Agata Zysiak
University of Lodz, Poland; University of Michigan, U.S.A.
https://doi.org/10.18778/1733-8069.11.3.06

The Socialist Project for a New Intelligentsia and Its Limits. Academic Careers in the Polish Post-War University: A Biographical Perspective

Abstract The paper examines the post-war period of reconstruction of the Polish academic system from the perspective of young academicians and students of that time. The generation born in the 1920s and early 1930s witnessed a profound change in Polish society, when its intelligentsia and universities had to face the dramatic events of post-WWII. The forthcoming reform of science and the higher education system was an attempt to build a socialist university and an egalitarian society. Those processes are often viewed as the political domination of academia, the captivity of professors, and seduction of students. It is a part of the story. On the contrary, it is argued herein that the academic field and its associated processes shaped the biographical paths of erstwhile scientists/academics as strongly, if not stronger, than the political factors which usually are brought to the forefront by researchers. Three chosen academic biographies present the complexity of those processes, and at the same time they reveal different patterns of the interplay between political changes, the university, the academic habitus and higher education reform.

Keywords university, intelligentsia, post-war Poland, biography, socialist modernization

Agata Zysiak, a sociologist of culture, is writing her PhD thesis at University of Lodz (Poland), focused on the post-war modernization of higher education. She is currently a visiting scholar at University of Michigan (USA). Her main areas of interests are urban studies, social memory, and historical sociology. She is involved in several research projects concerning the biographical method, local debates about modernity, and the social history of Lodz.

email: agatazysiak@gmail.com

In 1952 a young orphan of peasant origin, holding the diploma he received as leader of a workshop, entered the office of the Rector of the University of Lodz. He headed to the Enrollment Commission and said politely: "Dear Sirs (proszę Państwa), I would like to...", but he was immediately interrupted: "Colleague (kolego), here there are no sirs! We are all colleagues!". This scene was recalled in 2011 by a retired professor of the University of Lodz.[1] This person had, despite many obstacles, entered walls of academia less than a decade prior to the event. To him this kind of biographical path had once been beyond the horizon of his imagination, not to mention his aspirations. But, this particular decade was indeed a time of social revolution. After the dreadful events of WWII, from 1945 onwards there was no going back to inter-war model of academia. The whole university structure went through deep and rapid changes during implementation of 'Soviet solutions' for science. Its aim was to build an egalitarian society, to modernize the economy, and reform the educational system, especially higher education. Engineers, teachers and doctors were needed more than ever before. While intellectuals debated and quarrelled over the shape of future academia and politicians struggled for power and influence, another important layer of social change was taking place. Via the daily press, public speeches and everyday experiences the social imagination was being reconstructed, shaping the educational desires of the masses. The construction of a socialist university was a factor and response to those newly-created desires. The traditional elitist university was supposed to be reformed into a socialist one.

There are two contrasting narratives present in today's literature about the post-war period and higher education during the People's Republic of Poland: 1) that it created a new intelligentsia, or the so called 'ZMP-generation',[2] loyal to the Communist Party and in many cases grateful for the possibilities of upward mobility offered by the new system (Palska 1994; Świda-Ziemba 2010); 2) that for universities and the inter-war professors it was a time of oppression, captivity, the decline of science and the loss of autonomy (Connelly 2000; Herczyński 2008). According to this latter notion, the situation of higher education during the People's Republic of Poland is mainly presented as a dark period of terror and captivity, and the most recent publications reveal this even in their titles (Pleskot and Rutkowski 2009; Connelly 2014; Herczyński 2008)[3]. This totalitarian interpretation[4] offers a vision of the endangered university, its traditions and values undermined by political forces, which demand the production of specialists, support in the development of industry, implementation of positive discrimination in favour of youth of working-class origin, et cetera. Therefore, these processes are seen as the domination of academia and the captivity of professors. Similarly, the post-war generation of students is considered to have been seduced by the vision of a new society and creation of the already-mentioned 'new intelligentsia'.[5]

[1] In the year 2011 the project "Academic Lodz – university in biographies" was commenced in the Department of Sociology of Culture. The research team conducted almost thirty interviews with retired professors.

[2] ZMP (Związek Młodzieży Polskiej [Union of Polish Youth]), was the official youth organization established in 1948 by the Polish United Workers Party. Before it disbanded it enrolled more than 2 million people.

[3] It should be noted that the narration of captivity does not exclude spaces for opposition or resistance, which are underlined especially in writings of John Connelly. His works underlined ability of Polish academia to preserve values of traditional university, still were framed by totalitarian paradigm, which I am trying to overcome.

[4] The recent wave of publications and vividness of this notion is seen as a revival of the so-called totalitarian paradigm, dominant in English-speaking discourse about Central Europe and Soviet Russia in the Cold War period. According to this paradigm, totalitarianism was focused on power, legislation and the destructive influence of the system on societies. Furthermore, this attitude was in a way part of a wider political struggle between two superpowers. In opposition to this notion the revisionist paradigm appeared, underlining the importance of economic and social aspects of change. In the 1990s, after the opening of formerly closed archives and the transition enthusiasm in Central Europe, the totalitarian paradigm again became dominant, mainly in the Post-Soviet academic discourse (Kotkin 1998; Malia 2008).

[5] It is worth mentioning, that the term "new intelligentsia" was applied to a group of professionals, not a narrow intellectual elite.

Those two notions interact with each other within the frame of generational conflict.

However, I would like to revise such a totalitarian paradigm (Kotkin 1998). From a more revisionist perspective, the reform of universities, despite its political (in the narrow sense) context, can be seen not only as the oppression of a foreign superpower over Polish academia or the brainwashing of naive students. Such a point of view (i.e., the totalitarian paradigm) needs to be amended by taking into consideration two additional important factors. First, at the beginning (that is between 1945-1948), it was not known how the political situation was going to develop, which allowed considerable latitude for the accumulation of wide-ranging support for a new political project. Second, even after the political situation had already been defined, rapid modernization, upward social mobility, and simply the post-war stabilization were important factors which, for many Polish citizens, helped secure the legitimization of the new order. The construction of a new social order and socialist university can be seen as a modernization project, as an attempt to build the world anew, to create an egalitarian university and democratize access to higher education (Arnason 2000; Stoica 1997). In the following decades thousands of workers and peasants' children would enter universities and obtain a higher education, slowly fulfilling modernization dreams (including in their monstrous form).

