Przegląd

Socjologii

Jakościowej

Tom XI
Numer 3

Changes in a Human Life

pod redakcją
Izabeli Ślęzak
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Editorial:

Changes in a Human Life

Abstract   The subject of the volume *Changes in a human life* is the process of the broadly understood transformation taking place in the lives of both individuals and whole communities. It is a process that may have various faces and characters and that may refer to numerous fields of research and various contexts. Therefore, the group of notions that the authors of this volume focus on is comprised of those related to the problems of disability, fatherhood, prostitution, intelligence, corporate work or migration. The included articles are of an overview, exploratory and empirical nature. However, all of them bring the reader closer to the processuality, changeability and dynamism of the lives lived by individuals and communities.

Keywords   changeability, processuality, individual, society, qualitative sociology

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The world is built from social meanings, ascribed by people (...). The matter of changing the state of affairs consists in transforming the ascribed meaning. (Soder 1989: 121)

It is often emphasized that the lives of individuals and whole societies are connected with omnipresent dynamics, and the existence of contemporary man may be perceived as a process of permanent change. In a sociological context, the change means the transformation of one system status to another. Separate changes are interconnected, overlapping, and they trigger subsequent transformations. Therefore, they create a series of subsequent phases or stages of a given process, causally conditioned (Sztompka 2005:20-27).

The transformations may take place in various fields and in different dimensions, and they may be analyzed on various levels: macro-social (in whole societies and international systems), mezosocial (taking place in local communities and large organizations) and micro-social (within small groups and human attitudes). These levels penetrate and stimulate each other, creating a space for various social phenomena.

The psychosocial mechanisms and consequences of the processes of social transformations provided a topic of interest for scholars from the Chicago School, who were the first authors of works applying *life records* (Szczepański 1976:36). As far back as 1921, in the work entitled *Old World Trains Translated* (Park, Miller 1921), which related to the Americanization of emigrants, particular chapters were devoted to, among others, the problems of lost status, adjustment to the individualist society, the func-

tioning of immigrant societies, or interconnected institutions (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:21). Herbert Blumer (2007) in turn, one of the key representatives of the Chicago School, believed that a change poses an indispensable attribute of a society, which - as he claimed - was not a static structure, but rather a being that is dynamically reconstructed within a course of interactions taking place between individuals. He stated that social reality is of a processual nature, based on the interpretation of the meanings of common definitions of particular situations agreed on by its members. Individuals are active and fully aware actors here, acting on the basis of meanings ascribed to objects, therefore co-creating reality, and not reacting passively and lifelessly to external stimuli (Blumer 2007). Individuals that interact with one another communicate, thus creating the basis for the construction of a real and intersubjective world of people endowed with the sense of their own ego. Society, in turn, is created, maintained and transformed thanks to people's abilities not only to think and define, but also to self-reflect and self-evaluate, presenting the result of human actions, how all significant aspects of their life are interpreted on a current basis (Szacki 2002:545 and further). Hence, society is a process of entities that adjust to each other during interactions, acting in a specific social context (Blumer 1975:78; 2007:55-60). The individuals interpret a given situation on a current basis, which means that each course of action is constructed from the beginning (Blumer 2007:17).

At the same time, as is pointed out by Anselm L. Strauss (1959:94-95), being influenced by new conditions, external circumstances and various types

of human relationships, the identity of a given individual may undergo transformation. Some of those changes are planned or at least supported by members of social institutions which the individual takes part in (e.g. transformations of identity related to a professional career), others take place despite or against such regulated anticipations (then we can speak of the trajectory of a human life) (Strauss 1959).

Therefore, to grasp the transformations in a human life we may use the notion of a career, which will be understood in accordance with the definition developed by Everett C. Hughes (1958:63), as a "moving perspective in which the person sees his life as a whole and interprets the meaning of his various attributes, actions and things, which happen to him." It is usually possible to list several stages or phases within each career which transform the positions, functions and the manner of how the self is perceived by individuals (cf. Goffman 1961; Becker 1961 et al.). The category of career, as suggested by Howard S. Becker and James W. Carper (1956:289), bears both an objective component, pointing to changes at the level of participation in institutions, and a subjective one, "looked into in categories of ego, identity and transformation."

In turn, the already mentioned notion of trajectory is related to the course of certain experiences in time. According to the concept proposed by Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss (1968; 1975), this notion describes the evolution of a given phenomenon, the appearance of subsequent stadia as well as everything that supports their creation and development. As claimed by Fritz Schütze and Gerhard Riemann (1992; see also Schütze 1997), a trajectory is

a process of chaos, encroaching the individual process of life, leaving permanent traces in a biography and identity.

Taking into account the inspirations and theoretical references mentioned above, the articles comprised in this issue are related to the perspective of those researched, transforming their own points of view into a starting point for the construction of theoretical generalizations (cf. Włodarek, Ziółkowski 1990:55). The authors of particular texts adopt the aim of finding meaning in the experiences of ordinary people, thus answering the questions: how do they ascribe meaning to their experiences, and how is it defined, interpreted, understood, expressed and embodied within interactions that take place between actively operating individuals?

The issue opens with a text by Elżbieta Zakrzewska-Manterys, entitled *A History of the Exclusion of the Mentally Handicapped*, where the author deliberates the comprehension of the words "disability" and "intelligence" (which create the term intellectual disability). Two contrasting ways of comprehending the term intelligence have been presented there: derived from ancient times and introduced by the modern system of psychological measures. The author makes an attempt to bring the reader closer to the consequences of understanding the human conditions entangled in the modern world which are brought by the application of those two approaches to the term intelligence. Both linguistic deliberations as well as those related to the application of the segregation policy towards the intellectually disabled serve to highlight the worse social situation of this category of person. The author presents numerous

examples of the treatment of intellectually disabled individuals over the course of decades, thus proving the transformations that influenced how they were perceived by society, especially in the states of the Western cultural circle, which developed a policy of integration and social inclusion. Zakrzewska-Manterys, in the conclusion of her article states that *communion with intellectually disabled people starts being symmetrical, which means that it enriches ourselves*. For numerous years, relations with our disabled fellow human beings took the form of charitable actions. It is changing. We do not need to defend their humanity anymore, because they are able to take care of it themselves.

Also, Jakub Niedbalski, in his article entitled *The Role of Sport in the Reconstruction Process of the Identity of a Person With an Acquired Body Dysfunction*, raises the notion of transformations that take place in physically disabled individuals through their involvement in a sports activity. In the article, the author attempts to prove that practicing sport may create advantageous conditions for self-discovery and self-acceptance by a person with an acquired body dysfunction. Niedbalski's goal is to present the mechanisms of the emancipatory role of sport practiced by individuals with disabilities, as well as to emphasize the manner in which sport influence the self-perception of a disabled person. Therefore, the purpose of the conducted research is to analyze the processual dimension of the transformations of a disabled person's life which take place under the influence of experiences related to practicing sport. The drawn conclusions suggest that sport constitutes not only an opportunity to stay fit and healthy, but also to integrate the disabled through providing

them with the possibility to participate in a broader social life.

Kamila Biały, the author of a text entitled *Professional Biographies of Polish Corporation Workers in the Late Capitalist World*, presents three types of professional careers, based on narrative interviews with managers and representatives of professionals. While applying a conceptual framework derived from sociological language, especially from the perspective of Fritz Schütze, and psychological language, mainly the characterological-developmental theory developed by Stephen Johnson, the author makes an attempt to reconstruct the course and particular phases of the process where the subjects get involved in the corporational order. The author is interested, on the one hand, in the basic structures of the biographical experience of the maturing process in a corporation and, on the other, in their connection with the sphere of institutional solutions. Hence, the interest in biography should answer two crucial questions: what kinds of experience do we need to deal with (*biographical action scheme, institutional schedule for organizing biography, trajectory, biographical metamorphosis*), and how does it reflect something called corporational order, i.e. a certain kind of arrangement characteristic for late capitalism in its connections with Europeanization and globalization processes, multi-culturalism and trans-culturalism, as well as the neoliberal organization of a social life.

Two other texts are also related to biographical experiences. The first one, written by Paulina Bunio-Mroczek, *Becoming a teenage father. Having a Baby as a Turning Point in Biographies of Young Men of Low*

Socioeconomic Status Inhabiting Poverty Enclaves, raises matters related to the reconstruction of the process of becoming a father in the case of young men lacking father figures themselves, and whose fatherhood was often questioned because of their low socio-economic status. The aim of the article is to reflect on the process of change in the biographies of young men of low socio-economic status brought up in so-called "poverty enclaves" who became fathers as teenagers. The empirical grounds of the analysis are qualitative interviews that were part of the research on teenage parenthood as a risk of poverty and social exclusion conducted within the framework of "Strengthening Opportunities and Weakening the Processes of Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty among the Inhabitants of the Cities of the Lodz Province – WZLOT" project. The theoretical framework for the analysis is the concept of transformation and identity change by Anselm L. Strauss.

Another text related to biographic research is the article written by Agata Zysiak, entitled *The Socialist Project for a New Intelligentsia and its Limits. Academic Careers in the Polish Post-War University: a Biographical Perspective.* The author examines the postwar period of reconstruction of the Polish academic system from the perspective of young academicians and students of that time. The author examines the stories of the Polish Intelligentsia, who after WWII had to face dramatic events related to the forthcoming reform of science and the higher education system, which was an attempt to build a socialist university and an egalitarian society. According to Zysiak, those processes are often viewed as the political domination of academia, the captivity of professors and the seduction of students. However, on the ba-

sis of the conducted research, the author concludes that the academic field and its associated processes shaped the biographical paths of erstwhile academics as strongly, if not stronger, as political factors, which are usually brought to the forefront by researchers. To confirm her statements, the author selected three academic biographies to present the complexity of those processes. At the same time, they reveal different patterns of the interplay among political changes, the university, the academic habitus and higher education reform.

The next article in the presented volume is entitled *The Importance of Subjectively Constructed Meaning: Integration Viewed From the Perspective of Immigrants,* written by two scholars, Markieta Domecka and Antonella Spanò. The authors are focused on the term integration, which is commonly viewed in the context of migration. According to the authors, the perspective of the receiving countries (not migrants) - dominating in the performed social studies - which is based on 'objective indicators' and statistical analysis, the level of integration is measured and assessed as 'low' or 'high', 'sufficient' or 'insufficient'. Therefore, the authors decided to ask the migrants themselves what integration means to them. The analysis of the narrative interviews conducted with Ukrainian, Srilankese and Senegalese men and women living in the South of Italy has demonstrated that integration for them is related more strongly to the notion of a 'good life' than to the desire to become 'one of us'. From their narratives emerges the idea of integration as acceptance and satisfaction but without aspirations for equality, participation and full social and political rights, which calls for more active integration policies.

The issue closes with a text entitled *The Influence of Significant Others on the Course of the Process of Leaving Sex Work*, written by Izabela Ślęzak. The author raises the matter of a biographical change which is blocked, and regardless of the intentions or desires of the individuals, it cannot be realized. The author, based on her long-standing research experiences, presents the phenomenon on the example of women who provide sexual services in escort agencies. More precisely, it is based on the example of those researched women who thought about, expected and planned to leave sex work, though they were incapable of executing this transformation. The article presents the conditions which interfere in the process, support identity transformations, and effectively block the potential of *sex workers* to realize their biographical plans of action. As a result, the researched women continued engagement in *indoor sex work*, even if the action was highly unsatisfactory for them.

