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**Author:** Kazimiera Wódz

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# Workers' Communities of Upper Silesia in the Face of Restructuring Process

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**Kazimiera Wódz**

*University of Silesia  
Katowice*

## 1. Introduction

The political and socio-economic transformation occurring in Poland from 1989 brought inevitable structural changes in national and regional economy. Katowice Voivodship with the large Upper Silesian Industrial Basin located in the centre is an area of extreme concentration of traditional especially coal-mining, iron and steel industry with their history coming back to the beginning of the 19th century. The transition from the state-owned enterprises to the private ones going rather quickly in commerce, banking, services is extremely difficult in the heavy industry where still prevail the big state enterprises.

In 1996 64% of the active work-force in the region were employed in the public sector. (*Statistical Yearbook of the Katowice Voivodship*, 1997.) The industrial character of the region could be illustrated by the fact that in 1996 51.1% of the working population were employed in the industry, in this group 44.4% were those employed in the coal-mining industry and 12.4% in steel industry (after the *Statistical Yearbook of the Katowice Voivodship*, 1997). The ongoing changes in regional economy – growing importance of private investments in automobile industry (FIAT in Tychy, General Motors in Gliwice, Isuzu – also in Tychy) machinery, chemistry, alimentation although being an important factor of restructuring process have had until now limited impact on the local labour market and did not change radically the industrial shape of this region.

This is an area which is particular in many respects, namely due to its urbanization indicators (86.6%) which are the highest in Poland, with unparalleled concentration of traditional branches of heavy industry, burdensome for the environment, mainly mining industry (97% of pit-coal is dug here, along with 100% of zinc and lead), metallurgy (53% of the total production of steel), power engineering (23% of the total production of electricity in Poland), chemical industry. The Katowice

Province (Voivodship), which constitutes but 2.1% of the total territory of Poland, is inhabited by 4 million people (10.5% of the total number of inhabitants of Poland) of which more than half (2.3 million) inhabit the Katowice agglomeration, which is the biggest concentration of towns in Poland, constituting of 15 independent cities and towns. Those towns have been established and developed mainly thanks to the industrial growth of the region, in particular the raw materials present in the region, which have been exploited since mid-19th century. This industrial heritage left its characteristic impress not only on the appearance of the towns making up the agglomeration, which any naked eye can see, but also on the social structure of that area, in which the percentage of university graduates is below the Polish average (7% to 9%), and where the percentage of industry workers, until 1989, exceeded 53% of all such workers in Poland, while a few years later – in 1995 – that number was reduced to 43% (*Województwo katowickie '96:52*). The clear domination of traditional branches of industry also determined the specific requirements of the local labour market which mainly demanded physical labour for which no qualifications or low qualifications were sufficient. After 1989 there have been some changes in this respect, yet people of low education still prevail among the active labour force (cf. Table 1).

The structural transformations connected with the political transformation in Poland proved particularly difficult in case of the Katowice Province, both due to

Table 1

**The level of education in active labour force in the province (1995)**

Level of education	% of employed people
University education	9.9%
College professional education	29.0%
Secondary education	7.0%
Elementary technical education	43.8%
Elementary education	10.5%

Source: *Katowice Voivodship '96. Report on Social Development*, 1996: 56.

the industry present here, and due to the strong resistance of trade unions, which were supported by employees of big coal-mines and steel works. The attempts of making the mining sector enter free market economy, undertaken in the years 1990–1991, resulted in a catastrophic indebtedness of mines. 1992 saw the first serious attempts of reforming that branch, in which several mines were planned to be closed down, the output was to be gradually reduced, mines were to be grouped into syndicates/holdings, and privatization was planned for the enterprises supporting mining and providing services for it, including also the well-developed social services (programme prepared by the State Agency for Pit-Coal). All those plans met with radically negative response from trade unions, expressed in protests, industrial actions, pickets and occupation of government buildings. Despite the strong resis-

tance from miners, some 141 thousand employees in the pit-coal mining industry, were made redundant in the years 1989–1995 (data after: *Górnictwo węgla kamiennego [Pit-Coal Mining]*, 1996: 17 and Mitreǵa, 1996: 77). For the sake of comparison, it is worth pointing out that until the year 1992, the coal-mines of the Katowice Province employed some 318 thousand people (Nowak, Sobula and Tausz, 1994: 13). Various scenarios for the restructuring of employment in the coal-mining industry estimate the necessary reduction of some further 80 thousand or more jobs by the year 2000. The assumptions had it that the cutting of jobs was to take place in a controlled way, mainly through the so-called natural dismissals (retirements, disability pensions) and paid holidays for miners or early retirement programmes, or – for mines to be closed down (in the Katowice Province that applies to four mines at present, plus several others within the next ten years) – moving employees to other mines or other industries.<sup>1</sup> As a matter of fact, the possibilities of employing outside the mining industry the surplus labour force laid off by mines are not sufficient, no wonder then that miners are so afraid of further restructuring in the sector. Similar phenomena, although on an incomparably smaller scale, can be observed in metallurgy, where the planned cuts of jobs may embrace some several thousand or even tens of thousands (Bartoszek and Gruszczyński, 1997: 190). The additional element that unfavourably influences the labour market is the fact that people with lowest qualifications, having small chances for finding another job, are made redundant first (cf. Table 2).

The level of unemployment in the Katowice Province is fairly below the Polish average, in 1995 it amounted to 9.1% (national average – 14.9%), while in 1996 it

Table 2

**The unemployed in the Katowice Province by the level of education,  
in % of the total number of unemployed**

Level of education	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
University education	2.9	2.5	1.7	1.5	1.4
College professional education	23.7	22.4	21.3	21.0	22.5
Secondary education	8.2	8.2	7.6	7.9	8.8
Elementary technical education	35.6	36.9	38.2	38.3	38.1
Elementary education	29.6	30.0	31.2	31.3	29.2

Source: *The Katowice Province '96. Report on Social Development*, 1996: 59.

dropped to 8.4% (national average – 11.5%), whereas in figures one deals with enormous amounts of people (at the end of 1996 the regional labour offices had 138,658 people in their registers). Women clearly prevail among the unemployed in the Katowice Province (in 1995 – 68.9% of all unemployed, in 1996 – 71.6%).

<sup>1</sup> In 1998 new government presented a modified programme of the restructuring of the coal-mine sector, introducing different new solutions (for example an allowance equal to 20 medium-incomes for those who decide to leave out voluntarily their jobs). There is still too early to evaluate the efficiency of these regulations.

Table 3

## The clients of welfare centres located in the Katowice Province, years 1993–1994, by sex

Sex	1993		1994	
	total	%	total	%
<b>Female</b>				
18–60 years	97,659		91,398	
over 60 years	23,711		22,750	
Total	121,370	65	114,148	67
<b>Male</b>				
18–60 years	55,198		44,818	
over 60 years	10,755		10,363	
Total	65,953	35	55,181	33
Gross total	18,7323	100	169,329	100

Source: Data from WZPS [Regional Welfare Office] in Katowice, annual report.

This apparently striking fact becomes comprehensible when we make it clear that the consequences of restructuring in the mining industry first influenced the non-productive superstructure of mines, including social services, where most of the employees were women. Also the statistical data illustrating the distribution of clients of welfare centres situated in the Katowice Province between the sexes (Table 3) reveal that the situation of women gets worse.

That women are overrepresented in the population of the unemployed surely testifies to their difficult situation, which is due to the specificity of the local labour market, unfavourable for women. Women who lose their jobs, regardless the qualifications they possess, have it harder to find a new one (for men the difficulty is faced mainly by those who have no qualifications), that is why after they lose the privilege of obtaining unemployment benefit they become clients of welfare more often. The situation of single mothers proves particularly dramatic, as they get no support from the family and have limited access to protective and educational institutions. Besides them, the female clients of welfare in the Katowice Province are mothers of numerous families, in which the income generated by the husband is not sufficient to maintain the family. More often than not, they are also families of the unemployed, who lost their unemployment benefit. The scale of pauperisation among the inhabitants of the Katowice Province, who still come out positively in comparisons regarding the average salary (in 1995 the average salary in the Katowice Province amounted to PLN 707.73, while the national average was PLN 547.44), can be illustrated by the following comparison: in 1995 8% of the total number of welfare clients in Poland were from the Katowice Province, while the inhabitants of the province amount to nearly 10% of the total population of Poland (*Katowice Province* '96: 103). It is highly probable that further restructuring of heavy industry will result in the increase in the number of families that use various forms of aid. One should remember at the same time that restructuring of coal-mining will directly or indirectly concern over half the population of the province, both miners and their families, often for

generations having that professional tradition, as well as people employed in enterprises and institutions working for the mining industry. In some municipalities (Polish: *gmina*) the level of employment in coal-mines amounts to between 30% and over 50% of the total employment in national economy (e.g. Jastrzębie Zdrój, Piekary Śląskie, Tychy, Wodzisław Śląski, Ruda Śląska, Czeladź, Zabrze) (Nowak et al., 1994: 4–6). This determines the scale of social problems with which particular local communities will have to cope.

An additional source of tensions and social conflicts in the Katowice Province (and, more broadly, in Upper Silesia) are the complicated nationality and population relations in that region. Those problems were discussed more widely elsewhere (cf. e.g. Wódz (ed.), 1993, 1995a, 1995b). Here we will restrict ourselves to indicating the most basic determinants of the complex situation. They mainly derive from the big migrations of large groups of people from the territories that before World War II belonged to Eastern Poland, to the so-called Regained Territories [*Ziemie Odzyskane*] which until 1939 (except for a small portion of the territory of the Katowice Province, adjudged to Poland in 1922) (Davies, 1986: 116) had been an integral part of Germany. After World War II, which Nazi Germany lost, as a result of the so-called verification of nationalities, hundreds of thousands of Silesians of German origin left, in dramatic circumstances, Upper Silesia. Many of them, suspected of pro-Nazi attitudes, ended up in labour camps in the Soviet Union. Many Silesian families that had connections with the Germans, were humiliated and had to suffer in transition camps, were persecuted and expropriated. The Silesians who constitute a specific ethnic group with its own distinctly specific culture that reconciled elements of Polish ethnicity with strong influences of German as well as Czech and Moravian culture, found themselves in Upper Silesia after World War II as second class citizens, who could not be trusted by the “new” authorities. All those events branded the relations between the natives and the newcomers from other regions of Poland, including also the neighbouring Dąbrowskie Basin [*Zagłębie Dąbrowskie*] which together with the industrial part of Upper Silesia constituted the Katowice Province, and which by traditionally conservative Silesians was perceived as the bulwark of leftism and source of personnel for the communist authorities. The antagonism between Silesia and *Zagłębie* were also rooted elsewhere, a vital role was played here by the experiences under Nazi occupation, which were particularly dramatic in *Zagłębie Dąbrowskie*, with a high percentage of Jewish population that was brutally exterminated by the Nazis. Silesians were treated by the occupants *en masse* as Germans, whose nationality awareness was not fully formed (in Upper Silesia during World War II *Volkliste* was obligatory (Davies, 1986: 69) enjoyed an *Ersatz* of normality which was unattainable for others, while many Poles and Jews remembered them as opportunists and traitors. This simplified and unfair picture of Silesians-renegades was strengthened by the fact that Silesians were drafted to German army (Wehrmacht) and worked in lower administration. Those facts negatively influenced the situation of Silesians after the war, for sure.

Throughout the post-war period, yet intermittently, Silesians took advantage of the German legal regulations, which concerned the issue of citizenship of people

born in the territories of former Deutsches Reich, emigrating to Germany. In the 1950s, 1970s and 1980s, a few hundred thousand inhabitants of the Katowice Province left for Germany, under the auspices of the “reunification of families” (*Wiedervereinigung*) campaign. Those who remained were gradually pushed to the margin of social life, locked in their closed family-neighbourhood circles, with no possibility of wider participation in public life. Children brought up in traditional Silesian families, using the Silesian dialect on everyday basis, often felt discriminated at school, where the norm was the literary Polish, lost heart for further education due to failures at school, contenting themselves with elementary professional/technical education. As a result, among the youngsters from Silesian families in the Katowice Province, the processes of simple reproduction of professional and social position clearly prevailed over the processes of social rise. The industrial part of Upper Silesia, as well as Zagłębie Dąbrowskie [Dąbrowskie Basin], starting from the 1950s, were the place of intense migration of people from villages and small towns almost all over Poland; those people were recruited to work in industry, and were promised good pay, flats and social rise. The model of extensive industrialization, imposed by the communist regime, and based mainly on heavy industry, reduced the Katowice Province and the Upper-Silesian Industrial Region (GOP) to performing the role of providing raw materials and energy for the entire country, thus strengthening the specific requirements of the regional labour market for many years, with the dominating demand for physical labour requiring low qualifications. The regional education system, falling into line with the above, got dominated by professional/technical training and education, where the focus was to educate specialists for very specific branches of industry only. It would not be hard to guess that in the new situation that emerged, those schools were doomed to produce juvenile unemployed, able to find employment only in coal-mines or steel works. The situation remained like that until 1990, when first steps were undertaken to change the structure of regional education. In the years 1990–1995, the number of pupils attending elementary technical schools diminished by as much as 20%, whereas the total number of students in schools increased in the same time (from 47.6% to 63.0% quoted after the *Katowice Province 96'*, op. cit.: 107).