I argue that the process of post-war social change, traced from the biographical perspective, was much more complicated than simply the struggle to protect universities' autonomy against external intervention or the seduction of the young generation by the populist claims of the new authorities. In the academic field two opposite force vectors met: governmental reform, proposing a model of a socialist university with a new set of values and rules; and the inter-war vision of the traditional university (preserved by inter-war professors), protecting the values and rules of the imagined model of the traditional/liberal university. Those two forces were shaping academic fields and the paths of academic careers, revealing at the same time the limits of the modernization project. Was change possible? What were the limits of higher education democratization? What about the first post-war generation of academicians and future professors? Were they a part of a new intelligentsia, and if so was it because of or in spite of their social backgrounds? What happened to some of those of working class origin – were they fully socialized into the traditional university or did they bring the socialist model to life? These questions about their biographical paths are questions about the influence of modernization on academia, and the mechanisms of reproduction of the traditional university. The biographies of first post-war generations of professors which are examined in these pages reveal different patterns of the interplay between political changes, academia, and university reform and put into question the two earlier-described contrasting narratives about post-war academia.

The following section of this article contains a brief sketch of the historical context of inter-war academia, the influence of World War II, and the post-war situation in Poland, with special attention given to the industrial city of Lodz. This working class city occupied a very special place in the revival of academic life and higher education in the 1940s. In the second part of the article three academic biographies of the first post-war generation are examined, questioning the accuracy of the two dominant narratives about post-war academia. The three chosen biographies are a part of a wider collection of biographical interviews with professors born at the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, that is, who began their academic careers during Stalinization. They are representative of the wider collection of professors' biographies from that time.

Stalinization and Modernization

During the Second Republic of Poland (1918-1939) there were five public universities in the country: in Warsaw, Poznan, Lvov (Jan Kazimierz University), Vilnius (Stefan Batory University) and Cracow (Jagiellonian University), as well as the non-public Catholic University in Lublin and the Free Polish University in Warsaw, which had a local branch in Lodz. Including the technical universities or academies, over thirty institutions of higher education were in operation before World War II. The prevailing conditions of inter-war academia were far from satisfactory; one of the main obstacles to be overcome was the lack of funding, which strongly affected the experimental sciences and blocked the academic careers of many young scholars. From the 1930s onward political and social problems also arose – first following the Higher Education Act of 1933, which strengthened the state's control over academia; and secondly in the form of antisemitism, which reached the universities, where nationalistic youth launched brawls, which became an element of the final inter-war years (Natkowska 1999). Generally, the universities had a rather conservative profile with respect to both their methodological and political aspects. At the same time, the nationwide processes were not fortuitous: antisemitism at universities was just one element of increasingly dangerously ethnic tensions throughout the entire country, reflected in the "reforms" of 1933 and the strengthening of the authoritarian regime known as *Sanacja* (which can be translated roughly as "national moral regeneration"). Many inter-war leftist intellectuals could not find a place for themselves, although some managed to circulate around public universities or research institutes and some involved themselves in more progressive projects like the Free Polish University, while others – more radical and politically active – ended up in the Bereza Kartuska Prison.

The year 1939 not only ushered in the most frightening time of 20th century, but also a time of deep, irreversible change, the magnitude of which could even be perceived as a revolution. In writing about Poland, Michael Fleming and Padraic Kenney described the post-war period even as a double revolution: a social and economic one until 1947, and political one between 1948-50 (Fleming 2010; Kenney 2012). In turn, Krystyna Kersten (Kersten 1991) or more recently Andrzej Leder (Leder 2014) see it as one, rather social, revolution lasting from 1939 to 1956. The war years reshaped, in a cruel manner, the social, political and economic structure of the Polish state and society. Prewar values were undermined, population losses tremendous, infrastucture destroyed and geopolitical situation profoundly changed. There was no coming back to the Second Republic of Poland.

However, after the war this revolution was not based on pure destruction, but rather more on construction/re-construction. Without forgetting about or justifying the terror and millions of victims of Soviet-style modernization, it was nevertheless a time of great social experiment – both in Soviet Russia from the 1920s, and in Central Europe from 1945:

> Of all the deliberate social experiments which have taken place in human history, Soviet society was one of the largest ever undertaken (...) it claimed to offer an alternative to capitalism, providing full employment for its citizens, cheap housing for all, free health care and free education. (Bertaux 2004:2)

It was a time of leftist intellectuals, many of whom saw in the post-war reality a very special historic moment for implementing utopian projects, for instance reforming the social order by creating a new type of university – democratic, egalitarian and free. The time of so-called "gentle revolution" was very short however, and from the 1948 onward universities were transformed to institutions and spaces subsumed to the goals of the new socialist state ruled from the Soviet Union, where national history, ideology, and the future elite were going to be produced and shaped.

A special place on the post-war map of higher education was occupied by the young, working class city of Lodz. Following the conclusion of the war in 1945 only 30% of its former citizens remained, but its material structure was well preserved, and together, with the influx of internally displaced Poles, it became a temporary, informal capital of the country. It was also a magnet for leftist intellectuals (Connelly 2000). Although it was the second biggest city after Warsaw, because of its lack of any previous higher education institutions (the only one being a local branch of the non-public university of Warsaw) it had no previous academic structures to be reproduced. However, as an industrial giant Lodz was considered to be a "red" city with its tradition of the 1905 Revolution and labour movements, historically playing a kind of figure of the 'Other' in Polish culture (Zysiak 2014). All in all, it was a perfect place to build a university for the new times, and one could easily feel and become a part of this change.