All of the issues collected in the articles present the problems of the transformations in the researched individuals' lives, triggered by particular experiences, in a matter appropriate for their authors. Referring to the selected theoretical background and methodological basis for the research, the authors of the separate articles make successful attempts - in a highly interesting and well-thought out manner - to reconstruct the process of changes related to biography, identity and the ego of individuals, doing it in various contexts of social life. Therefore, they not only bring the reader closer to the scope and character of the transformations that take place in lives of those researched and their environments, but they also prove that the process of change, both in the individual and collective respect, is permanently inscribed in the sphere of sociological research.

Happy reading!

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Citation

Zmiany w życiu człowieka

Abstrakt: Przedmiotem tomu zatytułowanego *Zmiany w życiu człowieka* jest proces szeroko rozumianej zmiany zachodzącej zarówno w życiu jednostek, jak i całych zbiorowości. Proces, który może mieć różne oblicza oraz charakter i który może odnosić się do wielu obszarów badawczych oraz rozmaitych kontekstów. Z tego względu wśród podejmowanych przez autorów niniejszego tomu zagadnień znalazły się te odnoszące się do problematyki niepełnosprawności, ojcostwa, prostytucji, inteligencji, pracy korporacyjnej czy imigracji. Zawarte w nim artykuły mają charakter przeglądowy, eksploracyjny, jak i empiryczny. Wszystkie jednak odsłaniają przed czytelnikiem procesualność, zmienność i dynamizm życia jednostek oraz zbiorowości.

Słowa kluczowe: zmienność, procesualność, jednostka, społeczeństwo, socjologia jakościowa

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A History of the Exclusion of the Mentally Handicapped

Abstract   The article corresponds to the problems of terms describing people as mentally disabled vs. intellectually disabled, compared to those with an intellectual disability. The application of each of those notions is justified by the premises of an axiological and worldview nature. Political correctness encourages us to replace stigmatizing terms with more neutral ones. However, the question arises: from where did the terms of a discriminating character appear in the language?

The article presents examples of the application of segregation policy since the 1970s, as a result of which the intellectually disabled remained in residential care centers, separated from the rest of society. Based on the literature of the 1970s, a dramatic picture of the fate of people deprived of human dignity is painted. This situation meant that the terms applied to intellectually disabled people condemned them to the worst position in society. It began to change when the policy of social integration and inclusion was implemented in the West.

The second part of the article includes deliberations over the understanding of the words "disability" and "intelligence" (a word present in the term intellectual disability). Two contrasting ways of comprehending the term intelligence are presented: one derived from ancient times and the other introduced by the modern system of psychological measures. I demonstrate what consequences the application of those two understandings of the term intelligence bring for the understanding of the human condition entangled in the modern world.

The summary presents the conclusion that mental retardation does not need to be treated as a deficiency or a dysfunction, but it may be – according to the idea of variety – treated as an equal way of being a human, different from the statistical majority of the population, however, still demonstrating a unique specificity and beauty.

Keywords   mental handicap, intellectual disability, segregative policy, integration, inclusion, diversity, humanity

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A notion that appears increasingly often in the literature of sociology related to the people discussed in the paper is the notion of variety. I am not willing to name the terms, as any that I would use would not be philosophically or axiologically innocent. Each suggests a certain philosophy, a specific manner of thinking about the world. The notion of variety appears increasingly more often in speaking about those people, and there are even some attempts made to determine those individuals not in categories of disability but in categories of "queer" (McRuer 2006). This term is synonymous to disquieting, eccentric, odd. McRuer introduces a theory he calls "compulsory able-bodiedness" and argues that the term "disability" is produced by the system of compulsory able-bodiedness, just as the system of compulsory heterosexuality produces queerness (2006:2).

It would seem that deliberations over these problems are only of a linguistic nature, seemingly referring to the comprehension of words. However, words are not the object of attention and reflection by people. The exploitation of certain terms hides the intention to introduce the mentioned people into a specific social context. This process of naming encompasses the beautiful concept called political correctness. But, praising the concept of political correctness can lead us on a wild goose chase. Because if we were to succeed in coming up with an axiologically neutral notion, not stigmatized, the ruthless colloquial language would take over the term almost immediately, transforming it into a stigma. That was the case with the idea of "mental handicap", which was anti-stigmatizing towards the notion "mental defective". When that became stigmatizing, a new term was developed, "disabled persons", and from that "persons with disabilities".

Modern Rationality of 20th Century

The pursuit for non-stigmatized terminology has not been around for long in Europe. In Scandinavian countries, which were the first in Europe, and in the world, to begin the process of integration and normalization, disabled individuals growing up in the 1970s and 1980s were called "the first generation of integration" (Gustavsson 1996:232). Since then, there have been numerous attempts made to "bring back into society" those who had lived in closed institutions, fulfilling the segregation policy, which was mandatory at that time. The Norwegian researcher, Jan Tøssebro, writes about it a little misguidedly: "[...] the three decades after WWII, that is, between 1945 and 1975, were called the "Golden Age" of the welfare state. This description is of an international character, but it is also related to Scandinavian countries. The first fifteen years of that time may also be called the "Golden Age" of the segregation policy towards the intellectually handicapped. This refers both to centers of permanent stay, as well as to the interconnected system of special education" (Tøssebro 1996:47).

At the beginning of the 1970s, numerous publications were issued where authors made every attempt to describe "the creation of living conditions" for people staying in total institutions. Many of those publications were available in the USA, where the process of deinstitutionalization began relatively early. Here, such articles as "Construction of living spaces in an institution" (Risley, Favell 1979:

3-24) or "Planning a system of services in a residential center" (Swenson, Seekings, Anderson 1979:25-26). The contents of those publications suggest that it was a time when the movement of the humanization of previously completely dehumanized people, deprived of any feelings of a worthy existence, started. However, the idea to simply close the institutions that isolated those wretched individuals from the society and send them home still hadn't come about. Western societies needed to wait for almost a whole decade.

Erving Goffman, who between 1955 and 1956 conducted some research in a psychiatric hospital in Washington, describes the degradation processes which were experienced by 700 patients of that huge total institution (Goffman 1961:7). To deprive the patients of the feeling of self-esteem and self-respect – to crack the whip and control them completely – there were some procedures applied that caused loss of the feeling of personal security: "Beatings, shock therapy, or, in mental hospitals, surgery – whatever the intent of staff in providing these services for some inmates – may lead many inmates to feel that they are in an environment that does not guarantee their physical integrity" (1961:21). Goffman also writes about numerous humiliations and torments which the patients were exposed to. "Medical and security examinations often expose the inmate physically, sometimes to persons of both sexes; a similar exposure follows from collective sleeping arrangements and doorless toilets. An extreme here, perhaps, is the situation of a self-destructive mental patient who is stripped naked for what is felt to be his own protection and placed in a constantly lit seclusion room, into whose Judas window any person passing on the ward can peer" (1961:24).

A conceptual network, developed as a result of analyses and numerous other, even more drastic actions taken against the patients, led Goffman to come up with the category of "total institution", and put forward a theory of the operation of such institutions. According to that theory, which employs ideally typical structures, five categories of total institutions may be distinguished. One of them is posed by centers for persons who require care and control, because they may be "a threat to the community, albeit an unintended one" (1961:15). Rational thinking related to the effectiveness of keeping people – closed in a single place, isolated from the world – whose biography is a homogeneous degradative "career" of a patient giving away his fate in the hands of an institution, is expressed in the creation of anti-TB centers, hospitals for the mentally sick and leprosariums. The remaining four categories of total institutions embrace a wide spectrum of persons, who for certain reasons, and for some purpose, have been placed together in an isolated space. Goffman claims that "to learn about one of these institutions we would be well advised to look at the others" (Goffman 1961:14).

Therefore, it may be assumed that sometimes spectacular differences in the operation of particular institutions are not so significant as to make it impossible to provide them with a common name. The fate that the societies of the West had for their handicapped and mentally ill (this differentiation, currently obvious, was not complete in the first half of the 20th century) is a mirror that reflects the attitudes and arising actions in an exaggerated and condensed manner which we take as members of a society towards ourselves. A psychiatric hospital from the 1950s is a grim metaphor of 20th century rationality. As claimed by Goffman, this so called "mental illness" cannot be regarded as the "reason" for placing an individual in a psychiatric hospital: "in the degree that the 'mentally ill' outside hospitals numerically approach or surpass those inside hospitals, one could say that mental patients distinctively suffer not from mental illness, but from contingencies." (Goffman 1961:126). Speaking graphically, an inevitable condition for placing someone in a psychiatric hospital is that someone needs to diagnose a mental illness, that is, to denounce the wretched individual. In the case of people labeled mentally handicapped, there needs to be someone, who would "give away" such a person.

An example of the description of the fate of the intellectually handicapped and mentally ill individuals, kept together in centers of isolation, is an album of black and white photos with the significant and terrifying title: "Christmas in Purgatory. A Photographic Essay on Mental Retardation" (Blatt, Kaplan 1974). The first part of this album was published as a separate publication in 1966. Family and friends of the mentally retarded distributed thousands of copies of this shocking document, sending it to representatives of governmental agencies, members of health commission, academic professors and leaders of parents' movements. They showed pictures of adults and children – naked or dressed in inappropriate clothes of the cheapest quality; closed in isolated rooms without handles, in empty spaces with walls dirty with excrement, in locked solitaries or bedrooms for dozens of people. The photographs are accompanied by commentaries of a commission that inspected the institution. For example: "we were amazed by the over-crowdedness, by the disrepair of older buildings, by the excessive use of locks and heavy doors, and by the enormity of buildings and numbers of patients assigned to dormitories"; "Beds are so arranged—side by side and head to head—that it is impossible, in some dormitories, to cross parts of the rooms without actually walking over beds. Often the beds are without pillows"; "Six States spent less than $2.50 a day per patient, while only seven States spent over $5.50 per day. Nationally, the average is $4.55 per day, less than one-sixth of the amounts spent for general hospital care"; "The population of State residential facilities runs the gamut from a few hundred to more than 5,000; but on the average, each institution is caring for 350 patients over stated capacity and has a waiting list of better than 300." Each chapter opens with a motto, which is a quotation from a literary classic. Notions that pose metaphors for human fate in literature adopt an amazing character in the descriptions of the total institution and the inhumane conditions for their "patients". The motto opening the first chapter is Dante's "Abandon all hope, ye who enter here". Another dramatic quotation opening one of subsequent chapters comes from the Phila Henrietta Case: "Oh! Why does the wind blow upon me so wild? Is it because I'm nobody's child?"

All of this happened more than fifty years ago, during a century declared the age of knowledge and science, in a country claiming to be the cradle of democracy.