## **2. Miners in the presence of the restructuring. Note of the assumptions and methodology of the research**

Without any doubts the restructuring of Katowice region is unavoidable but due to its monocultural industrial character the restructuring of this region will be of

particular difficulty. First of all because restructuring has already brought and will bring for thousands of workers the menace of unemployment, the necessity of professional requalifications caused by the decrease of the workplaces in heavy industry, increasing spatial mobility, changing everyday habits and customs. The industrial restructuring understood as a social process can not, of course be reduced to purely "...technical changes, production reorganisation, social relocation and product transformation..." (Bagguley et al., 1990: 212). The workers – participants in the economic restructuring "are conscious agents, located indeterminate social positions and institutions, and with biographies, who, consequently – contrary to the means by which management calculate their worth – do not arrive in the workplace as the pure labour power. Labour brings with it a baggage of attributes acquired as an outcome of the general process of social reproduction – memories of struggle, skills and expertise, aspirations for autonomy, gendered identities, social obligations... political ideologies and organisational capacities" (Bagguley et al. 1990). In other words – from sociological point of view – either the economic restructuring could be beneficial or generating social problems depend in large extent on the adaptational capacity of the concerned populations to the professional and intellectual requirement imposed by the transformations and of course on the extent of the protective policy of the state, regional, local level, diminishing the negative effects of the structural changes. Until now such a complex policy programmes does not exist, however the Programme of Restructuring of the Coal-Mine Sector accepted by the Polish cabinet in 1998 contains an important social dimension.

The question of crucial importance for the future of Upper Silesian Industrial Area is how the traditional workers communities of this region will react to this situation. More precisely – this question is about if the cultural and social capital (Coleman, 1990: 300–321) of these communities, accumulated by the generations will facilitate or not the new form of productive and social activity, the creation of new types of personalities, more rational and independent, ready to undertake new types of carrier let it be educational or professional. Taking into consideration that the cultural and social identity Katowice Province was determined by the industrial heritage of more than a century, it seems to be quite justified to ask how the specific cultural traditions of Upper Silesian workers communities, demonstrated in cultivating the traditions of profession, strong and expanded family and neighbour ties, attachment to the traditional customs, limited social and spatial mobility will affect the ways to confront the challenges of restructuring process. Will these traditions and attitudes be an obstacle in the process of economic modernization of this region or – an advantage?

Looking for the answer to these questions, the group of researches directed by the author undertook in 1994 a research project, sponsored by the Committee of Scientific Research (Grant No. IP109 036 06) entitled: "The Process of

Marginalisation of the Traditional Workers Communities of Upper Silesia".<sup>2</sup> The aim of this study was to diagnose the state of mind of this segment of the coal-mine workers – the ground workers who are doing the less qualified, physically exhaustive and dangerous work in the coal-mines. There were many reasons for choosing this group as a subject of the study. The most important was that as numerous examples from Western Europe and the USA show – the global economic restructuring and the transition from industrial to post-industrial economy implied the decrease of the number of working places in traditional industries like mining, metallurgy, textile and forced the structural downward mobility of many traditional workers communities into the “new lower classes (underclass)” (Lash, 1994: 157).

It is more than sure that the less qualified segments of working class will be the most vulnerable to the negative consequences of the restructuring process, resulting in growing unemployment or structural changes in labour market.

As we stated above the presented study was aimed at the description and explanation of the effects of the specific cultural traditions of workers communities of Upper Silesia will have on their adaptation capacities. There is no enough space here for the detailed presentation of the theoretical and methodological assumption of the project. Let us just state that we described these capacities using some psychosocial characteristics from Alex Inkeles' theoretical model of “individual modernity” (Inkeles, 1983 – achievement motivation, educational and occupational aspirations, openness to the new information and new experiences, dignity, universalism, planning/time orientation, optimism (Inkeles, 1983: 35). We have also examined the structure of value-system of the surveyed group (with special emphasis of the workers' group ethos), political attitudes, evaluation of the different dimensions of the political and economic transformation in Poland, the sense of regional and local identifications, and selectively chosen items from the scales of ethnocentrism, authoritarianism and helplessness.

Discussing the issue of the influence of the traditional culture of the workers' communities of Upper Silesia, we can not neglect the essential cultural heterogeneity of the regional population. Generally, it can be divided between autochthons and immigrants, however the group of autochthons is also internally diversified between the Silesians and Zagłębie Dąbrowskie people, living from at least three generations in their communities. We decided to include in our studies those three culturally different groups – the native Silesians, the Zagłębian and the after II World War immigrants to the area.

The participation of these three groups allowed to identify the relationship between cultural features linked to the regional affiliation with the social-cultural features of the industrial working class as such. The research was carried out in

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<sup>2</sup> The complete report from this research has been prepared by: Krystyna Faliszek, Iwona Gliniecka, Krzysztof Łęcki, Krzysztof Stadler and Kazimiera Wódcz. The shortened version of report, prepared by K. Faliszek, K. Łęcki, K. Stadler, K. Wódcz has been published in 1997 by UNDP (“Programme of Sustainable Development of Katowice Voivodship”). The following part of this paper is based in large extent on this material.

1995 in five cities of the Katowice District – three in Upper Silesian part (Katowice, Mysłowice, Siemianowice), two – in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie. 600 ground workers from seven coal-mines have been interviewed by large questionnaire. Finally 450 cases have been analysed, 150 from each group described above (Silesians, Zagłębian, Immigrants).

The socio-demographic characteristic of the examined group is presented in Figs. 1–8.<sup>3</sup> Nearly half of the respondents were between their forty or thirty years old, nearly one third – between thirty or twenty years old (Fig. 1). Majority finished their education at the level of vocational school (Fig. 2) working actually as the skilled miners, more precisely speaking – very narrowly skilled ground workers (Fig. 3). Greatest majority of respondents were married (Fig. 4). More than one third of their wives have the full-time job, however one third have never worked outside home (Fig. 5). The typical respondent's household is composed by the parents and two children or one child but the families with three children are not an exception (Fig. 6). According to the respondents' declarations, their family monthly income in 1995 was above the average salary in the region (Fig. 7) and largely above the average salary for the whole country but we should keep in mind that this money must be divided into at least four numbers of the workers' households. However, the miners' are rather well equipped with the household goods, TV and VCR sets, cars and PC's (Fig. 8) – this is a remainder of the passed prosperous years of the end of real socialism when the coal-miners salaries were really very high and this group was beneficent of special regulations (the so-called miners' booklets) giving them right to buy attractive goods in the so-called miners shops (it was at the period of general shortage of the consumer goods in Poland!). This kind of privileges, like many other forms of direct and indirect supplementary benefits for coal-mine workers, have been suppressed after 1989.

### **3. Psychosocial portrait of the workers**

#### **Results of the survey**

The sense of regional identity is one of the most important features taken into consideration in our study. As we described above, the respondents represented three major groups differentiated by their regional origins (Silesians, Zagłębian and Immigrants). It is interesting to see how this regional background is reflected in the respondents self definitions. More than half of them define themselves first of all as "Polish", it is the case of the greater majority of the immigrants, then Zagłębian and the less for the Silesians. The region as a frame of reference seems to be of

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<sup>3</sup> Figs. 1–29 are inserted in an appendix at the end of this article.

greatest importance for the Silesians and far less for Zagłębian, the immigrants more frequently than the others perceive themselves as “workers” (Fig. 9) (statistical value of those and others differences was measured by *chi-square*,  $p < 0.05$ ). We can conclude that the sense of social identity defined regionally is characteristic mainly for the respondents coming from Silesia. This strong regional identification of Silesians is associated with a relatively higher than in the case of Zagłębian evaluation of Silesia in comparison with other regions of Poland. The immigrants’ regional identification feeling is almost non-existent (Figs. 10 and 11). Despite these differences there is a consensus among the respondents that the inhabitants of the Katowice District (Voivodship) have equal life opportunities indifferently from their origin (Fig. 12). Looking at the group importance of the different community, we must note that region comes at the third position after nation and the state (Table 4). More than one third of the respondents (also a small part of non-Silesians) know and use in everyday life the regional Silesian dialect (Fig. 13).

Table 4

**The importance of belonging to particular community**

Community	Rank
Nation	1.58
A country state	1.66
Region	1.95
Global community	1.97
Town	2.04
Professional group	2.10
Europe	2.22
Central Europe	2.33
Fellow religionists	2.82

State which of the listed below communities is important to you as a group of belonging?

1 – the most important

5 – the least important

The ethnic or national differentiation of the regional community is not treated by the majority of respondents as a significant source of potential conflicts (Fig. 14). However, quite big proportion of the examined express the feeling of insecurity, this is especially true for the Zagłębian (Fig. 15).

The identification with region and regional culture implies in the consciousness of many inhabitants of Upper Silesia the identification with the ethos of the hard work. A majority of the respondents are convinced that the hard, exhaustive and endangering work should be better paid than other job (Fig. 16) but at the same time they are aware that their profession gets very low respect in the Polish society (Table 5). People’s respect is among the most important values, after family happiness, quiet life, welfare, before the peace in the country and interesting job indicated by the workers (Fig. 17). In their work they appreciate first of all the human relations and their personal professional status than the respect associated still in

Table 5

## The respect earned by specific professions in Poland

Profession	Rank
A physician	2.71
A manager of state-owned company	3.55
An owner of a private business	4.23
A teacher	4.67
A university professor	4.71
A clerk	5.42
A policeman	5.95
A miner	7.24
A builder	7.81
A shop assistant	8.60

Which profession gets highest and lowest respect in the Polish society?

1 – the highest respect

10 – the lowest respect

their families and communities with the profession of coal-miner. The wages as a source of job satisfaction was mentioned by a minority, very few of the respondents believe that their profession offers them a good prospect for the future (Fig. 18). The workers' attitudes towards the ongoing social and economic changes are clearly expressed in the answers to question concerning the transformation of the regional industry profile and the role of the state in providing the social assistance for the unemployed people. Half of the respondents believe that there is a possibility to reshape the existing industry, or agree that only the out of date plants should go under liquidation but others should be reformed. The conviction that regional industrial structure should be completely changed is an exception (Fig. 19). At the same time the majority of respondents agree with the statement that it is a duty of the state to take care on the poor and unemployed people (Fig. 20). The dominant feature of the psychosocial profile of the respondents is the strive for stability and quiet, peaceful life, which is more important than earning money (Fig. 21). The feeling of helplessness is very high, once again especially among the Zagłębian (Fig. 22), this could be explained partly as the reaction to the fact that the first closures of the coal-mines after 1989 started in Zagłębie Dąbrowskie. The later group manifests relatively stronger authoritarianism (Fig. 23) and is more than two other groups eager to describe their political views as "leftists" (Fig. 24) which means first of all the acceptance of the state intervention in economy and extended system of social protection. The political convictions of the examined workers have no direct connection with the political activity – they are not affiliated with any political party, however the majority of them (67.3%) declare the membership in trade unions and participation in strikes (82.6%). Weak participation in the last local elections (54.2% did not vote) confirm their general political passivity. More than half of

the surveyed (60.9%) accept the statement that it is very hard nowadays to rely upon anybody and that the matters in the Katowice District are going in bad directions (52.8%).

The orientation to reproduction of the *status quo* is clearly manifested in the declarations of the coal-miners concerning their plans for the future 10 years. One third of them have definitely no idea of what will happen with them in ten years (30.9%), the expectations of many are limited to the simple fact of going to retirement (43.6%), important group (17.6%) believe to be able to continue the professional activity as coal-workers. More than half (55.6%) agree with the opinion that it is not good to do something in different way than the former generations and believe that the changes are worse than the continuation (63%) and that people who do not accept the usual way of doing are most often the trouble-makers (69.8%).