Reform and the New Intelligentsia

One of the most important goals of higher education reform was its democratization. This term was understood as the reconstruction of the social structure of students (and graduates) so it would reflect the social structure of society. If society was mainly rural, then mainly peasant children should attend the lectures. The need for more egalitarian access to higher education was seen, as well by many scholars, who actively participated in this process. In the first post-war years a variety of solutions were implemented, like the 'initial year', preparatory courses,[6] the special quota of registration indices reserved for the disposition of the Ministry of Education, and some preferences for children of working-class origin.[7]

The academic year 1949/1950 was crucial for Polish academia as the central reform of science was in its early stage of implementation. Science was parametrized and the universities were obliged to respect the assigned quotas of students and graduates. Courses became obligatory, and in opposition to the so-called "aristocratic manner of studying", students were supposed to work on the basis of rules similar to workers in a factory, with almost 8 hours per day of classes, roll-call, and supervision of their efficiency. The first three years of study were designed to prepare students for practical tasks, and the additional final two years to give them more advanced skills and the *masters* degree (M.A.). They were expected to contact a future workplace during their studies in order to obtain work experience in a factory or public institution. Universities were thus to become part of a production process aimed at training skilled specialists. Censorship was strengthened, international cooperation strictly controlled, and many courses – like sociology – were labelled as "bourgeois science" and simply cancelled.

Despite the reform's negative effect on the autonomy of academia, for the system of education and society as such it still meant new paths of upward mobility for many. It was a parallel process to the global shift from elite towards mass universities, which occurred in most developed and developing countries in the second half of 20th century (Scott 1995), both in socialist and capitalistic countries. Polish reformers planned to provide higher education for as many as 80% of each year's group of high school students (Hübner 1983:172). During the reform in the 1950s, the assumptions were more realistic and workers' children supposed to make up 30% of students, and peasants – 20% (Słabek 2001:367). In comparison with the inter-war period, not to mention the devastating impact of the wartime years, the change was visible already in the very first years: in the academic year 1938/39 there were about 14.4 students for every 100,000 citizens, while in the very first post-war academic year there were already 23.1 such students and the number was increasing rapidly: reaching 50 students per 100,000 citizens in the academic years 1950-52, and 55.4 in 1960/61, that is, almost four times more than before the outbreak of WWII (GUS 1964:91).

The post-war processes of rethinking academia were framed by the dichotomy of the traditional/liberal and modern/socialist models of university. The traditional model was based on Humboldt's idea[8], *universitas* - the imperative autonomy of science and its elitist character. The reformers' option called for meritocratic democratization - the notion of bringing high culture to the masses by providing access to higher education for the most skilled youth from all social strata – in this way avoiding the direct reproduction of the intelligentsia.

In contrast, the modern socialist model aimed at the massive and rapid production of skilled workers. According to this model, the university was rendered rather as a tool, a measure, and a component of the industrialization of Poland and of the strong egalitarian impulse to democratize Polish academia. It was thought that in this way it would play the role of a new type of university, closer to meeting

[6] Both were designed to overcome gaps in education and allow students without a high school diploma to enter university.

[7] An affirmative action program awarding additional points during enrollment was not implemented until the 1960s, when the effects of democratization turned out to be very poor.

[8] Also known as the german model, 19th century university in Berlin established by W. Humboldt, in literature it is used as a reference to an institutional model - autonomous union of scholars and students focused on both teaching and research, based on individualistic attitude, liberal values and vision of science as a separate social sphere not controlled by any outside, especially political, force.

the social and economic needs of workers, and open to as many people as were needed to build a socialist welfare state. There was no need to bring high culture to the masses; instead it was time to create a new mass culture.

While the traditional university model was supposed to be isolated from society and create pure science, with academic relations based on a craft model of master/mentor-pupil; the socialist mode was opposite to all these features: its role was supposed to be an active one as one of the tools of change in building a socialist society based on an organized, planned and collective effort of the working intelligentsia, not individual professors ("intellectual aristocrats"). The traditional model was politically neutral, or as critics would say "above people's needs", while the second was strongly devoted to social improvement and modernization. The first assumed that science is a way to get to know oneself, and the second that it is a public good, serving the development of a socialist society (Zysiak 2015).

The attempts to build a socialist university were most intense in the early post-war years in the working class city of Lodz, where over ten higher education institutions were created in the first post-war years. As already mentioned, before the war Lodz was labeled as the Red City. It was a textile industry center with the lowest percentage of intelligentsia and highest illiteracy rate among Polish cities (Baranowski 1996). While in 1957 1/3 of its citizens were still not able to read and write and 7% of adults had never attended school (Kamiński 1962), in 1988, after over 30 years of socialist experiment and with Lodz's population exceeding 850,000, over 95% of its citizens had secondary or higher education (Dziciuchowicz 2009:228). While in 1960 only 415,000 people had graduated from universities, before PRL's collapse in 1988 the number had reached almost two million (Karpiński 2005:160). But, the core of social change was supposed to be of a more qualitative nature, consisting of an increase in educational desires and reconstruction of the social imagination, causing an education to be perceived as something attainable for all social strata. More women and workers were graduating not only from universities but also from high schools and trade schools, which became a main channel of upward social mobility. At the level of higher education the results were not so spectacular as had been planned and the gross enrolment index in institutions of higher education did not exceed 10%. For example, although in the 1970s already 40% of each year group of high school graduates entered universities (while before WWII this rate was 4-5%), 20-60% of students didn't finish even their first year of education, and most of them were of working-class origin (Szczepański 1976:77). Still, all of the following generations brought up during the People's Republic of Poland had greater chances to attain a higher level of education, and education inequalities were decreasing (Zawistowska 2012).

On a general level, it should be noted that universities were not the main place where this educational revolution took place. It rather happened in trade schools, technical colleges and technical universities. All in all, it is estimated that 24-35% of the post-war Polish population experienced upward mobility (Słomczyński 1973:122), and these were mainly comprised of two groups occupying opposite positions in the social structure: the intelligentsia and unskilled workers, starting from lowest positions. Even if the post-war press was encouraging the working classes to enrol in universities, this was still a rather rare choice for them.