Reaction to this message, which was sent to prominent people around the USA, was beyond the expectations of many. Social policy towards the handicapped changed so radically that the second part of the album, published together with the first part in a new edition in 1974, presents enthusiastic pictures of children and adults lives, residing in closed institutions, images full of "life space", surrounded by toys and aesthetic equipment. However, the photos still present bedrooms filled with many people, child residents surrounded by their peers and educators. It is still an institutionalized life. The disabled are still on the margins.

Another shocking picture is painted by Vittorino Andreoli, an Italian psychiatrist-reformer, in his book published in 2004. The author describes his first visit to a psychiatric center, which took place when he was a high school student. There were various "weirdos", who had one thing in common – they were incurably dangerous to themselves and to society, and – following the regulations decided on in 1904 – "they were the cause of social umbrage" (Andreoli 2007:11). The mentioned act of 1904 was the only Italian act regarding the sick, so the need – so common in the 20th century – for the bureaucratization of different areas of social life had at the beginning of the century its precursors who needed to be urgently isolated and strictly controlled. In 1959, when Andreoli visited the San Giacomo della Tomba psychiatric center in Verona, Italy, "[...] it was a real fortress. The walls were so high that at the top of them there were pieces of broken glass bottles attached, to discourage any potential escapees" (Andreoli 2007:12). The walls surrounded ten, symmetrically arranged

buildings, inhabited by men and women separately. "Each building had two floors: the ground floor was occupied during the day, the first floor included bedrooms. For the night, everyone went upstairs, to go to sleep, during the day they came down to a huge room on the ground floor. One hundred and twenty people – the number of patients in each building – existed together all the time. The only place of relaxation during summer weather was a little garden surrounded with wire netting. A patient could enter the park only when accompanied by a nurse" (Andreoli 2007:12). Residents of separate pavilions were divided according to the severity of their mental illness: the least sick were placed in the first pavilion, male and female respectively, those with the most intense symptoms were located in the fifth pavilion. The higher the pavilion number, the more radical the tools of enslavement: "In the fifth pavilion, the situation of women was the most dramatic. An abomination. The women were left with no dignity, naked on a cold floor, chained to walls and smeared with excrement – truly Dantesque" (Andreoli 2007:12).

The everyday routine was not very complicated. All patients did the same things every day, that is, they slept or sat motionless. "The paramedics worked in three shifts. The first one tied the patients up, which was not an easy task, as they often rebelled, therefore the task was ascribed to strong and well-built persons; the second shift needed to untie them, wash them and tie them up again; the third undressed the patients from caftans and placed them in beds. If someone was tied at six in the morning, and soiled himself at half past six, they were not washed before two in the after-

noon" (2007:12). Isolation from the external world was complete, and the walls were totally impenetrable. "A psychiatric center had to be a self-sufficient unit, autarkic, where contact with the external world was kept to a minimum. Bread was baked there, laundry done and underwear darned. [...] Nothing was permitted to go outside the psychiatric center, as everything there was poisoned and dangerous for the city which surrounded the walls" (2007:13-14).

In subsequent years, together with development of treatment methods, the patients were not left to their miserable fate. Instead, attempts were made to implement therapies that would bring them back, maybe not to society – as they were still strictly isolated – but to rationality or the functioning of a regular man. The most widespread treatments, regarding their alleged effectiveness, were shock treatments and therapy with insulin. The shock treatment was introduced in 1938 by Ugo Cerletti, inspired by a procedure applied in slaughterhouses, which consisted in knocking out the pigs before killing them, so their meat was as tasty and delicate as possible. Since then, shock treatment has become a routine procedure of psychiatric therapy. "I, myself," writes Andreoli, "for many years, while working in a psychiatric center, applied this method to my patients. What is more, it became a kind of liturgical celebration" (Andreoli 2007:17). Similarly, the therapy with insulin was a procedure thanks to which the psychiatrists could control the unpredictable and aggressive behaviors of the 'nuts' in an easier way. "The patient was provided with such a dose of insulin which caused coma, maintained for a specific time; each patient had an

individual dose [...], which was determined experimentally, not following any scientific knowledge, but first of all considering the level of danger that a given patient produced" (2007:18). After a certain time had passed, the patients were woken up with sugared water, introduced into the body through a tube. "It sometimes happened that the patient did not wake up, and then rescue actions were undertaken quickly, such as stimulation of heart and circulation or respiratory tract. Some of them woke up only after several hours. Some of them did not wake up at all" (2007:18).

Andreoli, while describing the dramatic scenes taking place in psychiatric hospitals at the beginning of the second half of 20th century, summarizes them very bitterly: "In recent years, and even today, when I recall the past, I ask myself a tormenting question: how was it possible that when I crossed the psychiatric center's gate for the first time, and I was not even 21 years old at that time, I did not wonder about the indecency, perversion and inhumanity that prevailed? [...] How could it happen that not only me, but also men of great moral character accepted all of that? What is more, they were absolute rulers of the mad men in those places! [...] How could a boy like me, passionate about Greek culture, knowing Euripides and adoring philosophy, not rebel against such a striking degradation of humanity? [...] How can you explain this human callousness in the face of the suffering of others? [...] I am still tormented by these questions. I see them as no less dramatic than those related to the atrocities of concentration camps. It is not an inadequate comparison, I am not exaggerating" (Andreoli 2007:23-24).

A Stereotype as a Summary of Social Knowledge

It is not surprising that the people who remained in isolation up to the second half of the 1970s were not ascribed with labels proving their participation in social life. Their unenviable fate was reflected by the words which described them, usually insults. Only from the end of 1970s in numerous European countries, and in Poland even later – estimations say from the end of the 1980s – did a process of changes in attitudes of the general population towards disabled citizens start, especially towards the mentally disabled (Shevlin, O'Moore 2000:207). On the other hand, it needs to be highlighted that Poland, together with other countries of the "Eastern bloc", isolated from the West by the "iron curtain" from the second half of 1940s, did not adopt the Western patterns too strictly, and did not readily lock up its handicapped citizens in gigantic total institutions, something which was highly popular in more advanced countries. The figure of the "village fool", slightly old-fashioned and backward, was still present as an exemplification of the fate of a "free" handicapped person, not institutionalized, living life in a society which ascribed them a social role which maybe was not glorious but at least was socially sanctioned. The tradition of Polish special pedagogy, related to the works of Maria Grzegorzewska, cannot be overvalued, as even in 1920s she spread the idea which can be found in the motto of APS (Academy of Special Pedagogy – Maria Grzegorzewska University) - "there is no cripple, there is a human". Nowadays, such an approach could be seen as a precursor of today's trends. However between 1945 and 1960, in the "Golden Age" of to-

tal institutions, such declarations sounded highly anachronistic.

To this day, terminology related to the disabled resembles recent isolation. These are stereotypes of an unequivocally negative tone, "such persons are perceived as a burden for others, an object of taunts, violence, but also a threat for the rest of society, an unfortunate and pitiful entity" (Chodkowska, Szabała 2012:90). The authors claim that among the disabled the most hurtful terms are ascribed to the mentally handicapped, and the stereotypes pertaining to this group are often derogatory (Chodkowska, Szabała 2012:90).

This could be exemplified by stereotypes connected with sexuality. There are two extreme and mutually exclusive opinions, treating the mentally handicapped as hypersexual or asexual (Szabała 2010:62). The first stereotype arises from the end of 19th century, when it was thought that "as it is impossible to control sexual drive, such individuals may be threatening to the environment" (2010:62-63). 'Even now', such beliefs mean that any symptoms of sexuality by the mentally handicapped are controlled and attenuated, sometimes drastically. This results in their sexual education often being accidental, vulgar and incomprehensible (2010:63). This, in turn, leads to a "self-fulfilling prophecy" – the mentally handicapped actually give the impression that they are also handicapped in that sphere of life. The stereotype of asexuality is connected with thinking about the mentally handicapped as being "eternal children". This view, extremely different from the previously listed, results in similar consequences: no sexual education, a striking

negligence of actions leading to sex identification, et cetera. Therefore, it can be stated that strict control and suppression of sexuality – regardless of whether it is undertaken in relation to the first or the second belief – leads to a decrease in life quality of those people whose social functioning is determined as distorted, handicapped, or deviating from standards of regularity.

Of course, we need to give such people a name somehow. The current terminology is as follows: An intellectually disabled person, or – even more contemporary – a person with an intellectual disability. I do not oppose those formulations, as we need to use terms that other people can comprehend. However, I believe that describing those people one way or the other is of a metaphorical character, not a literal one. Hence, the fight over words makes no sense. Academic discourse deliberating the terminology may lose sight of the problem's essence – it is not the manner of terminology, but the drama of the existence of those people who were treated in an inhumane manner by Western societies taught by 20th century traditions.

Lack of Intelligence as a Disability

It is worth considering the issue, why the previous term "mental handicap" was replaced by "disability" and why this disability is related to intelligence. What does the word "intelligence" mean, after all? According to the words of one of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century, Hans-Georg Gadamer, the word "inteligentia" has ancient roots. However, this term meant something completely different to the ancient Greeks to what

it means now. For the Greeks, "inteligentia" meant a deep insight, even deeper and fuller than "ratio", that is, mind. Inteligentia meant familiarity with the highest principles of life, actions and thinking (Gadamer 2008:181-182). But, there are no traces of this in our terminology. Our contemporary understanding of the word "intelligence", that is, from the end of 19th century, when the word appeared in today's sense, and us understood by Western societies, is completely different than in the case of Greeks. Therefore, it is a temporal and geographic meaning.

In our society, intelligence is a certain measure, bringing a metrical understanding of a certain feature. What is more, this feature is of quantitative character, which means that we all have it, to a greater or lesser extent. In these terms, the differences between people are of a quantitative character. A genius possesses great amounts of this feature, and an intellectually disabled person very small amounts, but it still is the same feature. And these are the foundations which one of the most reductionist measurements is built upon, which we inherited from the 20th century, that is, the intelligence quotient. People's intelligence can of course be measured, but we need to ask: what for? Reductionism consists in the fact that developmental age is divided by life age. And in order to do this, we need to know what is absolutely normal for the average person at a given age. I would like to congratulate people who possess such knowledge. If the developmental age is lower than the life age, the IQ level of an individual is lower than 100. It means that, as psychologists say, a person "solves tasks" at a level lower than their life age. But, what does

it mean to "solve tasks"? How often does an average man go to a psychologist's office and solve any tasks? In their everyday lives, people do not solve any tasks, they just live. We need to use that measurement for school, administration and official purposes. Bureaucracy demands it. But, we should bear in mind that this measure is of a statistical character. It says nothing about the man, because the feature itself says nothing about the man. One of the leading contemporary intelligence scholars, Ian Deary, in the recently published book entitled "Integracja" [Integration], writes about various problems connected with measuring intelligence. However, he does not doubt that, first of all, intelligence means a person's intellectual fitness, and second of all, it is a feature, or as thought by some contemporary researchers, a collection of features (Deary 2012:18).

Gadamer, who undertook philosophical deliberations over intelligence, said that speaking about the intelligence of animals is not an anthropomorphism, as we frequently believe. The great philosopher reckons that it is on the contrary: speaking about the intelligence of people is unconscious theriomorphism, that is, ascribing animal characteristics to people (Gadamer 2008:195). I might not be as radical as he is, but those deliberations made me aware that the measurement that we apply in relation to our disabled fellow human beings tells us less about them and more about ourselves. We developed the measurement for ourselves, so we measure ourselves with that measurement. It is not funny to be human with an average level of intelligence in our society. It does not sound impressive.

