

ARTYKUŁ

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Polish Intelligentsia Totems in Elites' Struggles for Legitimization: The Case of Jerzy Giedroyc and Poland's Eastern Policy

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Jerzy Giedroyc—the founder and editor of the journal *Kultura*—has played an important symbolic role in Polish public debates, especially as an architect of post-communist Poland's policy toward its Eastern neighbors. At the same time, scholars and experts differ substantially in their assessments as to both the shape and influence of "Giedroyc's line." This article argues that in order to solve this puzzle, Giedroyc should be seen as an "intelligentsia totem"—an instrument for the reproduction of Polish intelligentsia hegemony, and a source of legitimization for which various factions within the elite compete. Taking into account this distinctive role allows for a new assessment of the influence of Giedroyc's line on Poland's eastern policy. By integrating the totemic interpretation with an analysis of the changing shape of the Polish field of power and changing interpretations of what Giedroyc's line entailed, I argue that only some postulates of Giedroyc were implemented after 1989. Despite this, because of Giedroyc's legitimizing function as *Kultura*'s editor, his role as an "architect" of the eastern policy was seldom questioned. Only when the reconfiguration of the Polish field of power brought an end to consensus in the foreign policy realm did new diverging interpretations of Giedroyc's line emerge, legitimizing competing visions for Polish foreign policy. This article delivers a more nuanced view of the role Giedroyc played in post-communist Poland, thus explaining his criticism toward its foreign policy. It also sheds light on the legitimization mechanisms at work within the Polish elite.

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