Table 1. The percentage of University of Lodz students by social origin 1945-1969.

Years	Percentage of UL's students by social origin			
	workers	peasants	intelligenstsia	other
1945/46	21	26	39	14
1948/49	22	18	41	19
1951/52	36	19	40	5
1954/55	33	18	44	5
1957/58	33	21	40	6
1960/61	29	16	48	7
1963/64	31	14	49	6
1966/67	35	12	48	5
1968/69	36	12	47	5

Source: Kłoskowska 1970:206.

The mobility ladder for them was the trade schools, and even though a considerable number of working-class children entered the universities as well, they were still definitely a minority. Therefore, while political careers and even management positions were more open to working-class people (Słabek 2001; Szczepański 1993), the academic field also served as a testing ground for upward mobility. As the most elitist and hermetic social field, and also probably the one most sceptical to educational reform, academia revealed the limits of upward mobility.

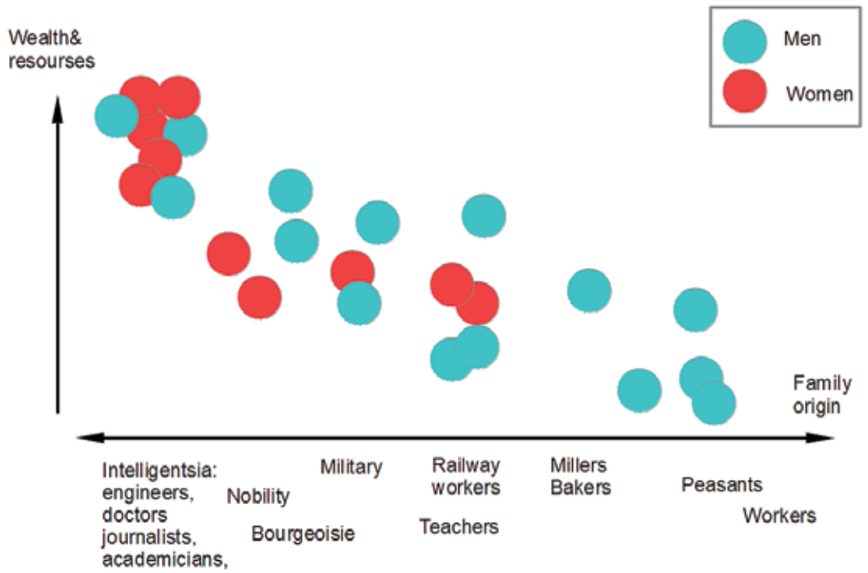
Academic Biographies

In this second part of the paper I present three biographies of 'future professors', that is, persons who started their academic careers during the time of reform. Along the lines of Daniel Bertaux (Bertaux 2004) and his influential work about Soviet Russia, where he refers to his understanding of the representativity of biographical research by stating that: "when picking a single witness whose life experience fits closely with what we know from history – his testimony reveals common patterns and mechanisms" (Bertaux 2004:13), in a similar vein I decided to select three biographical interviews to investigate patterns of embarking on an academic career during these turbulent times, and to trace the circumstances which determined this initial stage of this chosen biographical path. As stated, the presented materials are part of a wider collection of biographical interviews with almost 30 professors.[9]

[9] The research project "Academic Lodz – university in biographies" (2011-2014) was inspired by the methodological approach proposed first by Fritz Schutze and developed, *inter alia*, by the so-called Lodz biographical school (Kaźmierska 1999; 2008; Rokuszewska-Pawełek 2002; Waniek 2012).

In this group, most of the interviewees were born into intelligentsia families with high symbolical capital, and only a few came from peasant families (and none from workers). Intelligentsia should be understood here in a wide sense, including inter-war officers (military), teachers and even railway workers (Żarnowski 1965), as these were families with the highest symbolical and often economical capital. Although nobility was not to be counted as a part of intelligentsia (Jakubowska 2012), it was also a group characterized by a high symbolical capital.

Ilustration 1. Narrators social origin compared with wealth and resources available.



Source: Own elaboration.

An additional inspiring context was provided by the autobiographies written by professors themselves (*Moja droga do nauki [My path to science]* 1996, and others) and a collection of interviews with members of Polish Academy of Learning, re-established in 1989 (Kobos 2007 and others). The material selected for this article describes three representative academic biographical paths available to the generation born at the end of the 1920s/beginning of the 1930s. The first two cases - "the obvious" and "the romantic" - were born and raised in intelligentsia families, and the last case - "the unexpected" - was of peasant origin. There is a slight difference in the ages of the chosen professors, which might suggest a generational division between inter-war youth and the 'ZMP-generation' (Świda-Ziemba 2003). It is my belief that this is not an important feature in this case and analogical biographical paths occurred later on as well. It was rather the class background which was the crucial factor shaping this initial stage of academic biographies. Having the aim to answer the question about the reproduction of the academic field during the Stalinization of science, I focus mainly on a few elements of the otherwise dense and complex narrations: social background, moment of entering academia and future steps in one's career, and the position held in the academic field and attitudes towards its rules, as well as towards the influences of the political field. This is partly an attempt to answer the question: Which model of university – traditional (liberal) or modern (socialist) - was internalized during the academic careers of those persons whose biographical paths are presented?

1. The Obvious

The first narrator was born into a well-situated intelligentsia family in Lodz in 1926. Her safe childhood was interrupted by the war, but thanks to her family's social capital and savings, her level of life remained decent, allowing her to continue her educational path, almost without interruptions or delays, in the best schools available at that time. The interviewee was even introduced to academic circles in order to choose the future academic discipline that would most suit her interests, as her family network of contacts allowed for the organization of meetings with well-known professors. She relates that:

> [about choosing the field of study] It was a funny situation, as two families offered to help me. I was supposed to meet with two professors - one was with professor X, whom I knew, and the other with professor Y, about whom I knew nothing. But I learned […] that she was a very interesting person and conducted such an interesting study et cetera. so they arranged both meetings, and let's say that on Wednesday I had a meeting scheduled with Y - I had the address and a recommendation - and on Friday I had a meeting scheduled with X. So I went first to Y, and the professor convinced me at once. So I never went to the second meeting.