Therefore, I do not oppose the term "a person with an intellectual disability", because we simply need to use a term. However, I am not a fan of this term, because it suggests that disability clings like a limpet to a person. The beauty of their humanity remains intact, and the disability, this limpet, is something only standing nearby. I do not believe it is true. Since we think that disability is a certain lifestyle, it also is one of the strings that attaches us to the world. Nobody is a free spirit, we are all attached to Earth with various strings: sex, race, children, weights and everything else. If someone travels around the world, they know that being a Pole does not sound especially impressive in numerous countries. Disability is another such string. I do not see any reasons why we should be ashamed of it. One of the greatest philosophers of the 20th century, Martin Heidegger, once said such an aphorism: "A human does not have its being, as the human being is being" (Heidegger 1994:67). The being of a human is not a feature, it is a process. The essence of humanity of those people consists in being disabled individuals, with all the reservations about the comprehension of the word "disability". They are like this.

Putting them in categories of variety, instead of dysfunctions, leads to the activation of public discourse. Communion with intellectually disabled persons starts being symmetrical, which means that it enriches ourselves. For numerous years, relations with our disabled fellow human beings took the form of charitable actions: We will give, we will stroke their heads, we will take care of them, we will create proper conditions for them,

we will take care of their humanity. But, what can they do? Then, we said: "I am not interested in what you can give me, because you can give me nothing."

It changes. We do not need to defend their humanity anymore, because they are able to take care of it themselves.

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Upośledzenie umysłowe jako niepełnosprawność i jako sposób bycia człowiekiem

Abstrakt: Artykuł dotyczy problematyki używania pojęć określających osoby upośledzone umysłowo versus niepełnosprawne intelektualnie versus z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną. Za używaniem każdego z tych pojęć kryją się przesłanki o charakterze aksjologicznym i światopoglądowym. Poprawność polityczna skłania do zastępowania wyrażeń piętnujących bardziej neutralnymi. Pojawia się jednak pytanie: skąd w języku pojawiły się określenia mające charakter dyskryminacyjny.

W artykule ukazane są przykłady stosowania do lat siedemdziesiątych dwudziestego wieku polityki segregacyjnej, w wyniku której osoby niepełnosprawne intelektualnie przebywały w zamkniętych zakładach całodobowej opieki, oddalone od głównego nurtu życia społecznego. Ukazany został przerażający obraz losu osób pozbawionych podstaw godności ludzkiej, na podstawie amerykańskiej publikacji z tamtego okresu. Sytuacja ta spowodowała, że stosowane wobec osób niepełnosprawnych intelektualnie określenia sankcjonowały ich gorszą pozycję w społeczeństwie. Zaczęło się to zmieniać po wprowadzeniu w krajach zachodniego kręgu cywilizacyjnego polityki integracji i inkluzji społecznej.

W drugiej części artykułu podjęto rozważania dotyczące rozumienia słów „niepełnosprawność" oraz „inteligencja" (słowa obecnego w pojęciu niepełnosprawność intelektualna). Ukazano dwa sprzeczne rozumienia terminu inteligencja: wywodzące się ze starożytności oraz wprowadzone przez nowoczesne systemy miar psychologicznych. Ukazano jakie konsekwencje dla rozumienia kondycji człowieka uwikłanego we współczesny świat ma posługiwanie się tymi dwoma rozumieniami terminu inteligencja.

W konkluzji stwierdzono, że upośledzenie umysłowe nie musi być traktowane jako brak czy dysfunkcja, lecz może być – zgodnie z polityką różnorodności – traktowane jako równoprawny sposób bycia człowiekiem, różny od sposobu manifestowania się człowieczeństwa wśród statystycznej większości obywateli, niemniej odznaczający się swoistą specyfiką i pięknem.

Słowa kluczowe: upośledzenie umysłowe, niepełnosprawność intelektualna, polityka segregacyjna, integracja, inkluzja, różnorodność, człowieczeństwo

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The Role of Sport in the Reconstruction Process of the Identity of a Person With an Acquired Body Dysfunction

Abstract   The article raises the notions of the changes that take place in the lives of physically disabled people which are caused by their engagement in a sports activity. In the article, I will attempt to prove that practicing sport may create advantageous conditions for self-discovery and self-acceptance by a person with an acquired body dysfunction.

The purpose of the conducted research is to analyze the processual dimension of the transformations of a disabled person's life which take place under the influence of experiences related to practicing sport.

There is qualitative information applied in the research, collected through the techniques of in-depth free interviews and observations, conducted among disabled people who practice sport. Analysis and interpretation of the research material was performed in accordance with the procedures of grounded theory.

Keywords   disability, body, sport, transformation, identity

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Introduction

People who became disabled because of various circumstances need to face numerous physical, social and mental difficulties. If an accident or other event which led to the dysfunction, regardless of being willful or not, brought significant changes to the person's previous circumstances, which appeared stable, it can trigger deep, often traumatic experiences. The future of a person may depend on an instant, a split second, which will have serious consequences, exerting considerable impact on the future life of both the individual and those from their closest surroundings. This in turn causes new challenges and previously unknown problems to appear in such a person's life which they need to face. The character and type of the acquired dysfunction will influence their life to various extents. Nevertheless, they will almost always be connected with the necessity to reorganize their previous lives, to adjust to the transformed conditions and new, unexplored circumstances. However, first of all, such events have serious consequences related to the psycho-social field. They often adopt a negative character, leading to a mental imbalance of the individual. They may trigger feelings of loss, alienation or social exclusion (Major, O'Brien 2005:393-421). What is more, they cause a deep transformation in the manner of seeing themselves, which is related to the reconstruction of the previous vision of themselves and the loss of self-identification continuity.

Therefore, the process of supporting the disabled is seen as especially significant, and this includes their broad activation in various spheres of life. One such form of activation is sport, which may lead not only to physical fitness, but also to changes in the manner in which they perceive themselves (Pieszak 2012:136). Regardless the manner and character of the sport activity of the disabled person, it is assumed that it is a specific type of action, related not only to corporeality but also "being a social phenomenon, which is ascribed with certain meanings, and which is perceived by a given community in a particular manner" (Heineman 1989:238). As emphasized by Klaus Heinemann (1989:239), sport is a result of circumstances which are a framework of actions of an individual, which include elements of social acceptance and patterns to follow, life experiences, and individual and social identity. Hence, sport may be treated as an activity of a man which leads to transformations on the "I" level of an individual, and the accompanying process of the social reconstruction of the definition of disability (Shephard 1991:51-56).

Identity and Change - Theoretical References and Practical Inspirations

According to Piotr Sztompka (2006:437-439), a social change is a difference between the social system status (e.g. a group, organization) in a single moment, and the condition of the system itself at a later time. Within this context, the change means transformation of one system status to another. At the same time, separate changes are interconnected and entangled. Therefore, they create a series of subsequent phases or stages of a given process, causally conditioned. The transformations may take place on various fields and in different dimensions, and they may be analyzed on various levels: macro-social (in whole societies and international systems), mezzo-social

(taking place in local communities and large organizations) and micro-social (within small groups and human attitudes).

In the article, I focus my attention on the last level, at the same time adopting a cognitive perspective of the theory of symbolic interactionism, rooted in the interpretative paradigm. The nature of the social reality is of processual dimensions here, changeable and dynamic (Blumer 2007; Prus 1999). Particular individuals do not recreate a certain scheme, they are rather creative entities. A human reacts passively to the desires, feelings and actions of others, the requirements or expectations towards them, but they do it consciously, using their ego and mind (Blumer 2007:52). People are actors here, acting on the basis of meanings ascribed to objects, therefore co-creating reality, and not reacting passively and lifelessly to external stimuli (Turner 2004:418-421; Szacki 2002:545 and further). Hence, symbolic interactionists are inclined to perceive people as active social actors who reconstruct the picture of themselves, of their surrounding reality and of the place in life space imagined in that way, continuously and during interactions with the remaining members of a given community. Continuous dynamic changes create the identity of an individual which, according to Zbigniew Bokszański (1989:12), may be determined as a collection of the concepts, justifications and beliefs of a social actor constructed towards himself and towards others.

While raising the matter of identity analysis of people who acquired disability in adulthood, I adopt – according to Andrzej Piotrowski (1998:54) – an interactional model of identity, where it is treated as "an

object, result and resource of an interaction", connected with the mechanisms of identification and interpretation of oneself and of others in the mutual relationships of social actors. Following the words of Anselm Strauss (1959), I treat the concept of identity as an agent which serves the organization of empirical material and reflection over self-perception of those who, having acquired a disability and having "broken" the continuity of "I", reconstruct their self-identification, where a significant role is played by their actions within the sport environment. On that basis I make an attempt to reconstruct the transformations that take place in how disabled people perceive themselves, from the moment of their identity crisis resulting from the acquisition of permanent body dysfunctions, to the time when, being influenced by experiences related to their engagement in a sports activity, order-creating transformations take place in their system of self-definition. These changes, especially in the period taking place directly after the disability arises, are connected with traumatic experiences which trigger a feeling of alienation, related both to difficulties in accepting their body and the physical and social incompatibility with the environment. Such experiences, characterized by changeability and repeatability, are called *turning points* by Anselm Strauss (1959:93). The turning points take place when an action program for life is "locked and its course is being destroyed" (Strauss 1959:93). According to the mentioned author, a turning point is a situation, or a kind of *social patterning* process, where the individual discovers – both in object and subject manner – that their previous self-references were wrong (or non-compliant with the transformed circumstances). In such a situation it is impossible to maintain the feeling of continuity, separation and self-esteem, and

the individual experiences strangeness of their own body (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:111). Extreme cases of identity transformation are called alternation (Berger and Luckmann 1983), or conversion (Goffman 2006). Both kinds are related to the loss of their previous social world, breaking the bonds that connected them to it, and accessing the "new" world, which is accompanied by a radical transformation of the subjective reality of an individual (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:113).

The process of transformation of the personality, called a moral carrier, has been also described by Erving Goffman. It refers to experiences connected on the one hand with separation from the previous life, from previous roles and interconnected identities, and on the other it is accompanied by adaptation techniques, which reduce tension, and tendencies for self-reflection expressed in lamentation or apologias (Goffman 2011:24). The transformation of a system of identity of a social actor frequently results from an identity crisis, triggered by processes of negative life experiences and interferences in the realization of previous identities in specific interactional systems and the interconnected feeling of incompatibility with the socio-cultural environment (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:111). At the same time, identity transformations may be connected with elimination from the previous social world, marginalization, participation in a group deprived of meaning, experiencing of otherness or inability to accept a certain identification.