Although for majority of the examined workers the possibility of losing the job seems to be still rather an abstraction more than one third of them are eager to launch their own business and almost one fifth would do it with a support of their family and friends (Fig. 25). The workers are rather tolerant with regards to the possibility to start a professional career by the woman, however, only one third of the respondents accept the view that she is absolutely free to do it as she wishes (Fig. 26). The predominant attitude to the children could be described as the readiness to sacrifice the parents' life for the best of their children (Fig. 27). The workers understand that the future of their children depends mainly on their education and they declare their willingness to spend great amount of money for this (Fig. 28). If asked more precisely about the kind of investments in the education of their children (e.g. the additional activities like foreign languages courses) they are not so positive – 44.9 state that they do not spend the money for such kind of things. At the same time they give to the children the right to make the choice of their profession according to their own interests (Fig. 29). For the majority of workers (73.3%) life experience is more important than knowledge learned from the books.

## 4. Discussion

The results presented above have been chosen as an illustration from a large empirical material gathered by the deepened interviews with 450 ground coal-workers of Upper Silesian Industrial Region, a part of Katowice District. The analytical procedures made by the use of SPSS gave us the possibility to draw some general conclusions concerning the relationship between the social and cultural characteristics of the respondents, like level of education, family and professional traditions, values systems, social and regional identities, political preferences with the personal characteristics of examined workers, including the feeling of economic and social

degradation, uncertainty and anxiety, helplessness, lack of prospective thinking, educational and occupational aspirations, tolerance, unwillingness to any changes, authoritarianism, ethnocentrism. Briefly speaking, the results of the survey presented above show that the majority of examined workers are not prepared to the ongoing and future changes in regional economy. The miners practically ignore the real dimension of the economic restructuring and have very poor knowledge about the social policy measures already undertaken by the state.

The respondents reveal more or less similar form of attachment to the traditional values associated with family, religion, work (particularly physical work) and the tendency to continue their style of life especially as far as their professional career is concerned. The examined workers generally accept those political and economic consequences of transformation which do not require from them the active participation. It means that they either reject the social costs of economic transformation or do not want to bear those costs.

The strong attachment to the local community is quite evident in the whole examined population but the symbolic aspect of that attachment is particularly valued by the Silesians. The Silesians not only differ from others in their regional affiliation but also in the importance they assign to their kins' and neighbours' relationship. The predominant attitudes we could observe in the Silesian's respondents were: orientation to the reproduction rather than changes, weaker than in other groups achievement motivation, low level of educational aspirations, unwillingness to long-run planning. Those factors could support the hypothesis of the negative impact of the strong attachment to the local community for the formation of the individualistic entrepreneurial attitudes and consequently impede the adaptation to the structural changes of the regional economy. As the immigrant respondents are most socially mobile, we may conclude that the orientation to the local community and rootedness in the neighbour/family relationship could have a clustering effect, and consequently facilitate in general (either of Silesians as of Zagłębian) the transmission of the basic element of the social and cultural capital to the younger generations. Strong family ties, norms of reciprocity, mutual trust and solidarity between the members of professional community all these could be considered as the elements of social capital which could be a source of social support for the communities facing the shock of the transformation. In fact, the Silesian workers who are the most integrated to the local culture do not reveal so much as the others the menace of degradation and helplessness, they feel more secure and optimistic about their future, they also more easily accept the ongoing changes. At the same time they are among those less prepared for the transformation due to their attitudes towards education and professional career-oriented rather to reproduction than to change, even if they realise that this is not a solution for their children.

The two other groups of workers, Zagłębian and Immigrants are not so much attached to the regional or local values. Their main groups of reference are besides their families, friends and their co-workers and they are very strongly oriented towards the problems and interests of the whole professional community. However,

there are some similarities between the Zagłębian and Immigrants, there are also important differences – the Zagłębian are more attached to the leftist ideology, express strong feeling of degradation and menace and are the most claiming for the state/public institutions interventions to the solutions of their social problems. At the same time they are objectively in a better situation as they are more educated and qualified.

The Immigrants are in the most difficult situation. They are very weakly integrated in their local communities, reveal authoritarian tendencies and are the most determined not to accept any changes at all. They have the lowest level of education and qualifications and get no support from their larger family and neighbours.

If we try to draw a general conclusion from the empirical results discussed above, we should stress first of all that the core element of the social capital of the three examined groups of workers is strong familiaristic orientation, but in every group this familiarism appears in different configurations with other elements – in the case of Silesians, with strong attachment to the local/regional culture, with its rather self-preserving character and law educational aspirations, in the case of Zagłębian – with the presence of the radical social ideology and positive attitudes to the education and in the case of Immigrants, with a strong ethno-centric attitudes and generalized feeling of helplessness. Of course, these are only some of the most significant components of the state of mind of the respondents, coming from different cultural background. However, the presented data not only explain the domination of the defensive strategies of dealing with restructurization in the miner's communities but also give some arguments to predict the failure of the model of reorientation of the regional economy based mainly on individual entrepreneurship (e.g. small business) and specialized services. For the first – the workers' communities are not enough "individualistic", for the second – not enough ambitious. This is the reality that will be hardly accepted by economists or politicians who believe that the ordinary people share with them the same kind of rationality, and are ready to sacrifice their present life for the enigmatic future betterment.

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## Appendix

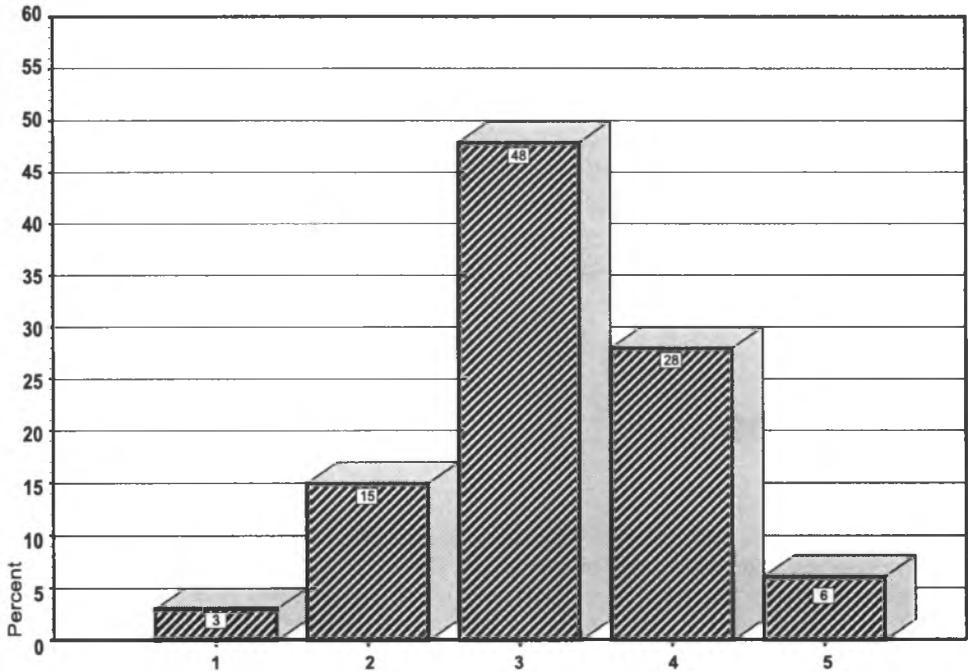
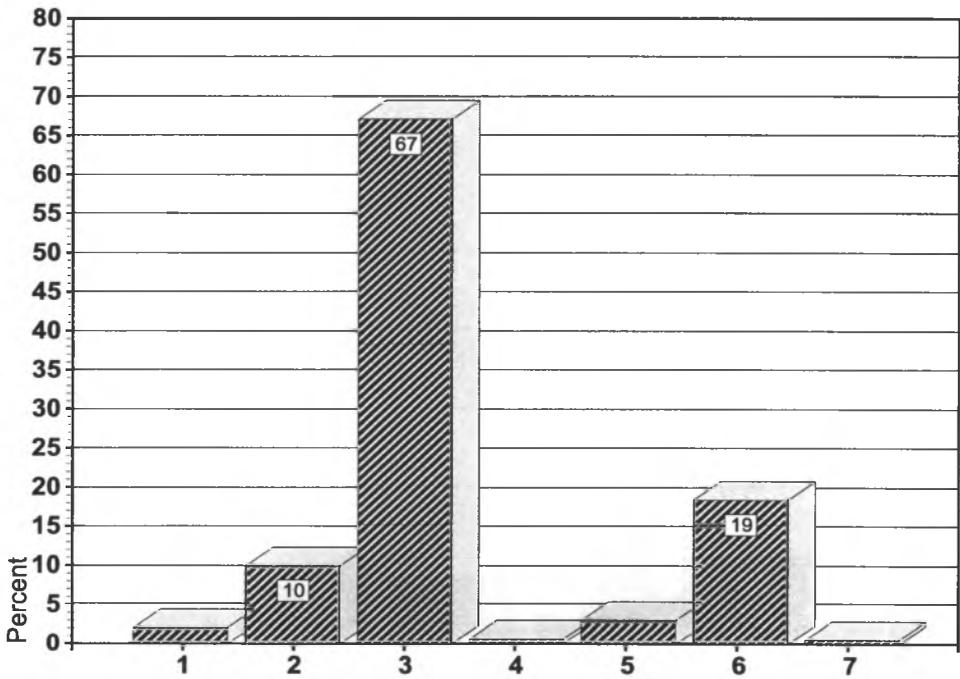


Fig. 1. Respondents' age

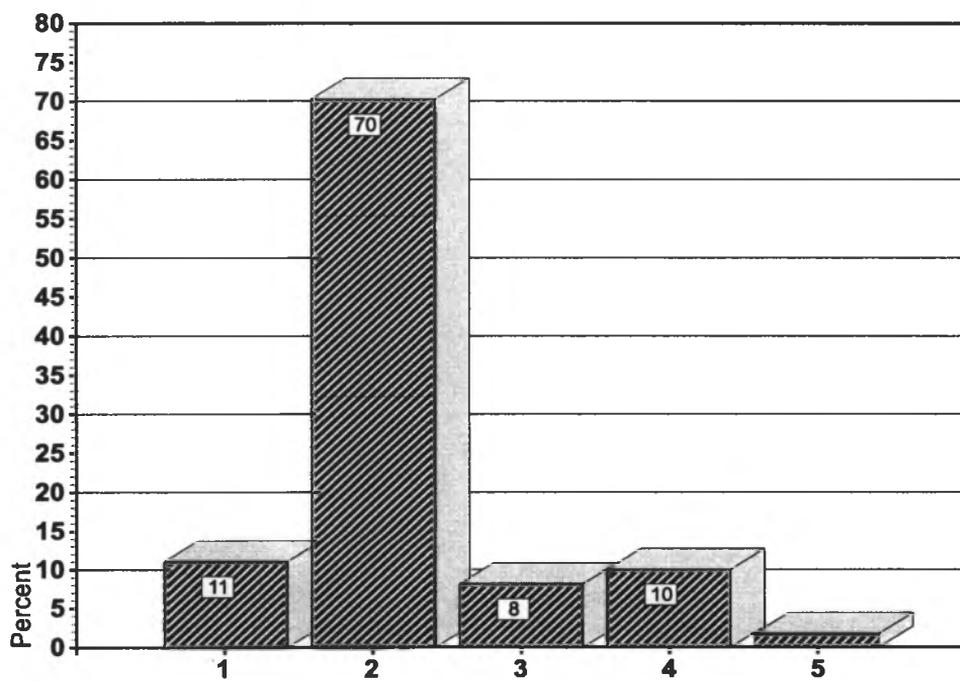
1. 1920–1940 3%
2. 1941–1950 15%
3. 1951–1960 48%