While this manner of arranging contacts was partly related to the war circumstances, still her educational career seems to be quite typical for an intelligentsia child, strongly supported by her family's social networks. It was obvious that she would start studies at university, as her older sister did, and she managed to attend an underground university. After the war, when the family managed to get back into its previous house, she continued her studies at the newly-established University of Lodz. She was deeply involved in the academic community and devoted to her academic supervisor. This dyadic relation of a master/mentor and pupil was typical of inter-war academia. She was involved in the organization of the new university, but on a purely academic level, avoiding political engagement and in fact was not even interested in politics, to which she referred in her interview as only annoying outside interruptions. Her whole narration is structured by her research projects and further scientific achievements. Although she lost her post at university during the peak of Stalinization (1952-1953), this event seems to have had only a minor impact on her academic path. She mentioned it only in the course of describing

a new research project in which she got involved. Her bonds with academic field and her master/mentor remained quite close and she got support from her family and husband, so she treated her dismissal as just a time-limited inconvenience. While she had problems with obtaining an academic degree and position owing to political reasons, it did not influence her academic career. She felt secure because her reference point was in academics, not politics, and it was rather the opinions of her supervisor that were crucial in the evaluation of her academic work, not the titles she held:

> After defending my PhD, I didn't do my habilitation for a long time; actually I hadn't defended my PhD for a long time as well because it was abolished. There were only exams and a title of candidate of science, and I had no great desire to pass an exam on Marxism-Leninism, because there was this Marxism-Leninism exam [...] And, we were all incurably non-party (laughs), with my professor leading the way. And due to this fact I did my PhD only in 1959 when the title of candidate of science was abolished.

Her biographical path is in many places and moments typical of that of a traditional university academic in inter-war academia – she is from a well-situated family, has close relation with her supervisor (mentor). Her definition of what the university is seems obvious, almost invisible or transparent, rooted in tradition. So are the rules that one follows – they constitute an inner moral compass she seemed to have socialized at home and during her education. From this perspective political changes are unexpected and unwanted outside interventions - not needed, rare and incomprehensible.

2. The Romantic

The second narrator was born in 1931 to a military officer's family. During the war the level of life of her family was quite stable, although her father went missing (but survived the war). Despite changing places of living, her educational path was also stable and when family arrived in Lodz in 1945 she continued her education in well-respected schools, without suffering any delays as a result of the war. Although in her family there were no expectations for women to be educated at the university level, when she had decided to sign up for the University of Lodz she received strong support – including even when she became politically active in communist youth organizations, which her family disapproved of. As she claimed, she was a representative of a generation too young to participate consciously in the war experience or the Warsaw Uprising. It was a generation that also felt a hunger for a grand narrative that wanted to be involved in a social change:

> I had a great interest in social issues, and the influence of Marxism, Leninism was very large (...) I belonged to the generation that was too late to participate... maybe I would have been a scout in Warsaw, but I lived in the countryside, so I did not participate in the Resistance. After the war we wanted to change the world through such slogans as free education, free health care and equality, equal treatment. In the countryside I saw how the farmhands were treated. It all somehow appealed to me.

With this romanticized notion, she was expected to be a part of the ZMP-generation and become a part of the new intelligentsia building a socialist university. Her university education coincided with the reform, of which she remained critical, searching independently for preserved niches of more traditional academia. Soon she settled in the elite group of students and assistants, all of intelligentsia origin (which even became an issue of official discussion and intervention):

> All of us [the department's faculty] were of intelligentsia origin so in the end this was badly seen. I was hired (...) as well of intelligentsia origin. And finally, Professor C., he came to his senses or was under pressure (...) he had to take someone from the new students, who would have a good class origin and was in the Party.

Her initial social engagement passed quickly and did not help her in her academic career – from the perspective of the local Party executive her social background seemed more important. While still studying and being active in many student projects, she began to work at the University as a typist and moved smoothly to an academic position after graduation. Throughout her whole narration a noticeable amount of space is given to her political and social activity.

This case may seem to be similar to the previous one, but the difference lies in her initial engagement and attitude towards political activity. She wanted to be an active subject in the current changes and was interested in politics and its relation with academia. However, following her initial engagement in communist youth organizations she became highly critical of the existing order. The more she became involved in the academic community and its traditional values, the more she became distanced from the governmental reforms of universities and the political order in general. Hers is a case of a politically active academician who at first became enraptured by the new system and later became disillusioned with it, albeit still involved in ongoing social change. Her academic career developed smoothly with the strong support of her husband (also an academician and dissident) and a close circle of scientists.

3. The Unexpected

The last of the narrators presented here is also the youngest. He was born into a peasant family in 1934. As he avoided talking about his childhood, we know only that his entire family except for his grandmother was killed during the war. Despite the difficult conditions, he commenced education in pedagogical high school in a small town, where he became the leader of a workshop and was exempted from a work order (i.e., an obligatory appointment to a job in provincial schools in his case).

> [in the 1950s] most of my colleagues had to go to work immediately. Then the country (with emphasis) needed people. There was more work then, so to speak (...) and just physically, biologically fit human beings were needed.

Due to his having obtained the title of workshop leader he was able to enrol in university. For personal reasons he chose Lodz and started courses in 1953, when the condition of this particular university was relatively poor and the Stalinization of science was reaching its peak. Already in the first

year he became the best student, surprised that he was given an award for his high marks, as studying was "just his duty". He was also active in student communist youth organizations, successfully seeking opportunities to participate in both the political and cultural life of a big city.