In the presented research I focus on a group of disabled people who, regarding their dysfunctions, are in numerous areas which are marginalized

and pushed out of the main sphere of social life, therefore while raising the problem of identity of this group of people, I put great emphasis on the process of stigmatization and its "identity" consequences (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:26). Howard S. Becker (2009:183) claimed, for example, that such stigmatization "places the actor in a situation that makes it harder for him to live a normal life, therefore provoking him to 'abnormal' actions." Accepting the role of a deviant and the internalization of attributes connected with the stigmatized identity may be treated as self-stigmatization. Self-stigmatization results in transformations in the individual's self-definition arrangement, the reduction of elements of the scheme, its fragmentation, and withdrawal from certain definitions (*identity refraction*), for the sake of returning to previous identities. In the categories of Goffman's analysis (2005), stigmatized people are characterized by *spoiled identity*, because stigmatization leads to the social exclusion of individuals regarding their features which are disqualifying in other people's eyes. At the same time, such people try to manipulate the stigma so they can avoid or at least minimize the effects of social odium (Melchior 1990:183; Goffman 2005:41-43). On the other hand, transformations in the disabled person's life may be of a constructive character, presenting, in fact, an example of actions that provide the individual with mental strength. The system of self-definition of a social actor is transformed, which results in the individual becoming someone different from what they used to be, perceiving and valuing themselves in another manner (Strauss 1959:91-92). Such a "new identity" is revealed in the process of identification of self and of others in the course of interactions which are related to the

physical activity and engagement of the disabled person in a sports activity – which I attempt to prove. The work on disabled people led by specialists (including physiotherapists, psychologists and therapists) and members of their closest surroundings (first of all family) is undoubtedly significant, which above all is brought down to the notions connected with fighting a real-life blow, that is, dramatic memories that accompany the situation of change (often also rapid and unexpected), resulting from traumatic events, which became a part of the individual (cf. Strauss et al. 1985). Kaja Kaźmierska, while referring to the concept of Anselm Strauss, speaks about "the effort of interpretation of one's own biographic experiences in relation to one's own identity, images of oneself, behaviors and undertaken activities" (Kaźmierska 2008:29). Because a person, within the biographical work process, refers to their own biography, this work is of a self-interactive character, but does not exclude the influence and participation of other people – first of all their significant others – in the course of this process (Strauss 2012:518-519).

Biographical work understood in this manner accompanies developmental crises, turning points and breaking moments of life stories caused by life circumstances, or entering new social worlds. It is emphasized that biographical work becomes "more intensive when a man undergoes difficult, unexpected situations, forcing himself to redefine identity, change the previous lifestyle", and is of special significance in the case of people who, forced by difficult, traumatic experiences from their consciousness, are unable to deal with currently experienced dilemmas (Kaźmierska 2008:29; Strauss 2012). Biographical work creates a framework where work may take pre-

cedence over identity. As Markieta Domecka writes (2010:208-209), "a belief in possessing certain attributes means that while reconstructing one's biography, those fragments are selected and highlighted, which confirm assumptions about oneself."

Hence, the purpose of the performed research is to analyze the processual dimensions of transformations which take place in the life of a disabled person, which are proved by certain physical activities. The subject of my reflection is the reconstruction of the process connected with heading towards the annihilation of an identity as a result of a traumatic, trajectory experience of "acquiring disability".

Methodology of Research

The research material applied in this study encompasses information obtained from disabled people realizing their physical activity through participation in various forms of sport. Non-structure free interviews were conducted with representatives of this category of interlocutors. Furthermore, the studies employ notes from observations made during meetings and sport events, training sessions and consultations, as well as existing materials (including legal act, terms and conditions, statutes, chronicles).

The premises that support the selection of the abovementioned techniques arise first of all from the accepted ontological (human experiences, interpretations, knowledge, evaluations, interactions are perceived as significant interdependencies of the social reality) and epistemological assumptions (the legal manner of data generation on the basis of those ontological assumptions comprises interac-

tion, conversations with people, listening to stories and achieving access to knowledge, evaluations, impressions of individuals). Second of all, the obtained data are complete and in-depth, which complies with statements by Rubin and Rubin (1997:205) "qualitative research is applied in the case of notions that require deeper comprehension, which is served best by detailed examples and expanded narrations." What is more, a motif for selecting the pointed qualitative methods was the need to identify "factual" manners of life, actions of units, processes of creating meaning, and therefore the desire to bring the sociological science closer to "life" and "recognition of social reality from the perspective of the subject that creates it" (Wyka 1993:34).

Analysis and interpretation of the research material was conducted in compliance with the principles of grounded theory methodology (Glaser, Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978; Strauss, Corbin 1990; Konecki 2000; Charmaz 2006; Gorzko 2008). Hence, the selection of subsequent cases for research was of a theoretical character (*theoretical sampling*), based on the constant comparative method. Thanks to theoretical sampling, a researcher while collecting, encoding and analyzing the materials, makes simultaneous decisions about where and what data to collect (Glaser 1978:49-50; Strauss, Corbin 1990:177). While applying the constant comparative method in my search for other data, I made an attempt to choose cases that are both highly varied and similar to each other, to grasp the maximum number of conditions differentiating the presence of categories and their mutual correlations (Glaser 1978:45-53, Charmaz 2009:74). Such a manner of performance resulted in people representing various kinds of physical dis-

ability being a part of the researched sample. There were people with quadri- and paraplegia, spastic paralysis and those with amputated legs. The research has been conducted since July 2013, across the whole of Poland, in centers adapted to the needs of the disabled practicing sport.[1] While starting to prepare this text, the empirical material was composed of: 51 interviews and 23 records from observations (as of 1 December 2014). The interviews were performed with 20 women and 27 men between 16 and 50 years old. The interviews usually lasted from 40 to 120 minutes. Before analysis, the interviews were transcribed word-for-word, preserving the details of the interviewees' utterances as faithfully as possible. The selection of cases lasted until theoretical saturation was achieved, that is, to the moment when subsequent cases confirmed previous analytical findings (Glaser 1978:142).

Data analysis was supported by CAQDAS – *Computer Assisted/Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software*. Work on the analytical-conceptual level was performed with NVivo 9 software, which supported the process of sorting and coding data (Niedbalski 2014; Niedbalski, Ślęzak 2012:141).

In the Face of the "New" Reality – the Experience of Disability by People With an Acquired Body Dysfunction

The surprising loss of the framework of everyday existence, which is our physical capability, causes an

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[1] The category of disabled people who practice sport is approached widely in this paper, embracing all interlocutors whose physical activity was of a cyclical, repeatable character, lasting continuously for a period of at least one year.

individual to suffer (Melchior 1990:27). At that time we deal *with the eradication of the previous biography*, which means that a man is deprived of his previous life order, and there is a need to adopt a new attitude towards everyday matters, played roles or positions occupied in various social structures. For people who acquired their disability at a certain time of their lives, such circumstances pose particular experiences of the new reality, which the individual becomes "disabled" in. The objective results of disability are accompanied by subjective transformations in the ego sphere of the individual, and in the arrangement of categories and marks applied towards himself and other people, related to the reconstruction of the image of their previous life and themselves (Rokuszewska-Pawełek 2012:17-18). It is a process in a mental sense, connected with the development of a certain cognitive perspective. The course of this process triggers numerous factors, and its effect is a reconstructed identity of the individual (Strauss 1969). It is reflected in the words uttered by one of my interlocutors:

> Unfortunately, the truth is that I was totally out of life for a certain time after the accident. I simply thought that it was the end, and nothing good would ever happen to me, that it was pointless to live. I was afraid, I was afraid that nothing would be the same as it had been, and that people would point their fingers at me. So I was afraid, I didn't believe and I was ashamed, I think it was that way. [interview No. 10]

A common theme in case of the researched individuals was that they felt depreciated in the eyes of other people, as "different" and "other", because of their disability. All of this meant that they were unable to

get away from the feeling of shame and humiliation which they felt towards others, especially able-bodied individuals. They saw the source of their partial self-confidence in their body dysfunction. They believed that they would not be accepted, and they would not find any understanding among able-bodied individuals. Hence, it was impossible for them to reveal their disability to those people (they made every attempt to hide it), at the same time they were afraid of exposure. As a result, they were pushed to self-exclusion, which related to almost every aspect of their lives:

> It was simply humiliating for me, I was afraid that someone would see me. I was a big man at one time, I had strength, others respected me, and after the accident I was unable to wipe my bottom. This was the matter that was the most disturbing for me. Not even the fact that I would need to deal with it for the rest of my life, but that the others, who remembered me as a real man, would now see a cripple, who can do nothing. [interview No. 12]

In the case of people with invisible or hardly recognized dysfunctions, prevailing were emotions related to the feelings of anxiety, threat, worries of being exposed, or their "otherness" being revealed, therefore they would acquire a label identifying them as not fully valuable. Erving Goffman determines people whose stigma is hidden as discreditable individuals. The main axis of interactive actions is focused, in their case, on dilemmas: whether, which, when, and where to reveal the stigma. Goffman claims that the most significant problem for them is to manage information about their disability properly, and questions that accompany this dilemma may be

grasped in the following form, "To reveal or not to reveal? To tell or not to tell? To give myself away or not? To lie or not to lie?" (Goffman 2005:77-78). In turn, people with a visible kind of stigma are called discredited, by Erving Goffman. Here, an individual needs to manipulate the conditions of the environment to decrease the tension connected with mutually difficult circumstances – for the individual and for those around him. The problem of manipulating the stigma depends in this case on whether the stigmatized social actor is known to the environment in a closer, more personal manner. With this kind of relationship, the people adopt a certain identity. The type and character of this identity exerts some influence on the manner of manipulating information, because the stigmatized person subordinates the application of interaction strategies to the manner in which they are perceived by others (Goffman 2005:158).

However, regardless the character of the stigma, the existence of stigmatized people, according to Erving Goffman, is determined – in almost all respects – by the society of people who identify themselves as normal (*normals*), which pertains both to the determination of a certain life sphere, and subordination to strong control, which may relate to the creation of separated enclaves of "misfits" (Goffman 2005:155). Furthermore, Goffman (1961) highlighted the fact that significant factors that decide the manner of conduct and self-identification of an individual constitute a part of social reactions. Public response to a given behavior supports not only its consolidation but it also changes the manner of defining the identity of a "stigmatized" person. According to Howard S. Becker (2009), a negative feature ascribed to a giv-

en person becomes generalized by the environment. This in turn means that within the course of further negative stigma, an individual is inclined to identify himself with the ascribed role. Such situations were also experienced by people who took part in the research. They felt that the manner in which others had approached them somehow reflected the disability of my respondents. Hence, the environment consolidated the disabled people's belief about their "otherness", and meant that they were unable to think about themselves in categories different than their not being fully capable:

> Others did everything for me, and around me as well, because I couldn't, I had no strength, I didn't want to. I simply lay in bed staring at the ceiling. It was the end for me, I thought it would have been better if I had simply died instead of living such a life. In hindsight, I believe that they pitied me too much, they treated me like I was incapable of anything, and I think it was even more depressing for me, it took away my strength to do anything. [interview No. 7]

Despite the fact that a stigma ascribed by society is often a very strong determinant which shapes their lives, still the stigmatized individual may try to take actions which enable him to fight the feeling of social and personal degradation, therefore limiting or minimizing the negative influence and pressure exerted by their environment. One such action is the physical activity of a disabled person, which may support considerable transformations in their lives, starting with an improvement in their general health and physical condition, through the development of their interests and the establishment of new interpersonal relations,

and ending with mental empowerment. However, the fact that seems crucial from the perspective of notions considered in this paper is that sport, and everything that it entails, may support significant changes in the manner in which the disabled see themselves and their life situations. I will make an attempt to take a closer look at his notion in subsequent points of this article.