4. 1961–1970 28%
5. 1971 and later 6%



**Fig. 2. Respondents' education**

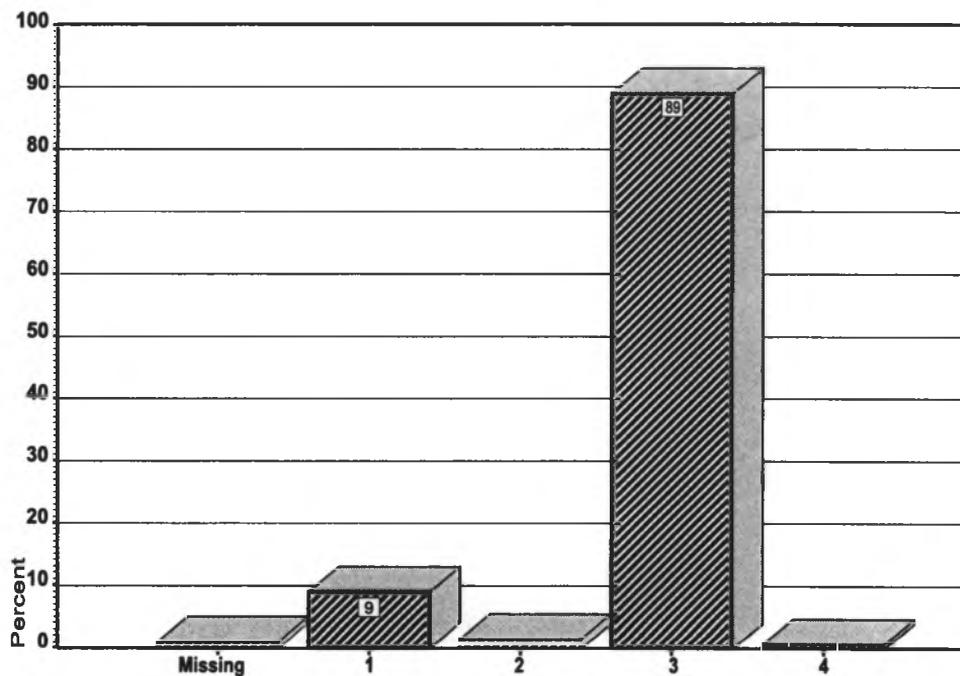
1. Incomplete primary school 1.6%
2. Primary school 10%
3. Vocational school 67%
4. General secondary school 0.2%
5. Vocational secondary school 2.4%
6. Technical school 19%
7. University 0.8%
8. Others



*Fig. 3. Respondents' profession*

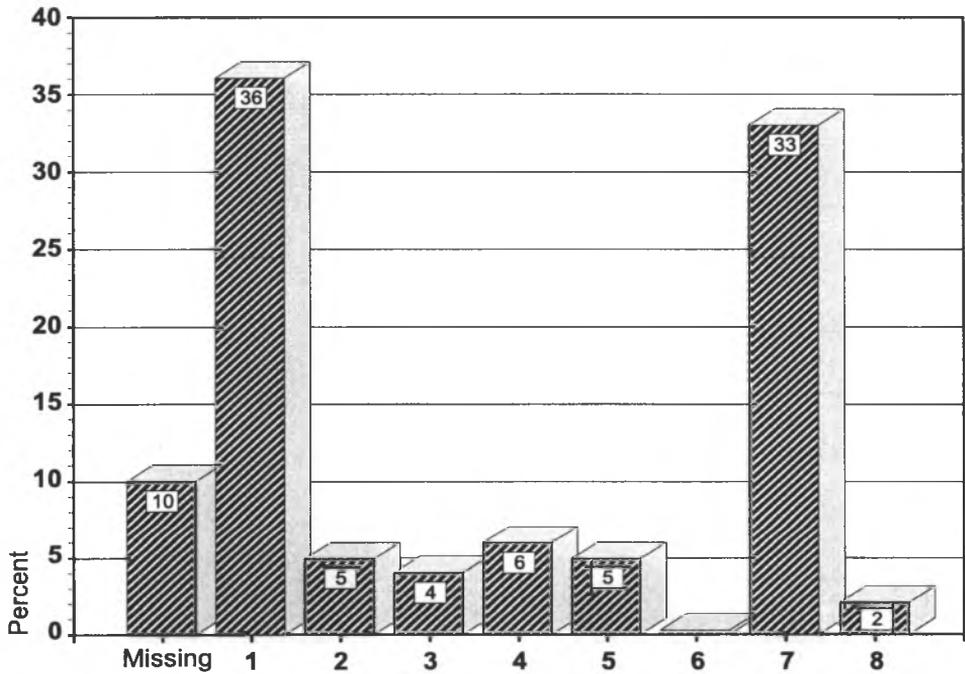
1. Unskilled miner/worker
2. Skilled miner/worker
3. Lower technical staff

4. Worker (not miner)
5. Others



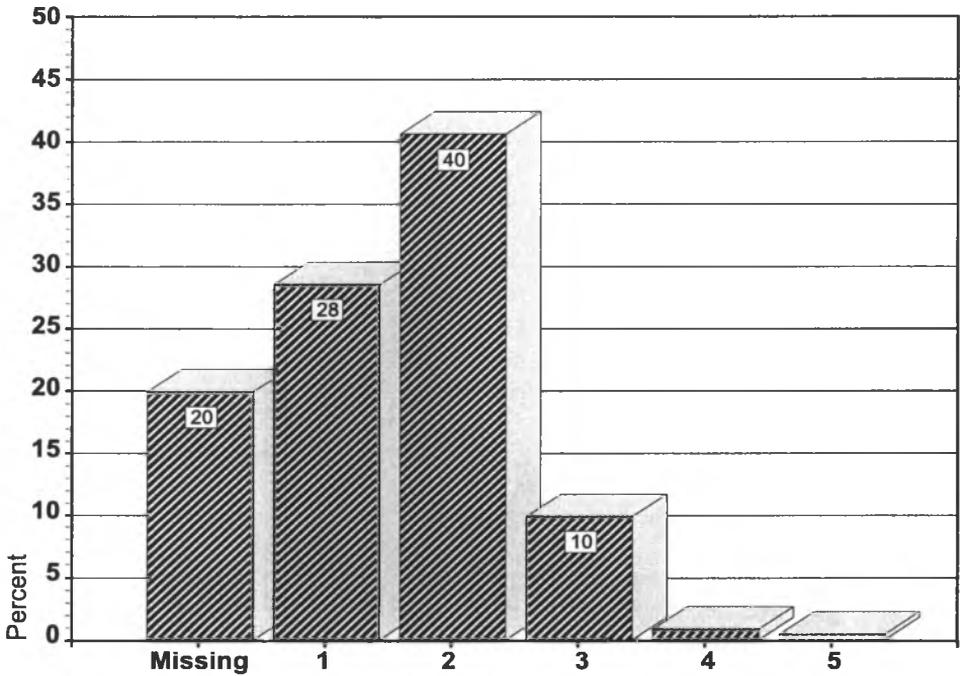
*Fig. 4. Marital status*

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1. Single 9%  | 3. Married (including living with a concubine) 89% |
| 2. Divorced (also without formal statement of divorce) 1.6% | 4. Widower 0.4%                                    |



*Fig. 5. The wife's occupation*

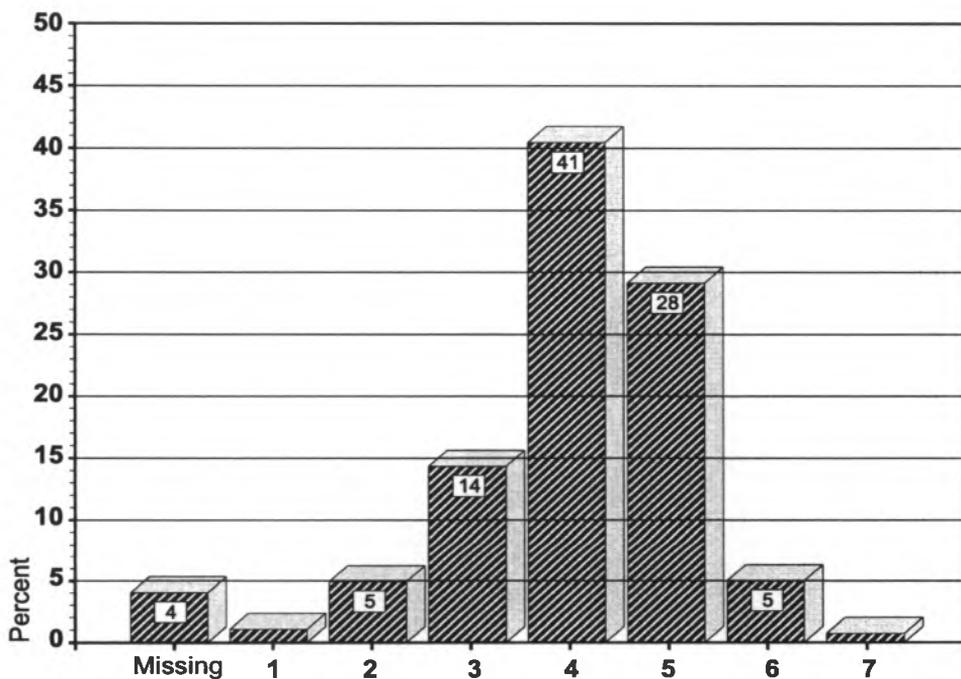
- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1. Full time job (including one-man business) 36%       | 5. A pensioner or receives annuity (annuities) 5% |
| 2. Part-time job 5%                                     | 6. At school or at the university 0.2%            |
| 3. Temporary absence (unpaid leave, maternity leave) 4% | 7. Not employed, takes care of the household 33%  |
| 4. Unemployed, looking for work 6%                      | 8. Other situations 2%                            |



*Fig. 6. The number of children in a household*

1. One child 28%
2. Two children 40%
3. Three 10%

4. Four 1%
5. Five 0.5%

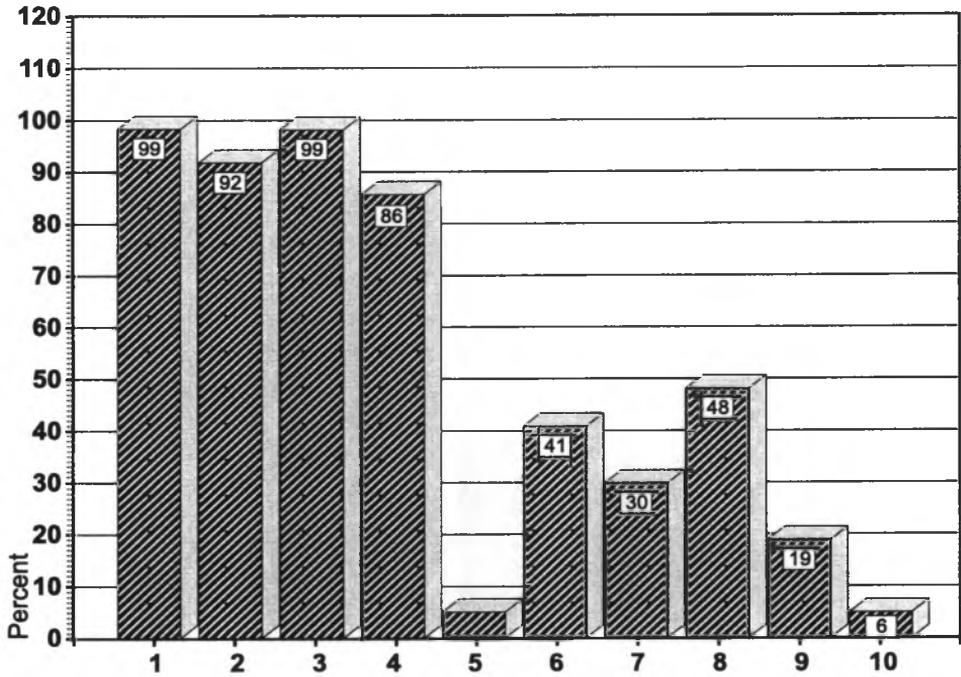


*Fig. 7. Monthly family income*

What is your family total income per month?