> [Around 1953-55] there were some elections. I do not remember whether they were the parliamentary one or to the councils, but the polling station was in the school, and one of the boys ran up and said that there are some hooligans, immediately, not agitated by anyone, all the students who had very different views and were not always enthusiastic about the, as it was then called, the 'new or current reality' or the Polish People's Republic, still upon hearing the news that something was happening at the polling station, everyone immediately rushed to the rescue. Before the militia arrived, order was restored.

Just after having defended his highly rated M.A. thesis he obtained a proposition from his supervisor and began his quite regular academic career, stabilized also by his early-established family. Until today he still retains enthusiasm and sentiment for the People's Republic of Poland and its social achievements.

In this case the narrator began his academic path without a previous habitus of intelligentsia, or attachment to any defined model of a university or set of values and rules. He has entered an educational path unexpected for his social origin - both from perspective of traditional academia and a socialistic one (which needed educated specialist for industry and primary education). He was the beneficiary of the newly opened possibilities for social advancement. Nevertheless, at the same time the idea of a traditional university turns out to be closer to him than one might expect. His initial enthusiasm for social and political order of 1950s is not problematic for him – nor does he try to distance himself from it. Still, in later fragments of his narration he focuses mainly on his scientific career, where he did not try to influence either reality or the university in any way. He seems to have continued his initial political and social engagement in his academic work, serving his country and society. His position in academia, as well as his economic status was stable, partly thanks to his wife's position as a manager of a local state institution.

His biographical path seems to be a perfect exemplification of the 'ZMP-generation' and the creation of the new intelligentsia. His 'proper' social origin, spectacular upward mobility, political activity, faith in the modernization project and the excellent academic results of his work make him a perfect 'socialist' scientist. However, one feature may be considered an exception to this model – when he embarked on his academic career he became, at the same time, a representative of traditional academia in the sense of values, relations, and his understanding of the aims of a scientist and the role of the university. This is especially visible in his relations with his mentor and the criteria of his academic career.

To sum up the main differences between these three biographies I have focused on a few specific moments and aspects of their biographical paths, which were related with their academic careers.

Table 2. Comparison of selected biographical features.

	THE OBVIOUS	THE ROMANTIC	THE UNEXPECTED
SOCIAL BACKGROUND	Intelligentsia	Intelligentsia	Peasant
TURNING POINT	Meeting with Master	Social relations in inter-war academic circles	Political privilege
ACADEMIC CAREER	Despite official obstacles, very close relation with Master	Strong social bonds, high social sensitivity	Close relation to Master, stable academic career
POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT	None, politics means problems	ZMP activist, later on – critical	Believer and supporter of socialist modernization

Source: Own elaboration.

The first case reflects a traditional academic career – it is driven by the stable and almost invisible rules of an academic field, based on the model of a traditional university. The political realm is seen as external and hostile. In the second case, the narrator's strong social sensitivity led her to both join the ZMP, as well as later participate in many opposition initiatives. At the beginning of her biographical path the influence of the political field and the socialist model of a university seems to be strong, although she later became highly critical towards the implemented version of the socialist university and the proposed version of communism. Without denying her previous engagement, she became a critic of the socialist university and built her academic career within the framework of a traditional university. Finally, the third narrator represents a perfect product of socialist upward mobility, yet although he preserved a nostalgia and admiration for socialist modernization, he himself became socialized into a traditional academic habitus, probably mainly because of his close relationship with his mentor/master. His academic career developed smoothly within the visible criteria of traditional academia, and he also stayed away from political engagement. Therefore in all three cases the narrators ended up with stable academic careers within a traditional model of university.

The Pre-War Intelligentsia Ethos

When power, however ruthless and forceful, "hits the ground," it is met with various interactive dynamics and reshaped along different structural and personal vectors. It was no different with the Stalinization of science. Here, the reconstitution of forced imperatives was made through people personally involved in benign projects of radical democratization and modernization. In all three examined cases the academic field gained dominance at certain moments of the narrators' careers. The acceptance of its rules and values seems to be a constitutive factor for continuing an

academic career. In the first two cases this process was supported by social origin and strong ties between the narrators and important others, who belonged to inter-war academia. The third case, as well as a few other similar careers of professors of working-class origin, created an unexpected pattern.

Table 3. Comparison of political and academic filed influence on biographies.

POLITICAL / ACADEMIC FIELD DOMINANCE			
At the beginning of their academic career	Academic	Political	Political
During their academic career	Academic	Academic	Academic

Source: Own elaboration.

A closer look at the biographical material provides a basis for criticism of the one-dimensional picture of post-war academia, which seems to dominate historical studies on the issue. The post-war reform created new paths of social mobility, making space for people earlier excluded from this type of career. What is interesting is that even those who benefited from organizational reform were themselves deeply socialized into the traditional model of academia, which existed as a positive model and a guarantee of developing an academic career. The radical, outsider and imposed modernization of science generated a sense of loss and strong nostalgia for a never-existing traditional model of university – not only among inter-war intellectuals and students of intelligentsia origin, but also among the beneficiaries of the very change itself.

The two main narratives of the post-war period in academia assume the dominance of the political field, both in the case of creation of a new intelligentsia and a captive university: the first narrative is about seduction, the second about enslavement. However, this is not the only vector of social changes which were in play. The fight against inter-war academia and the traditional university – a part of the narrative about the captive university – led ironically to reproduction of the traditional university. Two opposite vectors of social change met in the academic field. In the case of the new generation of academicians, those who were supposed to become a new intelligentsia reproduced the traditional university model. The vector of the academic field turned out to be stronger and probably determined their biographical path.[10] Even if the post-war social imagination had been reconstructed and educational desires emerged, still the habitus of working class children had to adjust to the academic field. Those who experienced the upward mobility path to intelligentsia entered an unknown and alien culture. The field of academia valued inter-war patterns of behaviour, rules and the traditional model of university, and it remained highly critical of the socialist model of university and the modernization project as such. Those who entered academia had to socialize themselves into the traditional university, and if they wanted to continue their academic careers they needed to adjust. This is why they would not become the new intelligentsia.