The Process of Transformations at the Level of Self-Identification of an Individual as a Result of Engagement in Sport

Stigmatization does not necessarily need to result in the development and maintenance of a stigmatized identity. If emotions connected with such a set of self-definitions pose a source of strong discomfort or suffering for an individual, they may start searching for new manners to characterize themselves (Melchior 1990:181; Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:152).

Hence, a social actor whose attitude is active when compared to the stereotype, may transform this negative image of themselves, and object to the harmful stigmatization, obtaining the definition of a person who is an exception to the rule. They may also redefine the concept of themselves and negative attributes related to the stigma, so they become a source of positive self-evaluation (Goffman cites statements of disabled people, adopted thanks to their dysfunctions, regarding their special sensitivity in perceiving themselves and the world Goffman 2005:42-43).

The people who experience *eradication from the previous biography*, may become aware of their identity by referring to what they were deprived of (Melchi-

or 1990:27). However, to make it possible, certain transformations need to take place connected with working out the matter of disability by the disabled individual and others. This refers to the process of continuous confirmation of identity of an individual. Refusal to validate a single element of an identity means that the individuals need to reinterpret their actions and reconstruct themselves. Discrepancies in the determination of identity means the necessity to assume a certain attitude towards those definitions through making a choice: adoption of an imposed image, refusal of that image, or an attempt to achieve a compromise (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:140).

On the basis of the performed research, it was found out that "freeing" oneself from the stigmatization feeling and biographic "breakup", and moving towards a new plan of action and a redefinition of self and one's own role, takes place within a three-dimensional process:

- first of all, it focuses on oneself, which means the **introspection of "I"** and concentration on **interactions with one's body**.

- secondly, it changes the object of comparison, that is, seeking a new **reference group** and **significant others**.

- thirdly, it is a revision of social identity, meaning the development of a strategy of coping with **public proclamation** of disability and the **presentation** of oneself.

These are not separate phases as they overlap one another to varying degrees and in different scopes.

In other words, regarding particular people, their biography will present overlapping phases, mentioned above, which means that the course does not follow step-by-step, but it is synchronous.

Bodily Transformations and the Process of Reconstruction of Self by a Disabled Person Who Practices Sport

The researched people, in the period before the sport activity, felt clear discomfort, both physical and psycho-social, connected with their not being fully capable. According to those I spoke to, body dysfunctions hindered, and in some cases even rendered it impossible to function independently and "normally". What is more, a dysfunctional body was perceived by those studied as a source of suffering, caused by its limitations. According to the researched individuals, their bodies took control over themselves, and forms of this power were determined by resistance, experienced in various situations of every day life. Here, it is worth recalling Thomas Osborne's (1997) words, who claimed that the matter, which did not allow a person to forget about their body was stigma. Stigma, as a bodily *memento,* hinders the process of freeing oneself from the body, which becomes the main problem of those with disabilities (Osborne 1997).

> I was unable to do a lot of things. Actually, I was able to do nothing on my own. Someone needed to help me clean myself, get up, get dressed (...); I was even unable to get to the toilet on my own. It was torture, I thought I'd be nothing anymore, but it wasn't the worst, because it was like my problem, until I started going out, being among other people. Then, I simply

felt bad, I felt that something was wrong, I felt it all the time. [interview No. 11]

A body stigmatized with disability was a source of stigma for the researched individuals, first of all in those social relationships where it became a reason for discrimination. The respondents stated that they did not like their bodies, they were ashamed, because it differed from the generally accepted norms. The shame related to a dysfunctional body meant that these people tried to hide their handicap and mask their deficiencies. Only practicing sport and its accompanying experiences caused a gradual transformation in the manner of perceiving their disability. As emphasized by those I spoke to, it was connected with becoming familiar with their bodies and their possibilities "again". These individuals very often found out that actions and activities which seemed hard or even impossible to them became achievable thanks to sport practicing. What is more, the disabled individuals who practice sport talked about exploring "unknown" possibilities of their bodies, and the "unidentified potential of their bodies". Hence, the boundaries of not only their bodies but also of their belief in their strengths moved. The vision of the individual changes, from a feckless and dependent person, towards an individual capable of acting in a manner and in a scope that they had been unfamiliar with.

> You know, a man doesn't know himself until he faces a particular situation, until he tries to do something, especially if it seems impossible. And it was the case with me, I also didn't believe that I could do something with myself, that I could be so capable (...) this is what sport gave me. [interview No. 5]

For the researched individuals, sport became a route which could be followed to support the process of accepting themselves and their disability effectively. A person with disability who took up a sports activity began to perceive their disability differently. At the beginning the changes took place slowly, over the course of time they were bigger and clearer, connected with "training" the body's fitness.

Thus, a disabled person sees positive effects of their engagement in practicing sport, pertaining not only to transformations in the body's fitness, but first of all in terms of acquiring greater control over the body, and improving self-confidence, the feeling of self-reliance and independence from others. This, in turn, constitutes an inclination to take up further challenges, which maintain and enhance the influence of sport on their bodies, psyche and interpersonal relations with those around them. This was accompanied by intensive work over the body. It usually consists in compliance with particular regimes, related among others to intensification of certain actions and a higher level of self-control. My interlocutors were usually aware of the fact that by neglecting their physical activity, they would achieve not only the functional regress of their bodies but they would also lose their "external image" – a definition attached to the disabled people's individual identity by Katarzyna Kowal (2012:190):

I get involved because I can see the effects, not because it's important to me, and I can't imagine anymore that it could be different, like it was some time ago. It costs me a lot as I train 12 times per week, add trips, training camps and competitions of course. But it's my life now, and I need to give in to this sit-

uation if I want to make something out of it. [interview No. 12]

Sport in the lives of the researched individuals became a factor responsible for the process of regaining faith in themselves, their possibilities, and it posed a source of belief in their own value and in the fact that despite a physical dysfunction, they remain fully-valuable and entitled members of society. Disabled people talked to themselves on the one hand about the manner in which they see themselves, and on the other, about the manner in which they are seen by others. Such a dialog, in both cases, was determined by certain stimuli coming from their environment. The more positive the stimulus, the higher the degree to which the disabled person was able to develop a more beneficial image of themselves, and the quicker they were able to "get over" the traumatic experiences connected with the situation that led to their disability.

A handicapped body with dysfunctions was not perceived by the disabled as something to be ashamed of, to be hidden from the world. While observing the changes of their body caused by sport practicing, such a person became satisfied and self-fulfilled. Therefore, a disabled body, which quite often was the reason for stigma, negative emotions, or even humiliation, was not associated with such experiences anymore. Hence, the body, as an outline of the actions and practices of an individual, became a significant element of constructing the feeling of their identity, through engagement in sport activity, and the control held provided a basic resource of maintaining this biographic continuity (Jakubowska 2009:170).

The Role of Significant Others in the Process of Reconstructing the Identity of Physically Disabled People Practicing Sport

In terms of the conditions of biographic and identity process, special significance is given to contacts, interactions and bonds with others, encountered at various levels of social life. A central place in confirming (and shaping) identity is occupied by significant others, that is, by people who the individual is connected with and who have intense and emotional relationships with (Berger and Luckmann 1983:231). Ansel Strauss (1959:132) drew considerable attention to the relationship between the ego and significant others, claiming that maintenance of a coherent definition of self by an individual depends on positive validation of each new element of their identity. Refusal of such validation equals a necessity to reinterpret the individual's actions, which means reinterpretations of the concept of oneself. What is more, Strauss notices that a significant role in the perception of self by an individual is played by whether they feel an integral part of the group they belong to. As he writes, "the path of the group becomes the path of the individual, and the mistakes of the group become his mistakes" (Strauss 1959:41).

The above statement also bears a significant meaning from the perspective of my research, as practicing sport means that an individual is met with a more significant number of people. It often happens that contact narrowed down to family and close relatives is, thanks to practicing sport, expanded by people who train and exercise together, or who simply attend social meetings. Hence, the circle

of people who the individual directly interacts with becomes larger:

I was withdrawn for a certain time, I was an introvert closed to others. I didn't want to show myself, talk to anyone, because I was totally devastated. Nothing was important for me at that time. People weren't important at all. And it would probably have stayed like this, but when I was brought here (to the training sessions - note by JN), I started to meet people. And I still do, because the group is constantly expanding (laughter - note by JN). [interview No. 10]

The creation of a group takes place here on the basis of the *commonness of a life situation* connected with the dysfunctions and resulting needs of the individuals (cf. Sajkowska 1999:11; Niedźwiedzki 2010:85; Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:146). The researched individuals had the possibility to become members of groups which included other disabled people. In such a situation, an individual perceived themselves as an integral part of the group, identifying with its goals (Strauss 1959:41). Participation in such a community was connected with the socialization processes, which consist not only in shaping a collective identity, but also in the potential (re)construction of the whole self-definition of the social actor (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:139). Through observing and identifying other people, a disabled individual internalizes new roles, accompanying identities, motivational and interpretational schemes, as well as various entitlements, regarding their social value (cf. Berger and Luckman 1983:214-218; Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:105).

In this context, the notion of a *reference group* may also be applied as a comparative scheme in relation

to which people form basic judgments and evaluations, regarding their social position. Therefore, it becomes a basic element in shaping the self-evaluation of an individual (Kuhn 1972:175; Ziółkowski 1981:77). This happens because they compare their social position with that of others. An effect of such a process is identification with groups of people with similar relative privileges or impairments. As a result, the individuals adopt the attitudes and patterns of behavior of members who belong to those groups (Merton 1982). Within those groups, the individual agrees on plans of actions, and permanently reinterprets the reality in interaction with its members, leading to a discussion with himself. Thanks to those interactions and specific auto-narrations, they obtain a key to interpret their place in the world (Mead 1934).

