

Abstract in English

Germany has a long history of political fragmentation, with local and regional identities playing a crucial role in the making of Germanhood. In the last decades, historical scholarship has depicted the process of rallying local identities to the national cause. Dealing with this issue is essential because it shows the variety of the concept of *Heimat* [home or local homeland]¹ in various territories of imperial Germany. Nevertheless, this process on the local level was not yet thoroughly examined in the case of the Giant Mountains' region before the First World War. Due to its geographical position and the strong local cohesion shaping the homeland, this case study enables to further such historical researches, which often concentrates on the German historical regions, and not on the study of a local territory shaped by tourism.

The object of the following thesis is to question the meanings assigned to the notion of *Heimat* in the Silesian Giant Mountains for the local activists and inhabitants, and thus, to write the history of the construction of *Heimat*. By using a methodology based upon different disciplines (respectively, the French “*géohistoire*”, literary theory, sociology), the research analyses many phenomena attached to other and recent historiographic domains, such as environmental history. The main hypothesis is the following: the complex organization and the discursive construction of the myth of *Heimat* fostered by the *Riesengebirgsverein* [Giant Mountains' Association] participated to a strong identification and attachment of the locals to their territory, and to a certain recognition within the Lower Silesian (regional) and imperial German (national) space, in spite of varying dynamics and critical accounts.

The first chapter retraces the evolution of the concept of *Heimat* in both its common and academic discourse. The second chapter looks at the process of institutional process of constructing *Heimat* and its organization, relying on a plurality of criterion and non exhaustive examples. A last analytical chapter interrogates the development of the local identity in the Silesian Giant Mountains through material and discursive dynamics. The conclusion outlines the results of the research, its limits, and the possible continuations of such a scientific endeavour.

Key words: Heimat, Identity, Development, Organization, Discourse, Giant Mountains, Lower Silesia

¹ J. K. Wilson, *Imagining a Homeland: Constructing Heimat in the German East, 1871–1914*, in “National Identities”, 2007, 9, p. 333.