

Nature protection area Natura 2000 as a multispecies network of dependencies. Non-obvious relations in anthropological perspective

The project covers ethnographic research in the site of the Lake Niedzięgiel in the Gnieźnieńskie Lakeland, part of the area protected by the Habitats Directive and under the Natura 2000 program (PLH 300026). Alike other basins in the Lakeland, the Lake Niedzięgiel is affected by strong anthropogenic pressure (tourism, agriculture, fishery, opencast mining), which combined with the climate change (above all the declining rainfall patterns and the desertification of Greater Poland) cause lowering of the water level. It threatens the habitats protected in the area. The Niedzięgiel represents the so-called hardwater lakes with the underwater *Charophyte* meadows (3140). *Chara* spp., commonly known as stoneworts, are "engineering" species, their presence induces the clarity of the water, but simultaneously depends on it. The preservation of these and other habitats is therefore necessary for the maintenance of the current character and functions of the Lake and is particularly important in the face of the advancing environmental degradation.

The presented project, however, goes beyond the functional thinking about the natural environment. Instead of analysis of dependencies between two distinct categories of society and ecosystem, I propose creating a map of multispecies relationalities on the site. I will be seeing the nature protection program Natura 2000 as an element of the network of interdependencies in the researched area, and not only as an expert-based nature management project. The ambition of this project is to formulate a definition of a community in a reference to the interspecies network of relationalities.

The project has three research goals: 1) to analyze the recognition and reception of the Natura 2000 program among the inhabitants and decision makers; 2) to create a map of relationships and dependencies among the identified subjects in the area – the local administrative institutions, environmentalists and biologists, representatives of the forests and waters management institutions, environmental protection institutions, residents and private agriculture and touristic entrepreneurs, as well as the species protected in the area under the Habitats and Birds Directives; and 3) to initiate a discussion on the map of the relationalities among the aforementioned subjects.

On both theoretical and methodological level, the research aims at enriching the discussion in the field of environmental anthropology which deals with the human-nature relations while stressing the anthropogenic character of the climate changes and presenting human as just one element of the multispecies map of dependencies on Earth. The project explores the prospect of broadening the category of community to encompass the non-human actors and underscores the relationality of being in the world. Moreover, it addresses important methodological challenges, above all the questioning of the division between nature and culture (and separate disciplines studying those) and the possibilities of writing about interspecies dependencies. It is also a proposal of engaged ethnography which initiates discussion on local identity and the future of the place, especially in the context of the climate change. Finally, beside the expected scientific results, the projected will contribute to building local social capital.