After the accident I was down in the dumps. My world actually collapsed. I thought it would have been better if I had died and not become disabled. It was a hard time, so when Maria (name changed – JN) came, and said that I could do this or that, and that people such as myself can even play, I thought she was nuts. Despite all of this, I wanted to go out as I could not sit in this cage anymore. I listened to reason. (...) Now I know that it was the best thing I could do in that situation. It allowed me to look at my life differently, set myself free from the dark thoughts and think that I can still live, work and function among other people relatively normally. [interview No. 14]

A sports activity allows a person to build the feelings of self-esteem and trust towards himself and also his environment (Wilski et al. 2012:86). This is down to the gradual transformation in the scope of perception of the individual's surrounding environment. Such positive strengthening, created thanks to building group bonds, as well as possibilities to show the environment that one is a functional unit, is on the one hand an important source for the realization of one's life plans, and on the other, it supports *self-acceptance*. From this perspective, individuals become subjects of consideration for themselves. This process is additionally enhanced by people who became especially important for the individual in a group (they obtain the status of *significant others*), as they play the role of specific guides, teachers and mentors. Such people may also become guardians of the individual's biography, exerting a strong influence on their identity and faith. The description of relationships between a disabled person practicing sport and the one that makes a certain 'road sign', pointing towards a desired action, may be applied to the notion of coaching, introduced by Anselm Strauss (1996:94). Such a relationship is most often established between people who are characterized with certain features, significant in terms of a given situation. In the case of disabled sportsmen, the function of the coach may be adopted by another player or an institutional trainer. The latter had such a possibility because of the formal status, while another team (group) member may be considered this way when they have several significant attributes at the same time. First of all, it needs to be an experienced person with considerable seniority who knows the institutional rules, but also the informal organizational principles perfectly; secondly, this person needs to be older; and thirdly, they should have certain trophies and titles. The main qualities of the coaching relationship are rooted in the fact that a pupil, while going through subsequent stages, needs a guide. This is not only about the conventional sense of teaching skills but also about the fact that while the "coached" is moving within the social space, there are highly important processes taking place, requiring an explanation, and so here a crucial role is played by the "coach". These notions are also raised by Bourdieu and Wacquant (2001:220), emphasizing that "learning the professions, craft, vocation, (...) requires pedagogy that is slightly different from the one applied in knowledge acquisition (...). There are numerous manners of thinking and acting, which can often be quite lively, transferred in a practical form thanks to practices based on direct contact between the one teaching and the one being taught." While the mentioned authors highlight characteristics of the "teaching" process, Strauss refers in this context to identity transformations, which became a part of the "student" himself.

Alex was a couch of ours here, as far as I remember. I think it had always been like this, that's what I heard. And when I came here, he took care of me, showed me around, explained the principles and everything, he simply took care of me. I felt more confident when he was here, telling me what to do. Others also listened to him, because he knows a lot, and he played professionally in the past. [interview No. 10]

A highly significant element of "coaching" is the time schedule. A *guide-coach* needs to balance things when completing subsequent stages, so they can apply certain strategies. A frequently encountered strategy is the so called prescription, regarding how to act, i.e. to realize oneself in sport and to achieve successes. Therefore, the coach's role is to point out what needs to be done, what you need to do to distinguish yourself, which qualities need to be developed and which need to be gotten rid of. In a word, it is a formula which may not guarantee success on its own, but the application of which may bring a given person closer to the goal. What is more, coaches apply schedules which determine subsequent steps that need to be followed by a disabled individual to achieve progress gradually. A coach takes care of the player's development, not only shaping their career, but also exerting a certain influence on their biography. Therefore, they perform continuous work over the individual's biography and identity. For a disabled individual, the completion of stages is not only the achievement of subsequent levels but of pushing their own, often symbolic, boundaries. Therefore, a coach may not only motivate a disabled person, but also trigger their positive emotions related to the achieved successes, which pertain to the completion of subsequent challenges.

Public Presentation as a Manner of Manifesting One's Disability by People Practicing Sport

Anselm Strauss believed that each of us presents ourselves to others (and ourselves) while examining ourselves in the mirror of our own judgments (Strauss 1959:9). In such a context, some of the researched individuals held the belief that they would not be accepted or understood by those who are able-bodied. This meant that they were unable to reveal their disability in front of others while at the same time being afraid of exposure. Here, it is worth citing Erving Goffman (2005 [1963]), who believed that people with a stigmatizing feature are afraid of

a lack of acceptance from their environment. This in turn pushes them toward self-exclusion and social insulation. On the other hand, as suggested by Strauss (1959), an individual may oppose the imposed definitions, adopting a clearer identity project (cf. Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:139). Therefore, the moment of *public performance* is seen as important by a person with a disability. Then, the person may reveal himself in an open space, through for example, participation in a sports competition. These circumstances include the elements of "facing a challenge", but it is also connected with *public proclamation.* According to Strauss (1959), it is an individual's statement about their certain views or attributes. It is a certain passage in the process of the exposure of a disabled individual, which means revealing himself to a larger group of people, including also those who are able-bodied. What is more, it suggests that a disabled individual encounters another turning point in their biography, making a decision to expose their dysfunction in a wider social framework.

> For me, the first performance in front of an audience was unique. When you see all those people, who observe you, look at you, and you don't know what they're thinking, it's really paralyzing. You have a thought then, wouldn't it be better to run away, to pull the plug on it. But it would mean that you give up halfway, you'll be defeated by your own fears. [interview No. 17]

In such conditions, a disabled individual needs to make a qualitative jump in their biography, consisting in showing off hidden qualities of their bodies. Such a circumstance may be compared with the *open context of awareness* described by Anselm

Strauss and Barney Glaser (1965), where parties of the interaction do not hide the existence of a certain situation – disability in this case. The audience knows who they are dealing with, and presents no comments or takes no depreciating actions, and the social actor tries not to hide the attributes which are an indispensable part of them (which, according to them, are depreciating), and this is reflected to some extent in how they perceive themselves:

> For me, it was almost like, I don't know how to put it, simply like something unreal, (...) that I took the plunge and took off the prosthesis with everyone around, simple as that. But it was easier than I'd thought, because I wasn't thinking that I was removing the prosthesis, in my mind I was in a different place. I thought more about the competition, about the game, the result, that I'd need to sweat, to do my best. And this was what counted, nothing more. And when I understood that it can be done, that there's nothing more to it, I stopped being afraid of showing myself without the prosthesis, that others can see me, what I really am like. And say to myself that, when you don't think about it so much, you can do a lot more when you aren't afraid and blocked anymore. [interview No. 19]

Hence, sport supports positive thinking about oneself and one's own possibilities, which leads to the fact that the disabled ascribe a higher value to their "life vitality" than to the remaining life spheres. Sport may pose a certain bridge between physical activity and other types of actions of a disabled person. It means that for an individual, sport may pose a source of inspiration, but also of creation of an internal power, which stimulates activity within oth-

er fields of life. From this perspective, an especially significant aspect – as suggested by the disabled – is to regain the belief in one's own possibilities, leading to the reconstruction of life goals and priorities. It very often means greater openness of such a person, which in turn supports life progress, both in the private and public spheres. Within the first aspect, it is mainly about courage in establishing relationships with other people, and the potential establishment of closer contacts (sometimes leading to marriages). On the other hand, the courage and self-esteem derived from a sports activity means that an individual starts to present a more assertive attitude in regular relationships of everyday life.

It is worth emphasizing that practicing sport, especially when combined with participation in sport events, may become a manner of creating a positive image of the disabled among healthy people, even prestige. Therefore, it is an opportunity to prove to able-bodied individuals that the disabled are sufficiently strong, motivated and resourceful to be active, brave and passionate. Then, sport seems to be a perfect tool for changes in perception of the disabled. Through sports events, the disabled show their "world", often demystifying it for completely non-oriented and unaware able-bodied members of society (cf. Wilski et al. 2012:86). Therefore, this is also an attempt to reach society, a form of presenting another image of disability and of people with disabilities, as people who are self-reliant, but also able to achieve life successes and undertake various tasks, and seek challenges and rivalry.

> You know, it's fun when people who watch me say afterwards, "wow, it was great, I didn't know you

could do that." Then, I feel that I have proved that the disabled can do much more that many people think. [interview No. 17]

In this context, sport plays an important role, as it is one way than serves not only to incorporate disabled people into society, but it also allows them to present themselves from a more advantageous perspective, as self-reliant, valuable, but also brave and passionate people.

Conclusions

On the basis of the performed research and analysis of the collected material, it may be concluded that a disabled person who takes up physical activity starts to strive for improvement in their physical condition and obtains an opportunity to take part in actions with individuals with similar life problems. The individual begins to change the manner in which they perceive themselves and the surrounding world. This process is usually accompanied by positive emotions which are reflected in the whole life of the individual, strengthening them mentally through certain experiences which result from psycho-social processes. It is a kind of passage from the feeling of hopelessness and lost opportunities to a new life path. Therefore, the individual adapts to life in transformed conditions in relation to the period before the incident, not completely giving up a certain lifestyle. This is a process consisting in the development of a new manner of functioning, which will provide the individual with the minimization of potential losses or the necessity to remodel previous plans. It is reflected well in the words of the people I spoke to:

I believe that the fact that I started to practice sport, that I found myself here, is one of the best things that could have happened to me. After the accident, I was withdrawn, depressed, deprived of the sense of life. Only others pulling me out of my shell and showing me that something can be done with me despite the disability, made me believe in myself. It happened that here [in the club - note by JN] I found myself, and it helped me to pull myself together. [interview No. 18]

The performed research proves that practicing sport may influence the manner of perceiving oneself and one's life situation, leading to a gradual recovery of self-esteem and to restore the faith in one's own strength. A sports activity can be the basis for social and mental transformations of a disabled person. Through sport, an individual gains support but also the awareness that there are people that share their cognitive perspective. Therefore, as highlighted by George Mead (1934:243), the ego of the individual emerges, resulting from the attitudes of others (subjective ego), but also it is an organized collection of attitudes of other people which are adopted by this individual (objective ego). Ego emerges on the basis of knowledge connected with an image of ourselves in the eyes of others, and the expectations towards us, which is mentioned by Krzysztof Konecki (2005:43). A view from the angle of interactionist sociology allows us to determine the significance of sport practiced by the disabled, which acquires special significance in the individual's life, becoming a source of attitudes, behaviors and actions in various, also non-sport, contexts of their every day existence.

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Rola sportu w procesie rekonstrukcji tożsamości osoby z nabytą dysfunkcją organizmu

Abstrakt: Artykuł porusza kwestie przemian dokonujących się w życiu osób niepełnosprawnych fizycznie, które związane są z ich zaangażowaniem w aktywność sportową. W artykule staram się wykazać, że uprawianie sportu może stworzyć sprzyjające warunki do samopoznania i samoakceptacji osoby z nabytą dysfunkcją ciała.

Celem przeprowadzonych badań jest analiza procesualnego wymiaru przemian w życiu osoby niepełnosprawnej dokonujących się pod wpływem doświadczeń związanych z uprawianiem sportu.

W badaniach wykorzystane zostały dane jakościowe uzyskane za pomocą pogłębionych wywiadów swobodnych przeprowadzone wśród osób niepełnosprawnych uprawiających sport. Analiza i interpretacja materiału badawczego prowadzona była zgodnie z procedurami metodologii teorii ugruntowanej.

Słowa kluczowe: niepełnosprawność, ciało, sport, zmiana, tożsamość

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Professional Biographies of Polish Corporation Workers in the Late Capitalist World

Abstract   Referring to a set of narrative interviews being professional biographical interviews with managers and professionals, I would like to present some definite typically patterned professional careers. The course and main phases of the settling into corporate order are identified and described with Fritz Schütze's analytical tools and categories. The main focus of interest is not only biographical processes of growing-up in corporation, that is the sphere of cognitive, normative and emotional references, but also their relation to the institutional sphere. Simultaneously, I intend therefore to address two types of questions: what type of biographical experiences are we dealing with: biographical plan (an autonomous, self-reflexive and intentional process of planning one's own actions), institutional pattern (a normative-based process of meeting institutional expectations), trajectory (a suffering-involved process of uncontrollably being subject to external circumstances), metamorphosis (a surprise-driven creative process of change); and what are the ways a biography reflects corporate order, that is, some definite type of the social order in late capitalism, and the related processes of Europeanization, globalization, multiculturalism and transculturalism, as well as the neoliberal economic order?