The changes provided by socialist reform were a shallow facade, and the rules of the academic field at that particular historical moment were preserved, as is clearly visible in case of "The Obvious", who views her loss of her job as only a temporary setback. During the reform eleven assistant professors lost their jobs, yet nine of them - like our as ours chosen narrator – later continued their academic careers. Furthermore, while academic titles were granted to 302 people in 1951-54, only 41 were Party members (Connelly 1999:198). The failure to produce a new academic intelligentsia was not only a problem of generations (Świda-Ziemba 2003), but rather of classes, their values and languages (Swartz 2012). Furthermore, the research from the late 1950s revealed a profound distinction in educational aspirations between workers and intelligentsia families. While working classes wished for their children only to avoid physical work, the intelligentsia aimed at an academic career for their children – becoming a professor was a dream biographical plan (Szczepański 1960). In the 1980s 68% of academicians teaching at universities were of intelligentsia origin, as were the students planning an academic career (Najduchowska and Wnuk-Lipińska 1990).

On one hand, the academic field was supposed to adjust to the political reform, but this evoked, on the other hand, the resistance of inter-war academicians and led to an attempt to preserve the model of a traditional university. The reform excluded many professors from academic life, allowed some to develop their careers based on political capital, and opened the possibilities of upward mobility for the working classes. However those who wanted to obtain a position in the academic field had to adjust to its underlying values, which were still not changed by the reform. The radical project of social reform did not influence the inner-ruled academic field. The narrative of a captive university produced by the totalitarian paradigm conceals the highly conservative character of the academic field and its high level of autonomy, especially considering values and the criteria for granting positions to newcomers. Inter-war academia, seeing itself as an imagined liberal univerity, defended itself from the wave of 'barbarians at the gates'.

[10] From Pierre Bourdie's perspective, from which I borrow the terms 'academic and political field', this process could be described as hysteresis, a term employed to indicate a cultural lag or mismatch between habitus and the changing rules, values and regularities of a field. (Hardy 2012) Bourdieu described the hysteresis effect in *Homo academicus* as a reactionary mobilization in defense of what previously had been taken-for-granted practices and dispositions and a "profound transformation in the logic of the professors' collective action, by substituting concerted action deliberately orientated towards the preservation of the status quo for a spontaneously orchestrated ensemble of actions inspired by the solidarity with an 'elite'." (Grenfell 2012:133; Bourdieu 1988:151).

Acknowledgments

The work on this article was part of a research project realized at University of Lodz, Poland, financed by the Polish National Science Center, research grant Preludium 2 contracted as UMO-2011/03/N/HS6/01948. I am especially grateful for professor Brian Porter-Szücs for his remarks on this paper.

References

Arnason, Johann P. 2000. "Communism and Modernity." *Daedalus* 129(1):61-90.

Baranowski, Krzysztof. 1996. *Inteligencja łódzka w latach II Rzeczypospolitej*. Lodz: Wydawnictwo PŁ.

Bertaux, Daniel (ed.). 2004. *On Living through Soviet Russia*. Routledge Studies in Memory and Narrative, v. 12. London, New York: Routledge.

Bourdieu, Pierre. 1988. *Homo Academicus*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Connelly, John. 1999. "The Foundation of Diversity: Communist Higher Education Policies in Eastern Europe 1945-1955." Pp. 125-139 in *Science under Socialism*, edited by K. Macrakis, D. Hoffman. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Connelly, John. 2000. *Captive University: The Sovietization of East German, Czech and Polish Higher Education, 1945-1956*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

Connelly, John. 2014. *Zniewolony uniwersytet: sowietyzacja szkolnictwa wyższego w Niemczech wschodnich, Czechach i Polsce 1945-1956*. Translated by Witold Rodkiewicz. Warsaw: Polska Akademia Nauk.

Dziciuchowicz, Jerzy. 2009. "Ludność Łodzi od 1918 do lat 90. XX wieku." Pp. 91-100 in *Łódź: monografia miasta*, edited by S. Liszewski. Lodz: ŁTN.

Fleming, Michael. 2010. *Communism, Nationalism and Ethnicity in Poland, 1944-50*. Basees/Routledge Series on Russian and East European Studies 58. London, New York: Routledge.

Grenfell, Michael. 2012. *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Durham: Acumen Publishing.

GUS. 1964. *Polska W Liczbach 1944-1964*. Warsaw: GUS.

Hardy, Cheryl. 2012. "Hysteresis." Pp. 126-146 in *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*, edited by Michael Grenfell. Durham: Acumen Publishing.

Herczyński, Ryszard. 2008. *Spętana nauka: opozycja intelektualna w Polsce 1945-1970*. Warsaw: Semper.

Hübner, Piotr. 1983. *I Kongres Nauki Polskiej jako forma realizacji założeń polityki naukowej państwa ludowego*. Wroclaw: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Jakubowska, Longina. 2012. *Patrons of history: Nobility, Capital and Political Transitions in Poland*. Farnham: Ashgate Publishing.

Kamiński, Aleksander. 1962. "Łódź kulturalna – uwagi wstępne." Pp. 267-274 in *Łódź w latach 1945-1960*, edited by E. Rosset. Lodz: Wydawnictwo Łódzkie.

Karpiński, Jakub. 2005. *Ustrój komunistyczny w Polsce*. Warsaw: Akademia Leona Koźminskiego.

Kaźmierska, Kaja. 1999. *Doświadczenia wojenne Polaków a kształtowanie tożsamości etnicznej: analiza narracji kresowych*. Warsaw: PAN.

Kaźmierska, Kaja. 2008. *Biografia i pamięć: na przykładzie pokoleniowego doświadczenia ocalonych z zagłady*. Cracow: „Nomos."

Kenney, Padraic. 2012. *Rebuilding Poland: Workers and Communists, 1945-1950*. Ithaca, London: Cornell University Press.

Kersten, Krystyna. 1991. *The establishment of Communist rule in Poland, 1943-1948*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Kłoskowska, Antonina. 1970. *Uniwersytet Łódzki 1945-1970*. Warsaw, Lodz: PWN.