1. Up to 300 zł 1%
2. 301–500 zł 5%
3. 501–700 zł 14%
4. 701–1000 zł 41%

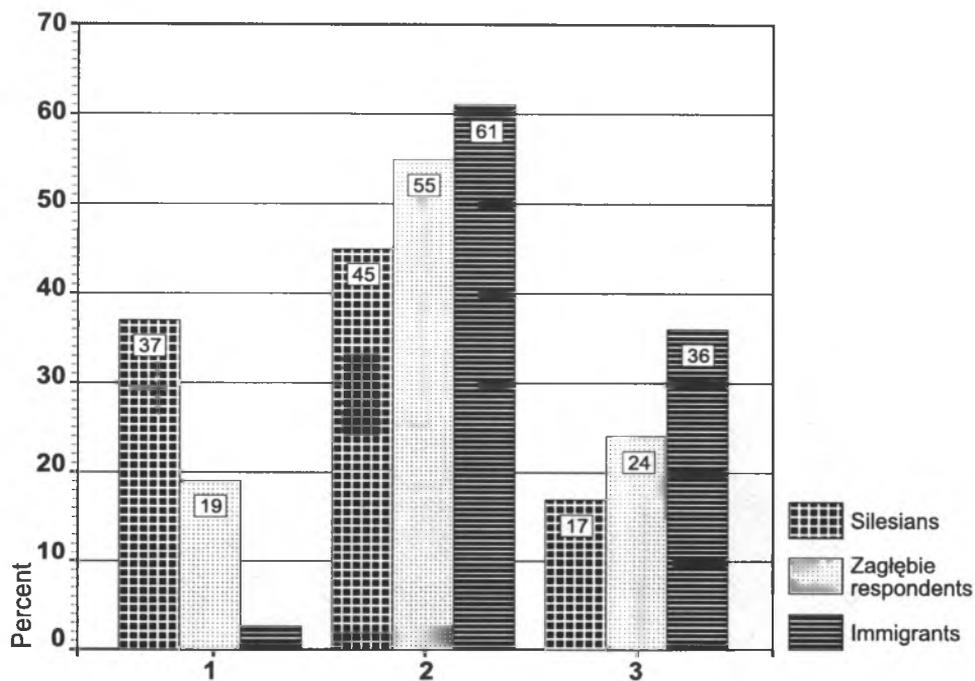
5. 1001–1500 zł 28%
6. 1501–2000 zł 5%
7. 2001 and more zł 0.9%



*Fig. 8. Household equipment*

1. Colour TV 99%
2. Washing machine 92%
3. Refrigerator 99%
4. VCR 86%
5. Video camera 5%

6. Computer 41%
7. Telephone 30%
8. Car 48%
9. Allotment 19%
10. Recreational plot 6%



*Fig. 9. Local self-identification*

When you read political statements do you mostly define yourself as:

1. "We Silesians" ("we Zagłębie people")
2. "We Polish"
3. "We workers"

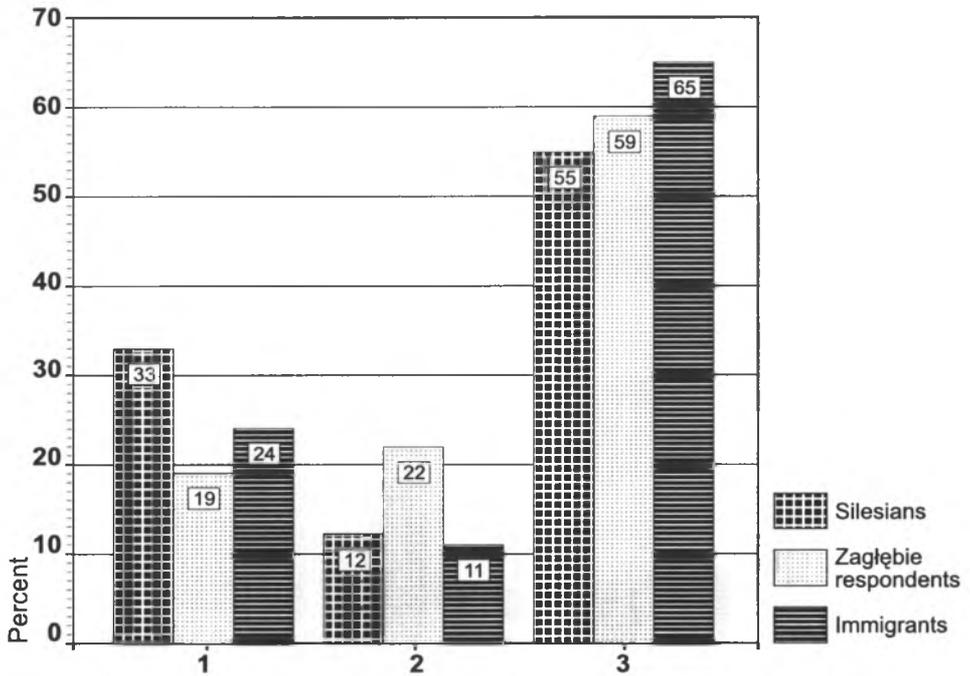


Fig. 10. The evaluation of Silesia region

1. Better and more valuable than other regions in Poland?
2. Worse and less valuable than other Polish regions?
3. Indifferent from other Polish regions?

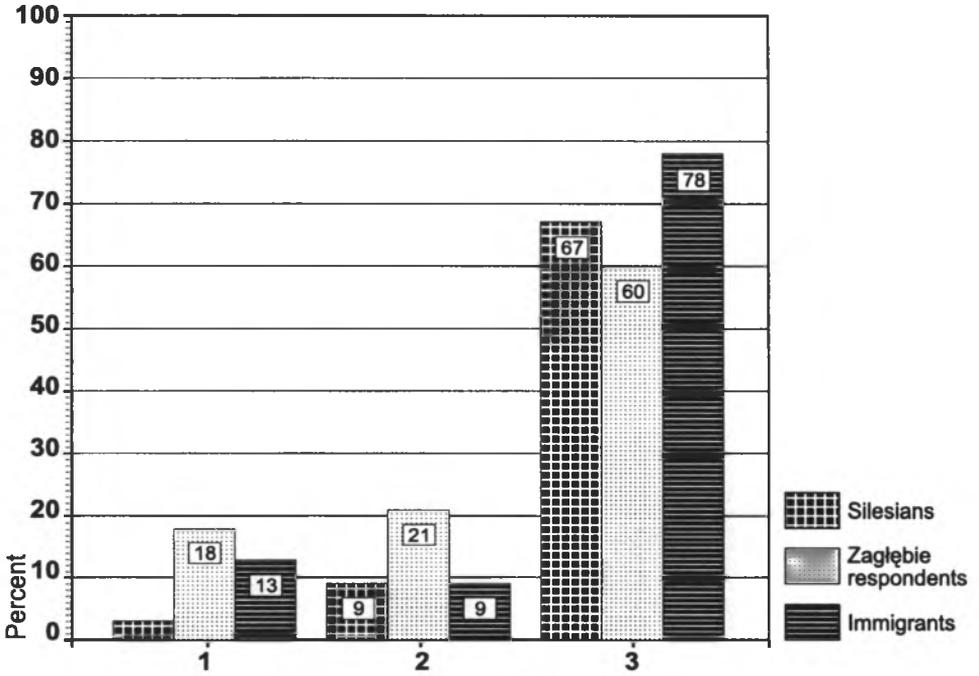
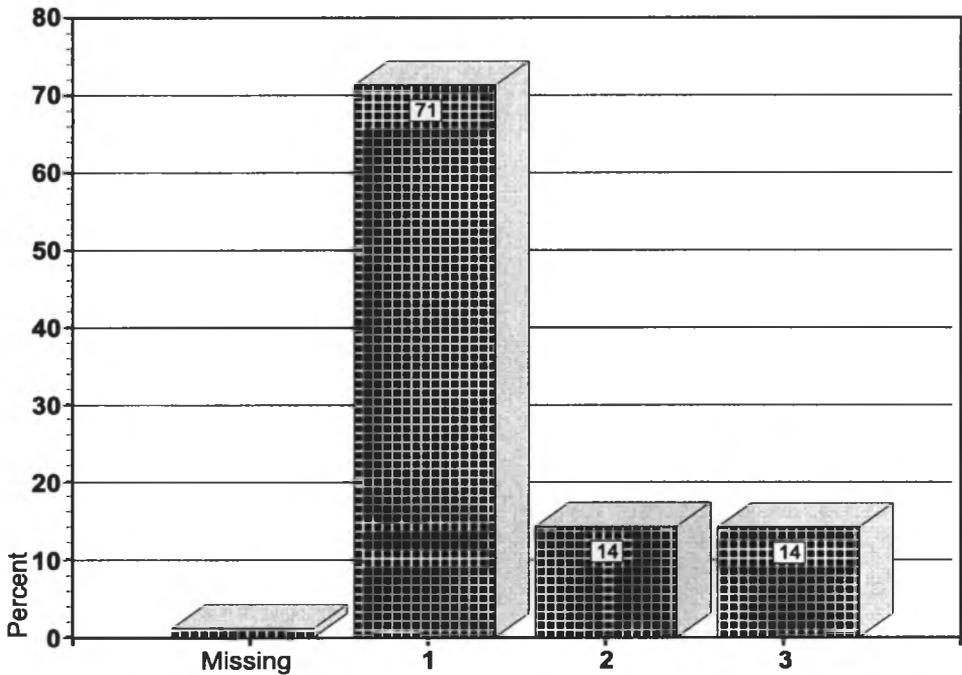


Fig. 11. The evaluation of Zagłębie region

- 1. Better and more valuable than other regions in Poland?
- 2. Worse and less valuable than other Polish regions?
- 3. Indifferent from other Polish regions?



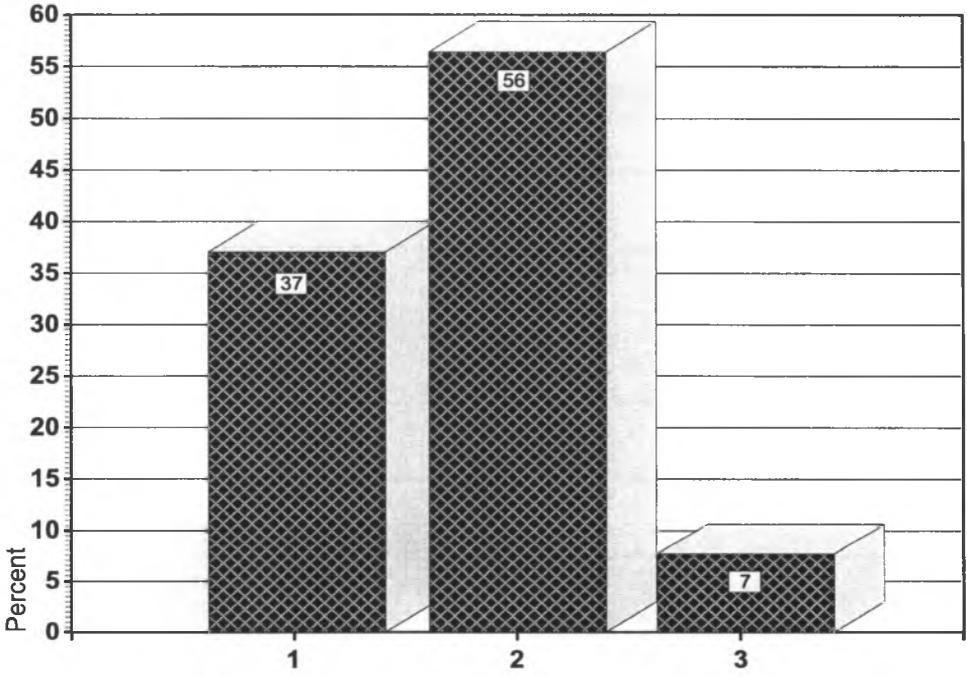
*Fig. 12. The equilibrium of life opportunities in Silesia region*

Do you think Silesian inhabitants have equal life chances indifferently from their origin?

