today. I look at the differential effects of age, gender, class, and cultural and material rootedness in the region on possible economic strategies and outcomes. Different skills and differential access to bases of power result in differences for individuals and families within Żywiec. However, the culture of place that connects nonelite Góral inhabitants in a regional identity differentiates them broadly from urban residents and the elite classes in the community, who have greater economic capital and greater social and cultural capital, which can be used in political and economic ways. In this chapter, I also consider the instrumental use of Góral identity within family networks in justifying adaptive strategies, as well as arguments over maintaining or breaking the links of family traditions.

In chapter 5, I look at Żywiec’s community-level strategies of economic and political responses to the national-level economic and political policies of transformation, primarily in the postsocialist era, but in part in contrast to those of the socialist era. Within the community, these transformations include changes in town management, struggles between the town and various businesses, and the budding tourist industry. In nearly all of these situations, the players (of all classes) invoke various ideas of Góral ethnic regionalism to bolster their positions. The ideological and financial conflicts between the town and the brewery, and the brewery and the metal factory, are explored in depth to show the ramifications of transnational capital on regional identity and resulting strategies of resistance. Between the community and the nation-state, the transformations involve control over the flows of labor and resources, and in the postsocialist era, they also include

globalizing strategies that involve sidestepping national linkages and forming ties with other communities internationally.

In chapter 6, I return to the day of the pope's visit to reconsider the event in terms of the larger questions of class and identity, community and nation that have been raised in this project. The articulations of traditionalism and modernity in Żywiec, and in the former Eastern Bloc in general, are shown to be similar in their logics to those occurring in Western Europe, and indeed to some extent in the rest of the "globalized" world. I discuss the supranational, national, and regional processes that problematize the nation-state as an analytical category in Europe, and deeply affected the relation between subnational and transnational identities and the nation-state in the 1990s. I look at regionalism, nationalism, and transnationalism as responses to economic, political, and cultural change. In doing so, I bring together various levels of discussion about families, business enterprises, and communities to discuss strategic adaptations to the changing economic, political, and social environment. Returning to the main thesis of the book, I discuss how globalization and local identity interact to form a primary battleground for claims to authority, from which come political and economic responses to the many changes in Poland today.

"BAD TIME FOR DEMOKRACY":
WRITING ABOUT A "TRANSITION" IN PROGRESS

Writing and conducting research about responses to broad political and economic change turned out in some ways to be as muddled a process as the "Transition" itself—in terms of both lived experience and theoretical modeling. Every day in Żywiec, I received new information, some of which contradicted information I had previously heard or approaches I had tried. Everyday I attempted to fit this in with my changing views—of Góral life, of the consequences of national policy, of something seemingly as simple as buying bread or what kind of train ticket to buy to get to Prague for vacation. Sometimes, I got so frustrated with the onslaught of change that I attempted to go back to old behavioral patterns or theories, only to be forcefully reminded that they didn't work anymore. At other times, I made confident plans based on the new order, only to find that it hadn't penetrated nearly as deeply as I thought. In the end, I managed to come through somehow, for better or worse. This basic pattern, of course, is more or less the same for everyone in every society today. The difference in Eastern Europe

post-1989 is that the changes are so widespread; so thoroughgoing, so loved, hated, craved, and feared—brought on by themselves and now out of control. Historian and sociologist Jadwiga Staniszkis told us in 1984 that the Solidarity movement was proposing a “self-limiting revolution,” which would result in changes only to bring a “socialism with a human face.” In 1995, it felt to me, and to many others with whom I spoke, as though this self-limiting revolution had fed on itself and now appeared to be a limitless revolution, an uncontrollable monster rampaging through the countryside with endless demands.

The heading of this section, “Bad Time for Democracy,” is taken from graffiti scrawled across a wall on a building in the heart of Żywiec when I was living there in 1994–95. It caught my eye among the other graffiti because “bad time for democracy” was painted in English (and misspelled). Underneath it, in a different color of paint, someone had declared in Polish, “I don’t understand.” As if to clarify, yet another respondent demanded, “Write in Polish!” This exchange was a daily sight for me from autumn 1994 until late spring 1995, when it was painted over to prepare the town for tourist season and the pope’s visit in particular. This tragicomic interchange of social analysis, pleas for understanding, and whitewashing for outsiders could hardly escape me as an allegory of daily life during the transition. I interpreted this to mean that the writer, like many Poles with whom I spoke, took a dim view of the economic changes in Poland, and believed that the political changes did not and would not result in democracy.

The initial euphoria of 1989, felt by many people in Central and Eastern Europe as well as observers in the West, soon faded as the realities of life in transition sank in. Those who thought that they had supported the “add free market and stir” approach to decentralizing economic and political power found that this was not as simple as it seemed. A splintering into dozens of political groups occurred, where previously there had seemed to be such a clear division between the Communists and the opposition (Solidarity) umbrella organization. Workers, peasants, national and local politicians, and intellectuals discovered that they had very different expectations about how the dismantling of communism and the putting in place of market and democratic institutions should proceed. This has resulted in conflict and disappointments on most sides, and affluence and hope for a very few.

In this study, I try to portray the situations as they were explained to me by people in Żywiec and as I experienced them myself from the perspective of someone living in Żywiec. I sought to interview Żywiec residents from a variety of perspectives—members of

different classes, women, men, local politicians, young, old, workers, and managers. I interviewed some people who had left Żywiec to live in other places, those who were unemployed or partially employed, and those who owned businesses. Some people identified very strongly with the Góral label, some did not. I do not claim to represent in any comprehensive way the points of view of national-level politicians or advisors, urban residents, Góral in other regions (such as Zakopane, a neighboring region, or Slovakian Góral), or foreign investors.

Nevertheless, this study is written to be read primarily by academics—in Poland, in the United States, and elsewhere. I hope that I can do justice to the many interviews with which I was gifted, and I hope that Żywiec residents who read this can recognize themselves and their descriptions of their lives, despite the academic analysis. In discussions of anthropological methods, the question often arises whether the anthropologist, as outsider, can see certain aspects of a phenomenon more clearly than those who are inside the culture, or whether we merely distort our findings to fit our analyses. A well-off, highly educated, widely traveled Żywiec resident might read my study and think, “But I’m not a Góral! That’s a part of the past.” No culture is entirely the same for all participants. However, the frequent and wide-ranging appeals to Góral ideology and imagery that I witnessed during my year in Żywiec seemed to me to be based in some solid notion of cultural meaning, was understood by members of the community, and frequently accomplished the task at hand. The fact that things got done when Góralism was invoked is a strong argument for me that Góralism is alive and well in Żywiec, whether in ties to folklorized images or in felt understandings.

There is a difference, of course, between community ideals of Góralism, which grow and change with the times, and the frozen, folkloristic idea of the “real” Góral, which some people have in mind if asked the question, “Are you a Góral?” I attempt to explain both aspects of the problem in this study and to show how they are both relevant to the lives of current Żywiec residents. Likewise, I would like to stress that there is certainly an expressive, affective, noninstrumental aspect to this identity—people do not appeal to Góralism merely to get things done, but also because it is personally and historically meaningful to them.

The community of Żywiec has survived many upheavals over the centuries. The much vaunted fall of communism is no different from any of the others, in that people pick up the pieces and move on. This project is about moving on. In the same sense that Chekhov’s

play *The Three Sisters* is not about wanting to go to Moscow, but about living while not going to Moscow, this project is not about the postsocialist transition, but about living while dealing with the many transitions that Żywiecers have experienced.