Kobos, Andrzej M. 2007. *Po drogach uczonych: z członkami Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności rozmawia Andrzej M. Kobos. T. 1*. Cracow: Polska Akademia Umiejętności.

Kotkin, Stephen. 1998. "1991 and the Russian Revolution: Sources, Conceptual Categories, Analytical Frameworks." *Journal of Modern History* 70(2):384-425.

Leder, Andrzej. 2014. *Prześniona rewolucja ćwiczenie z logiki historycznej*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej.

Malia, Martin. 2008. *Soviet Tragedy: a History of Socialism in Russia 1917–1991*. New York: Simon and Schuster.

Moja droga do nauki. 1996. T. 1. Lodz: ŁTN.

Najduchowska, Halina and Elżbieta Wnuk-Lipińska. 1990. *Nauczyciele akademiccy 1984*. Warsaw: PWN.

Natkowska, Monika. 1999. *Numerus clausus, getto ławkowe, numerus nullus, „paragraf aryjski": antysemityzm na Uniwersytecie Warszawskim 1931-1939*. Warsaw: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny.

Palska, Hanna. 1994. *Nowa inteligencja w Polsce Ludowej: świat przedstawień i elementy rzeczywistości*. Warsaw: PAN.

Pleskot, Patryk and Tadeusz Paweł Rutkowski (eds.). 2009. *Spętana Akademia: Polska Akademia Nauk w dokumentach władz PRL*. Warsaw: IPN.

Rokuszewska-Pawełek, Alicja. 2002. *Chaos i przymus: trajektorie wojenne Polaków: analiza biograficzna*. Lodz: Wydawnictwo UŁ.

Scott, Peter. 1995. *The Meanings of Mass Higher Education*. Buckingham: SRHE, Open University Press.

Słabek, Henryk. 2001. "Wychodźstwo robotnicze: awans społeczny jednostek i zubożenie klasy?" Pp. 313-324 in *Komunizm: ideologia, system, ludzie*, edited by Tomasz Szarota. Warsaw: Neriton.

Słomczyński, Kazimierz M. 1973. "Rola wykształcenia w procesie ruchliwości wewnątrzpokoleniowej." Pp. 103-123 in *Struktura i ruchliwość społeczna*, edited by K.M. Słomczyński and W. Wesołowski. Gdansk: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.

Stoica, Augustin. 1997. "Communism as a Project for Modernization: The Romanian Case." *Polish Sociological Review* 120:313-331.

Swartz, David. 2012. *Culture and Power: The Sociology of Pierre Bourdieu*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Świda-Ziemba, Hanna. 2003. *Urwany lot: pokolenie inteligenckiej młodzieży powojennej w świetle listów i pamiętników z lat 1945-1948*. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

Świda-Ziemba, Hanna. 2010. *Młodzież PRL: portrety pokoleń w kontekście historii*. Cracow: Wydawnictwo Literackie.

Szczepański, Jan (ed.). 1960. *Wykształcenie a pozycja społeczna inteligencji: praca zbiorowa*. T. 2. Lodz: PWN.

Szczepański, Jan. 1976. *Szkice o szkolnictwie wyższym*. Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna.

Szczepański, Jan. 1993. *Polskie losy*. Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza "BGW."

Waniek, Katarzyna. 2012. *Polish Immigrants to Germany: Biographical Analysis of Narrative Interviews with Young Polish People Who Left for Germany Between 1989 and 1999*. Lodz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

Żarnowski, Janusz. 1965. *O inteligencji polskiej lat międzywojennych*. Warsaw: Wiedza Powszechna.

Zawistowska, Alicja. 2012. *Horyzontalne nierówności edukacyjne we współczesnej Polsce*. Warsaw: Scholar.

Zysiak, Agata. 2014. "The Desire for Fullness. The Fantasmatic Logic of Modernization Discourses at the Turn of the 19th and 20th Century in Lodz." *Praktyka Teoretyczna* 3(13):41-69.

Zysiak, Agata. 2015. "Modernizing Science: Between a Liberal, Social, and Socialistic University - The Case of Poland and the University of Łódź (1945-1953)." *Science in Context* 28(2):215-236.

Citation

Zysiak, Agata. 2015. „The Socialist Project for a New Intelligentsia and Its Limits. Academic Careers in the Polish Post-War University: A Biographical Perspective." *Przegląd Socjologii Jakościowej* 11(3):90-108. Retrieved Month, Year (www.przegladsocjologiijakosciowej.org).

Socjalistyczny projekt nowej inteligencji i jego granice. Kariery akademickie na powojennym uniwersytecie w Polsce: perspektywa biograficzna

Abstrakt: Tematem artykułu jest powojenna rekonstrukcja polskiej akademii z perspektywy młodych pracowników naukowych i studentów. Pokolenie urodzone w latach dwudziestych i trzydziestych XX wieku było świadkami fundamentalnej zmiany polskiego społeczeństwa, kiedy także inteligencja i uniwersytety musiały stawić czoła dramatycznym wydarzeniom związanym z II wojną światową. Nadchodząca reforma systemu szkolnictwa wyższego była próbą budowy socjalistycznego uniwersytetu i egalitarnego społeczeństwa. Te procesy są zazwyczaj widziane jako dominacja akademii przez pole polityczne, zniewolenie profesorów czy uwiedzenie studentów. Jest to część tego procesu. Jednak w opozycji do takiego ujęcia tematu artykuł proponuje tezę, iż to pole akademickie kształtowało biograficzne ścieżki przyszłych naukowców przynajmniej na równi – jeśli nie silniej – niż czynniki polityczne, których rolę zazwyczaj się podkreśla. Trzy wybrane biografie akademików przedstawiają nie złożoność tych procesów, ale także odmienne konstelacje między politycznymi zmianami, uniwersytetem, akademickim habitusem i edukację szkolnictwa wyższego.

Słowa kluczowe: uniwersytet, inteligencja, Polska powojenna, biografia, socjalistyczna modernizacja