1. Yes, they have equal chances 71%

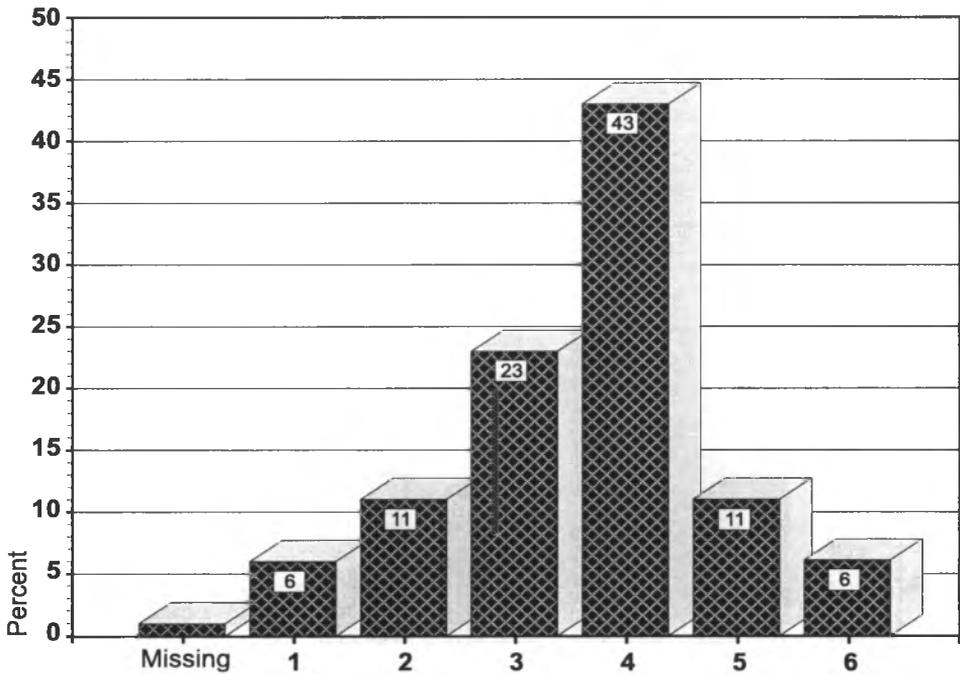
2. No 14%

3. Difficult to say 14%



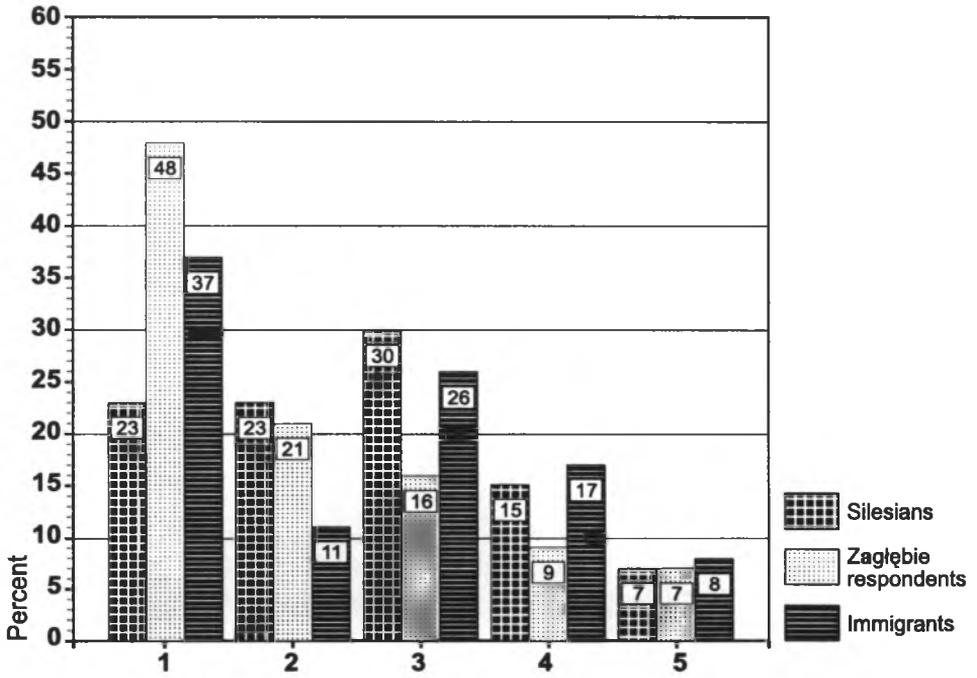
*Fig. 13. Use of a regional dialect*

- 1. Yes
- 2. No
- 3. Difficult to say



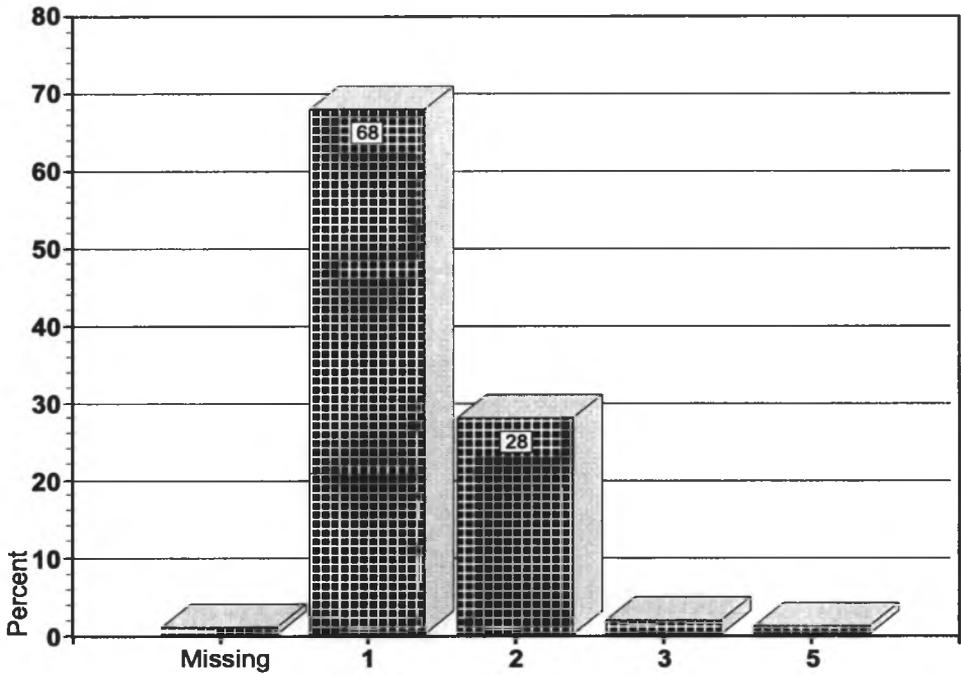
*Fig. 14. Do you think differences associated with various nationalities in Upper Silesia may be a problem?*

- |  |                       |
|--|-----------------------|
| 1. Yes, definitely 6%                              | 4. Rather not 43%     |
| 2. Rather yes 11%                                  | 5. Definitely not 11% |
| 3. Only sometimes with regards to some matters 23% | 6. I don't know 6%    |



*Fig. 15. Nowadays it is not easy to feel secure in Silesia area and Zagłębie Region*

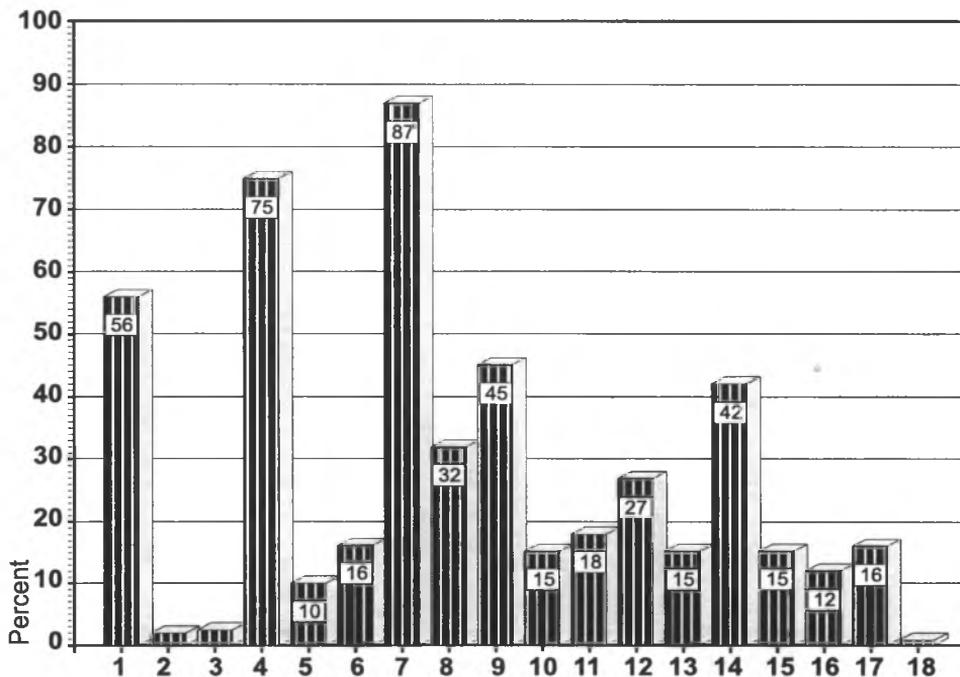
- 1. I agree with no objections
- 2. I rather agree
- 3. I partially agree and do not agree
- 4. I rather do not agree
- 5. I do not agree at all



*Fig. 16. Do you think hard, exhaustive, health endangering work should be better paid than other jobs?*

1. Yes, definitely 68%
2. Yes 28%
3. Difficult to say 3%

4. No
5. Definitely not 0.4%



*Fig. 17. The most important values in one's life*

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Welfare 56%          | 10. Religion 15%                                  |
| 2. Fame 1.8%            | 11. Friends 18%                                   |
| 3. Power 2.0%           | 12. The sense of being needed by other people 27% |
| 4. Quiet life 75%       | 13. Country's prosperity 15%                      |
| 5. Pleasures 10%        | 14. Peace in a country 42%                        |
| 6. Strong will 16%      | 15. Reciprocal love 15%                           |
| 7. Family happiness 87% | 16. Helping other people 12%                      |
| 8. Interesting job 32%  | 17. Education 16%                                 |
| 9. People's respect 45% | 18. Other 0.7%                                    |

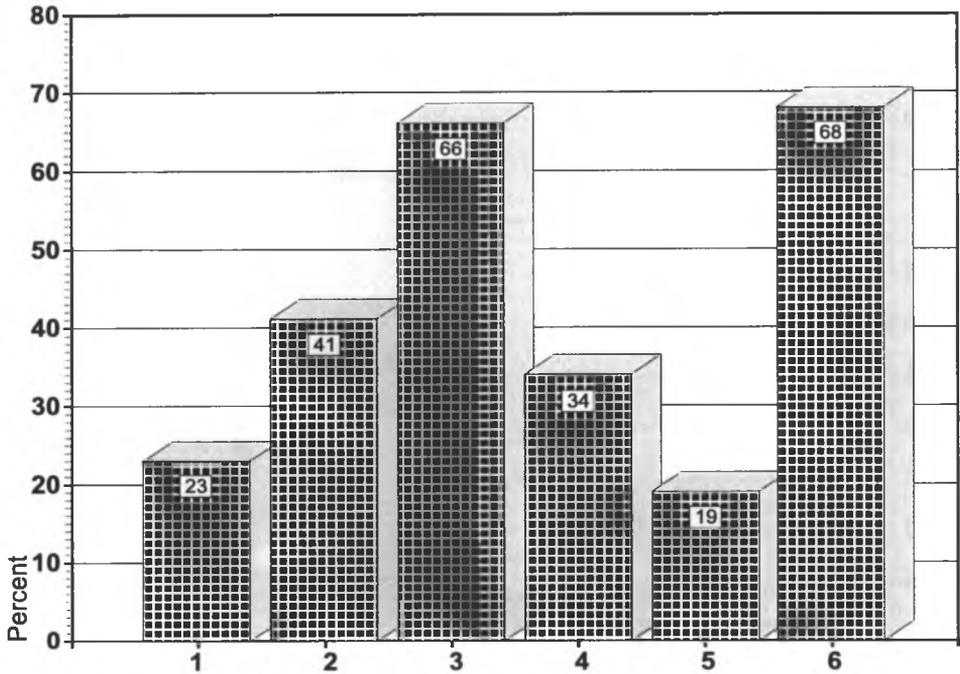
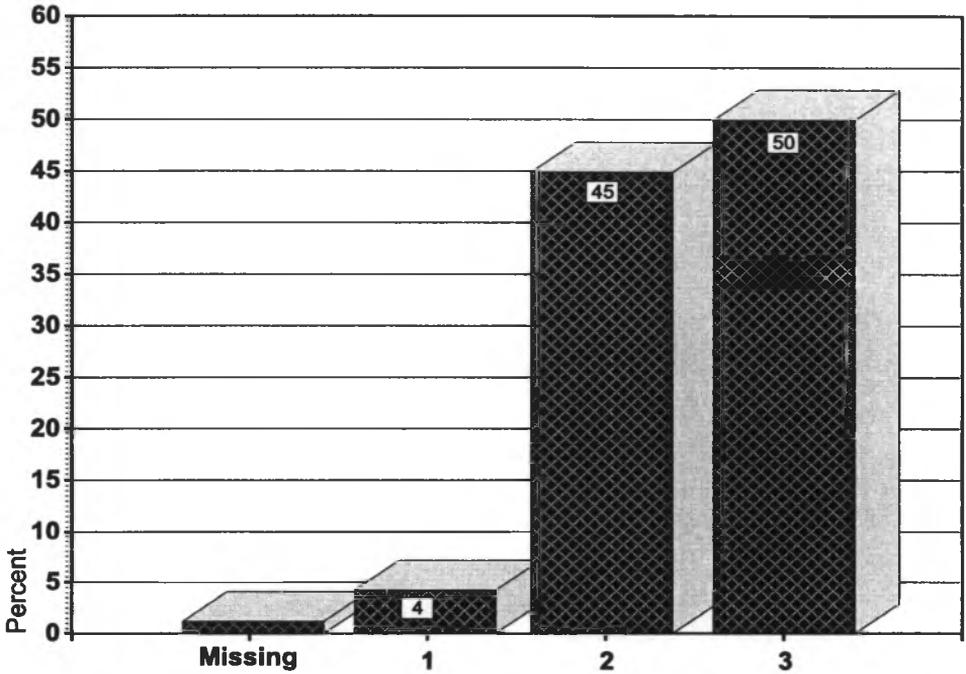


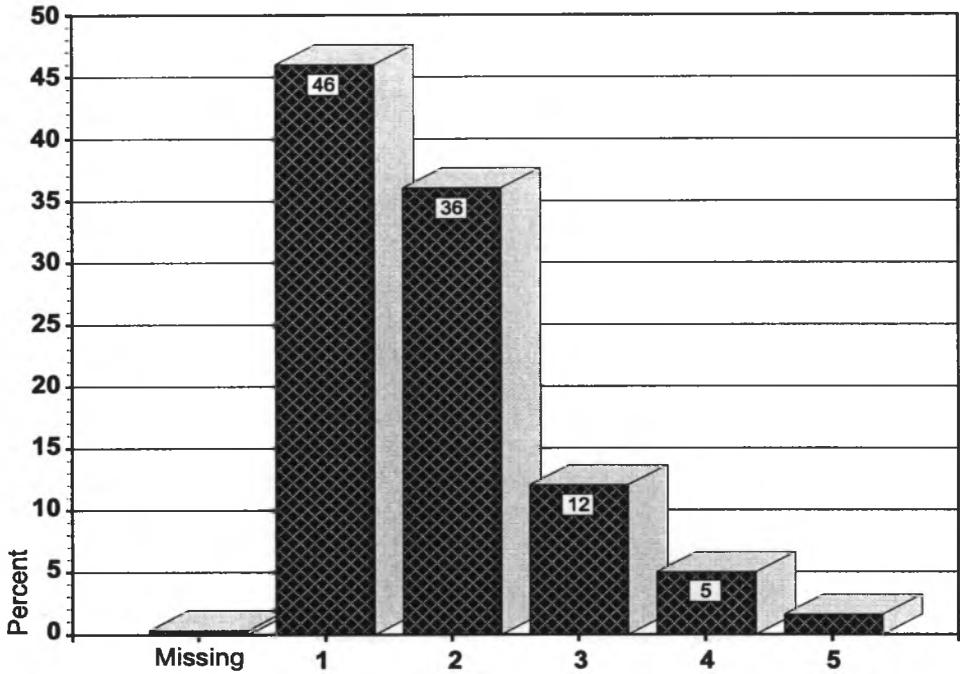
Fig. 18. Satisfaction from work in terms of:

1. Salary 23%
2. Respect associated with it 41%
3. Post you held 66%
4. Work steadiness 34%
5. Future prospects 19%
6. Human relations 68%



*Fig. 19. Acceptance of changes of regional industry profile*

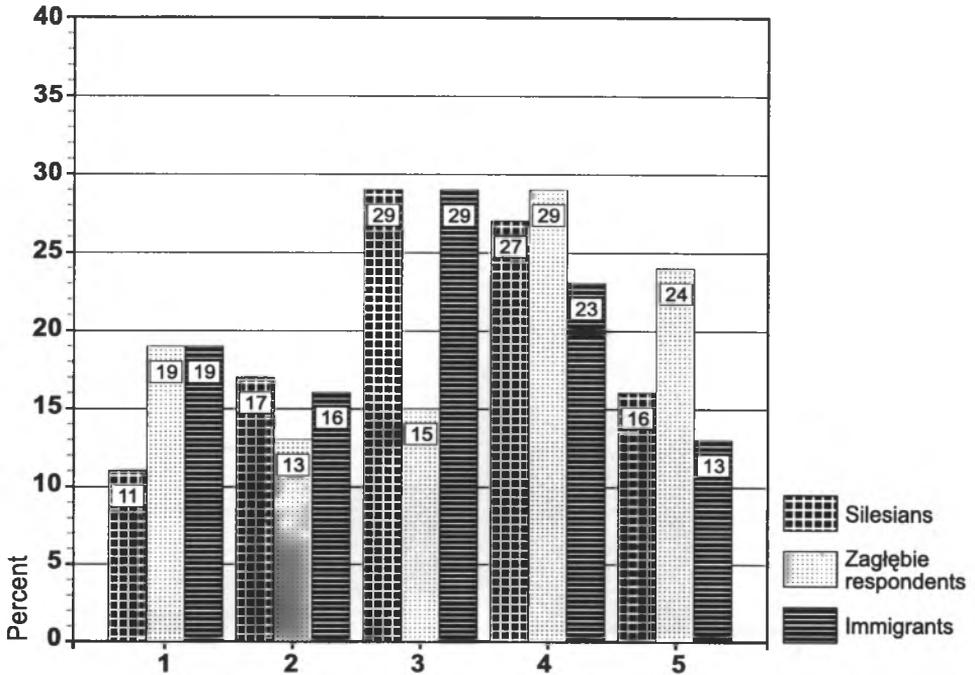
- 1. It should be completely changed 4%
- 2. Out of date plants should go under liquidation, other bussinneses should be reformed 45%
- 3. One should only help restructuring the existing industry 50%



*Fig. 20. The expectance of assistance for poor and unemployed from the state*

- 1. Yes, this is a state's duty 46%
- 2. Rather yes 36%
- 3. Difficult to say 12%

- 4. Rather not 5%
- 5. Not at all, the state should not get involved in social assistance 1%



*Fig. 21. Earning money is more important than a peaceful life*

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. I agree with no objections         | 4. I rather do not agree |
| 2. I rather agree                     | 5. I do not agree at all |
| 3. I partially agree and do not agree |                          |

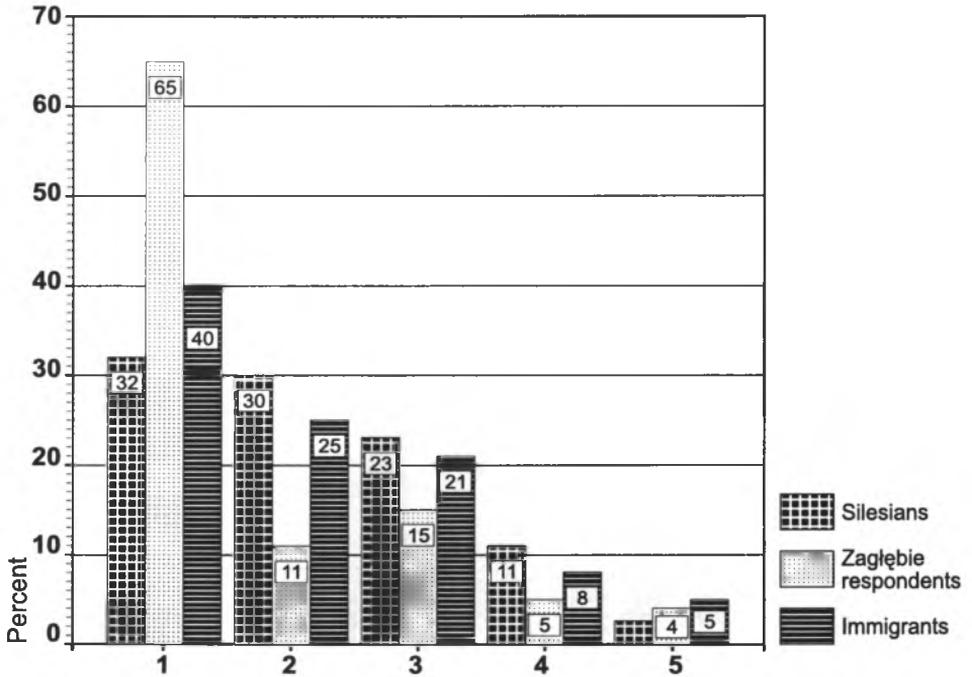


Fig. 22. I feel helpless towards what is happening in the world nowadays

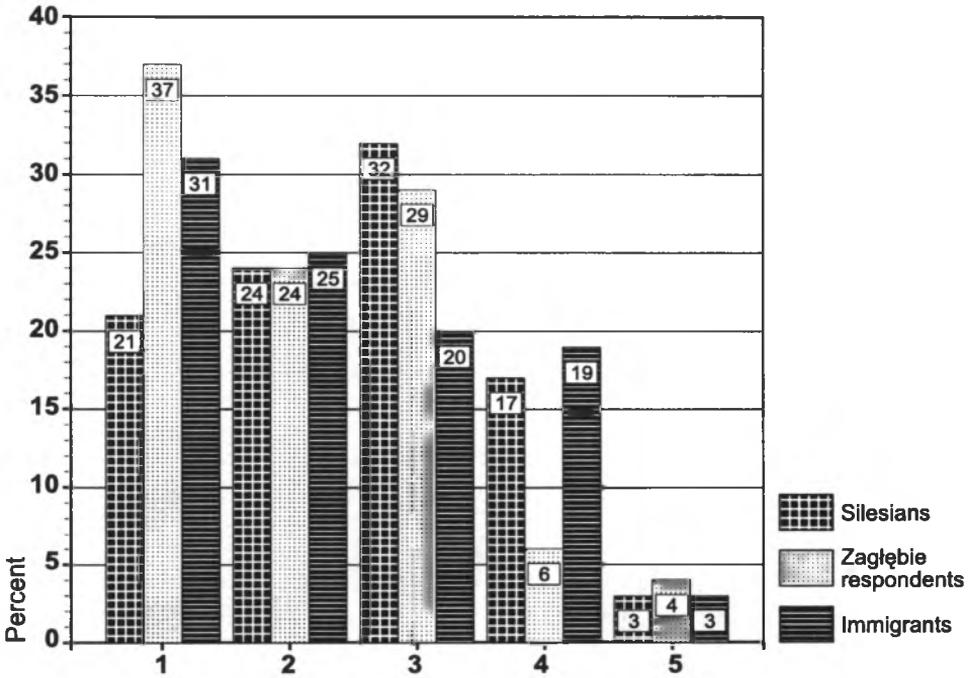
1. I agree with no objections

2. I rather agree

3. I partially agree and do not agree

4. I rather do not agree

5. I do not agree at all



**Fig. 23. Democracy is good in theory but it is troublesome in practice**

- 1. I totally agree
- 2. I agree
- 3. I partly agree

- 4. I rather disagree
- 5. I neglect the statement

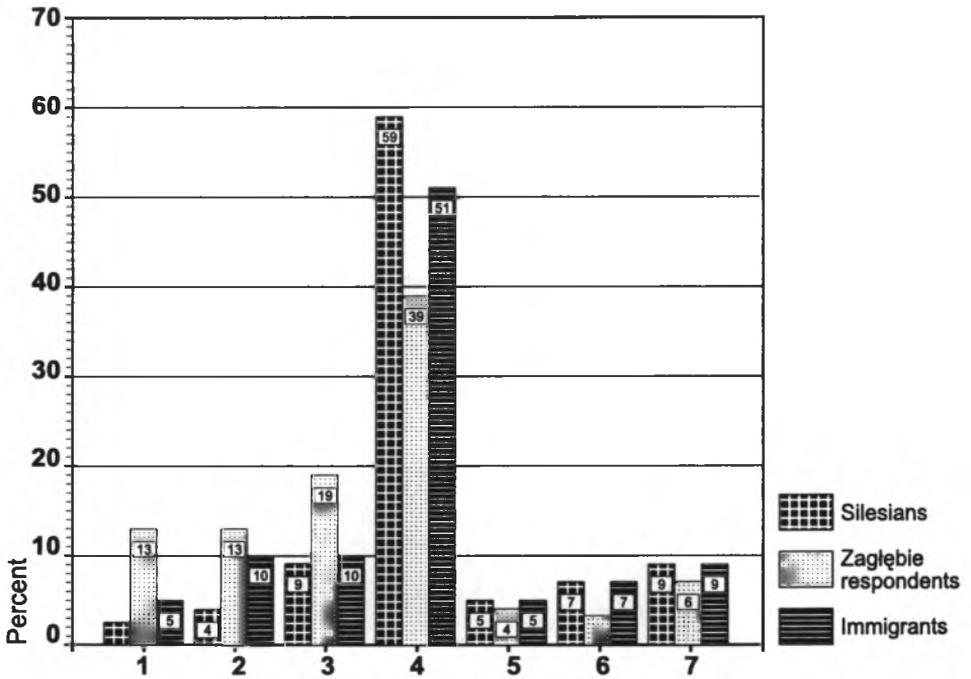
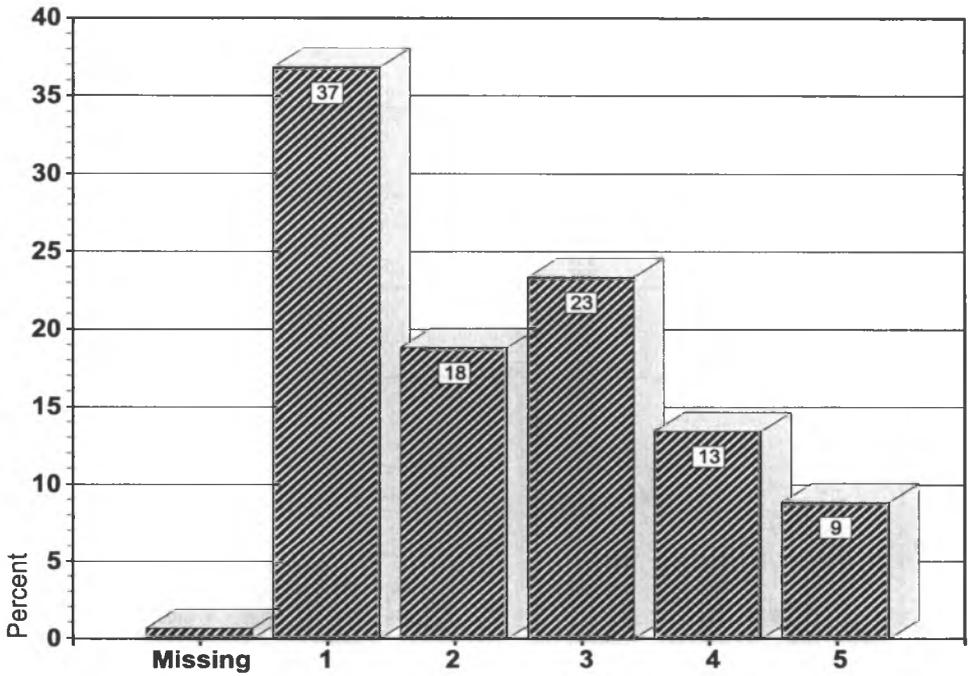


Fig. 24. Many people use words “leftish” and “rightist” for describing political views

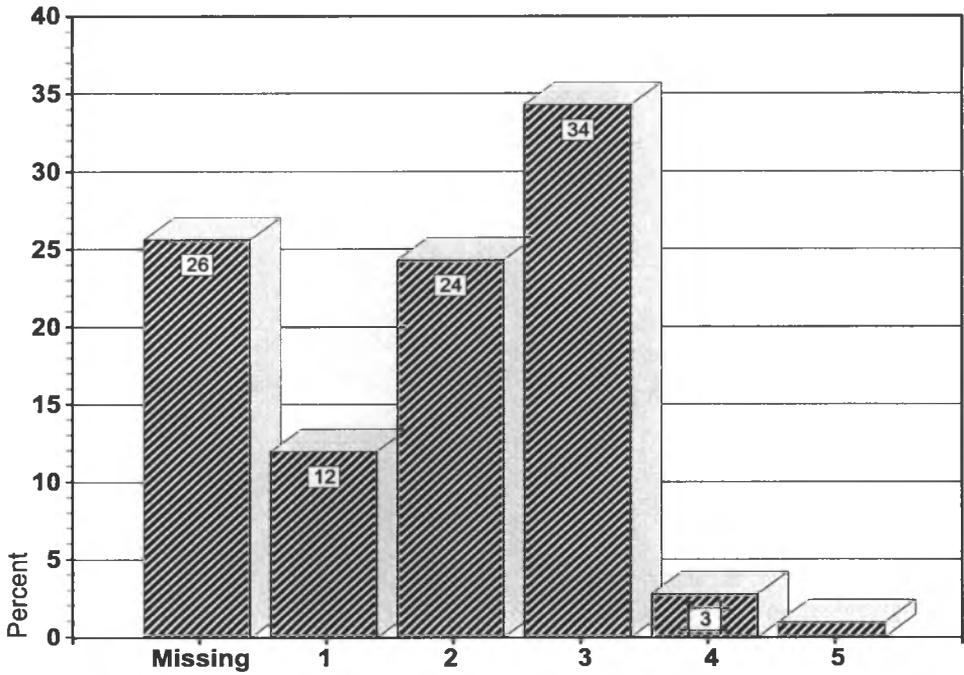
Where would you place your political preferences?

left-wing---1---2---3---4---5---6---7---right-wing



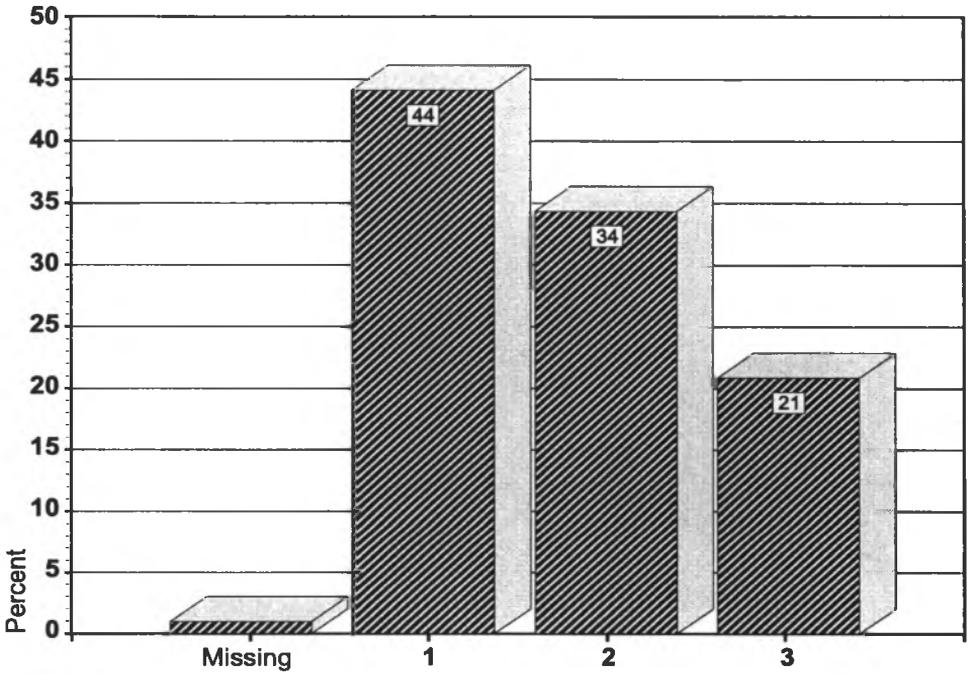
*Fig. 25. Readiness to start own business*

1. I would surely do it 37%
2. I would do it with a support of family and friends 18%
3. I don't know, I have not thought about it 23%
4. Rather not unless someone helps me a lot to do it 13%
5. Definitely not 9%



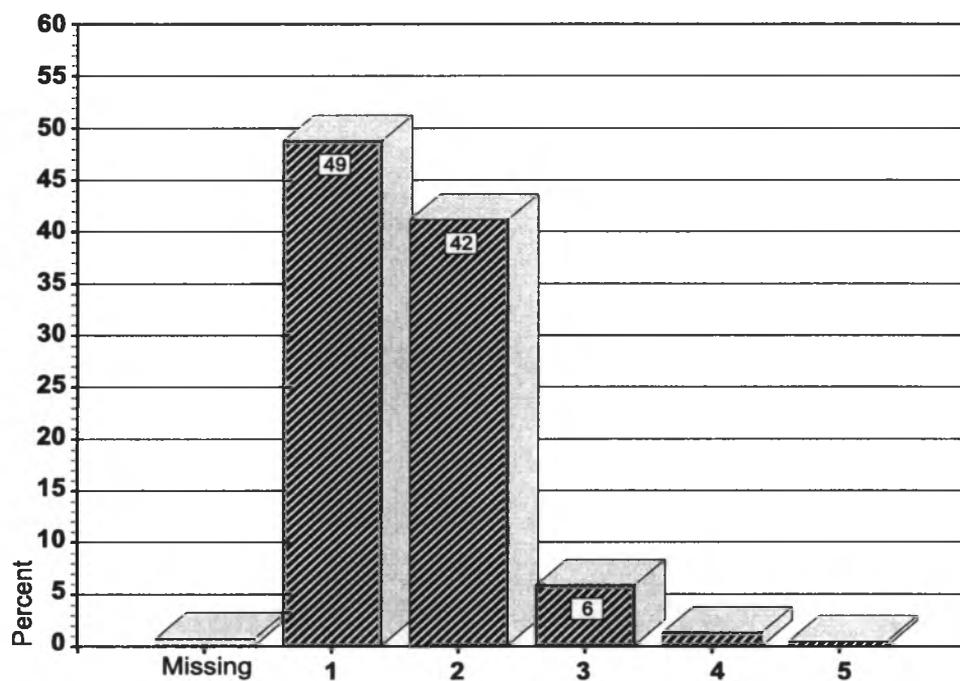
*Fig. 26. A woman may begin professional career:*

1. Only if her material situation requires it 12%
2. To improve family's standing 24%
3. When she only wishes 34%
4. As any other person 3%
5. In other circumstances



*Fig. 27. Which of the following statements describes your opinion on parents' duties towards children the best?*

1. The duty of parents is to provide their children with everything, even at an expense of themselves 44%
2. Parents live their own life and one should not demand a lot from them 34%
3. Difficult to say 21%



**Fig. 28. Expenses on children's education**

Is it worth, in your opinion, to spend a great amount of money on your children's education?

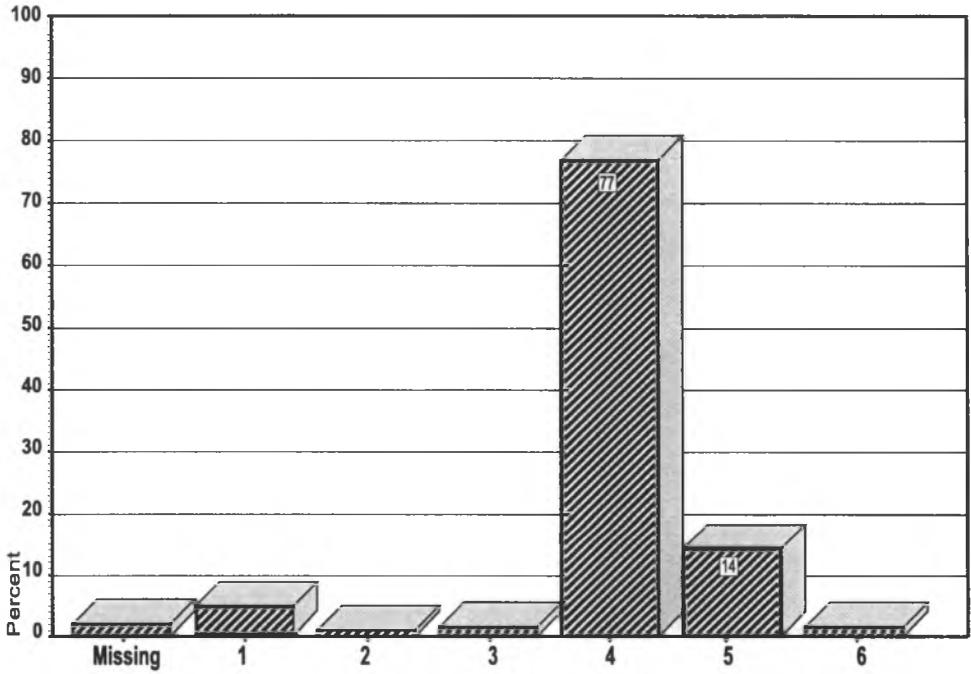
1. Yes, definitely 49%

2. Rather yes 42%

3. Difficult to say 6%

4. Rather not 1.3%

5. Definitely not 0.4%



*Fig. 29. The expected motives of a children's choice of profession*

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Parents' opinions 4.5%                    | 4. Own interests 74%                   |
| 2. Profession tradition in one's family 0.7% | 5. Aspects of a present usefulness 14% |
| 3. Advice of teachers 1.1%                   | 6. Other 1.1%                          |