Keywords   professional biography, biographical processes, corporate order, late capitalism

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Introduction. An Outline of the Problem and Rationale for the Author's Theoretical Perspective

The aim of this article is to present an attempt at the reconstruction of the varieties and dynamics of biographical experience of the Polish managers and representatives of the *professional* category. The material comes from the pilot study of a larger research project,[1] and consists of 12 narrative interviews with

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[1] The article is a result of the research project "Poles in the world of late capitalism: changes of biographical processes in terms of

members of these two prediagnosed vocational groups.

I'm interested in the basic structures of biographical experience related to the process of maturation within a corporation, that is, the sphere of cognitive, axionormative and emotional orientations on the one hand, and their connections with the sphere of institutional solutions on the other. The course of and the subsequent stages in the process of blending into the corporate order are described using primarily the conceptual framework of the language of sociology (in particular Schütze's research perspective), and, to some extent, the language of psychology (S. Johnson's character development theory, see: Johnson 1998).

My interest in the biography serves then to answer two questions. First, what sort of experiences are we dealing with; secondly, how does the biography reflect what we refer to in the above-mentioned research project as the corporate order, that is, a certain type of ordering typical of the late capitalism and the related processes of Europeanization, globalization, multiculturalism and transculturalism, as well as the neoliberal economic order?

Managers of large, as well as small firms, and the category of *professionals* are social categories mostly exposed in the context of corporate order whose life chances have improved as a result of system transformation. Simultaneously, it is assumed that the structural features of the organisation of work, as

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well as the corporate standards of the project-based working style are not specific to narrowly understood international corporations only, but permeate the whole institutional field (law, finance, medicine, media and communication, education, consulting, and information technologies).

Schütze's approach offers tools that allow a comprehensive reconstruction of processes related to the shaping of personal orientations within their social context. His biographical method emphasizes, what is significant here, on the one hand the subjectivity of individuals involved in the different biographical processes developing in accordance with specific patterns oscillating between the attitude of care, taking control over the one's own life and authentic involvement, and, on the other hand, the category of suffering, being in the power of external and impersonal social institutions. Biographical action schemes, trajectories of suffering, institutional expectation patterns and creative metamorphoses are the four main kinds of biographical experiences (so-called *process structures*) and the corresponding four main rules of social organisation (Schütze 1981). In this research I am not interested in biography as a subject, that is, biography in the sense of life-story (Helling 1990), but I look at biography as a starting point of life-history, that is, the content of biography, the sense of one's living and existence in terms of professional career, social relations and (social and personal) identity.

Such a humanistic-existential perspective is a common ground for Schütze, as well as for a psychological tradition I here refer to. Firstly, Stephen Johnson's approach presents a theoretically grounded personality

typology, including developmental and interpersonal aspects. According to Johnson, each character structure stems from one of the basic existential human problems, each of them being of fundamental importance to the human experience and so needing to be constantly solved throughout a person's life (Johnson 1998:18-19). And secondly, in gestalt psychotherapy approach, which we refer to in the research project, individuals learn to balance and adjust to fitting their boundaries in a socially acceptable *gestalts*, and disturbances are said to arise from the inability to find and maintain the proper balance between boundaries of self and the rest of the world.

Summing up the research questions: from the bottom-up perspective I intend to ask how much control / compulsion and how much care / autonomy is there to be found in these biographies? Do they lead to an existential breakthrough, metamorphosis or biographical plans of action, or do they embody the so-called *fixed gestalts*, continual mastering of a (repetitive) trajectory? What sort of resourcefulness do we see? Is it a passive and reactive resourcefulness, which serves exclusively to master trajectories, or is it an active and creative resourcefulness of the emancipatory type?

Whereas, from the top-down perspective the corporate order appears to bind, to further use the metaphor of the maturation process within a corporation) in a twofold manner. Due to its inherent ambivalence, on the one hand it largely deregulates, allowing for and generating a considerable area of discretion and creativity for the workers (Foucauldian ‹internal› form of power "through" subjectivity referred to as subjectification), while at the same

time it strongly regulates, controlling, and auditing them (the ‹external› form of power "against" subjectivity, akin to disciplinary power)[2] on the other. This ambivalence appears to stem from a yet more general tendency characteristic of the postmodern times, that is, the abolishing of all types of binarisms, blurring the existing boundaries and the ultimate conflation of the different orders (in particular certain properties of the traditional and the modern order), the synthesis of the individual and the social, the instrumental and the autotelic, the rational and the pre-rational, which indeed implies the coexistence of the different forms of power (Collier 2009).

Questions of power and freedom require a separate comment at this point. While I am interested in tracking the techniques and procedures of power used in the corporate world, including all the forms of subjectification (following post-Foucauldian studies), my research interests focus with equal intensity around the forms of resistance to these techniques and procedures. I see the forms of resistance described by Foucault and compiled by his commentators (Milchman, Rosenberg 2009)[3] as both a reference point and a subject of a few doubts.

Within my research perspective, I set out to search (both within the corporate world and outside) for freedom ‹beyond› the forms of power and counter-

power. By 'freedom' I don't mean the transcendental freedom, but rather choosing ‹among› those forms, accepting (acknowledging) a given standpoint, and then espousing it along with the related values, as well as constant (processual/dynamic) checking, confronting the successive choices and taking the relevant decisions. For want of a better name, here I would call it a "critical involvement in values"; it is based on a different philosophy of man than the Foucauldian tradition. Of particular relevance to this research perspective seems to be E. Fromm's philosophical thought. According to Fromm, the human being's fundamental (hence a-historical) need is the need to possess a reference framework and an object of involvement; in this sense it is in line with Foucault's thinking and also, earlier, with Durkheim's reflections, who both believed that as the organisation of the social order progresses, there is a growing demand for symbolization. This diagnosis, however, leads Fromm to conclusions not only of philosophical but also, if not primarily, of psychological nature. In his reflections on the inherent human tendency to seek self-realization,[4] he quotes, among other authors, O. Rank, who pointed out that achieving individuation is in itself a creative act: a person who has become his or her real self (or, in other words, has completed self-realization) is, in this psychoanalyst's terms, an artist, who has attained the courage necessary to overcome the separation fear (Fromm 2013); this also shows how important it is for an organism to (effectively) interact with its environment.

Foucauldian paresis, critique and the related problematization[5] could potentially become forms of autonomy/auto-expansion, but there is a risk they might remain forms of mere counterpower, (involuntary/unreflective) reaction to power. To put it in the language of psychology: they might take the form of devaluation as the mechanism contrary to idealization, where both forms are relationally undifferentiated, coming into existence because of and in relation to the object.[6] The risk of telling the whole truth a person has on their mind may be, but a blind (even if intellectually skilful) protest against previous prohibitions; it could also be seen as acting with no respect for boundaries / with no responsibility for the interlocutor (which does not preclude the conventional or courteous adapting to them). Critique, in its turn, due to its constant doubting attitude, may carry fear (or a strong pressure of an unsatisfied need), for example, a fear of getting involved (narcissistic fear of fusing and the irreversible loss of [the illusion of] separateness). This fear, as I will explain below, may reduce the ability to actively unmask. In this sense, then, both these forms of resistance, unless reworked and (critically) rooted within a specific value system,

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[2] The process of bifurcation has been described in many contexts in sociological literature; here I refer to Foucault following Nikolas Rose (1998).

[3] Similarly to Magdalena Nowicka's (2013) views presented in her PhD thesis "The voice from outside: games using the figure of the alien in disputes over the common memory"("Głos z zewnątrz – gry figurą obcego w sporach o pamięć zbiorową") I see subjectification, paresis and critique as different forms of resistance.

[4] As early as the 1950s Fromm realized that the term self-realization had been popularized (mainly by A. Maslow) and at the same time its meaning rendered shallow, which made its use in the more serious context difficult.

[5] Within the context of my research, I do not elaborate further on the subjectification project, which is the most radical one and seen as elitist by Foucault's commentators quoted above. Let me say, however, that I think the idea of rejecting the subjectivity project risks becoming an illusion. Similarly to other forms of resistance discussed further in the article, the fundamental question is to what extent this attitude has been reworked, and to what extent it is merely reactive, what is its internal motivation? At the first sight it seems the opposite of narcissism, but it may prove narcissistic with the opposite sign: "while the narcissist wants to be admired, the complementary narcissist wants to entirely devote themselves to the other person; both are characterized by a poorly defined 'I', which is at risk of losing its boundaries and burdened with a sense of inferiority (Willi 1996)."

[6] This prompts some more general questions about who formulates these theses, who embodies one or the other attitude/form of power, what are these people's motives, why are these theses formulated, are those who formulate them aware of their motives, if so, to what extent?

can easily fall prey to power techniques and procedures, which they themselves set out to track under the term 'subjectification'. The contemporary capitalism is, by its very nature, business-driven and opportunistic (Braudel 2013): it easily adapts, reorientates and creates new elements, including both the assertive and the cynical attitude.

Critical social sciences and their representatives face the same dilemmas and dangers as the world of people they research: it is the same world of weakened social bonds and symbolic references, values undergoing conflation, postmodern dialectics, games (and their playing procedures – both the trivial self-realization and the nontrivial critical attitude), where it is not clear what is to constitute the basis of order, identity and involvement, and, consequently, the basis of differentiation, autonomy and the authority of separate content and roles. A further result of these processes may be a decreased sense of responsibility and an increased risk of a covert imposition of certain views or ways of conduct. This tendency – next to the mentioned psychological explanation - was noted and described by Basil Bernstein (1990b) in the course of his research on the changing educational codes and the related hypotheses concerning the broader phenomena of power transformations and mechanisms of symbolic control.

Below, I will present three typical professional career patterns: 1/ cyclothymic pattern, 2/ institutionalized pattern and 3/ the pattern of individualized institutionalization. The whole data used for generating these three types included 12 interviews, as well as the existing body of data, which was collected in the course of the research project under the 7th

Framework Program, entitled "Euroidentities. The Evolution of European Identity: Using biographical methods to study the development of European Identity". The latter were used to some extent as the pilot study and helped to develop the sampling strategy for the aforementioned 12 interviews. The study was conducted taking into account the broadest possible diversity, according to the grounded theory strategy (Strauss 1987). Theoretical saturation point (where no new information coming from the interviews was obtained from further data) determined the number of these types (typical career patterns), and their adequacy followed by a detailed analysis. They do not however form a typology; the material we plan to collect in Opus 6 Project in the form of transcriptions of 82 autobiographical narrative interviews may constitute a rich research resource, to be used, under certain conditions, for the typology formation.

Cyclothymic Pattern.[7] The Narrator's Analytical Profile, Rationale for the Type Specification, Summary of Biography

The narrator's biographic career and his narrative about it are an example of a certain distinc-

[7] Whenever I use terminology drawn from the language of psychology in this article, I will do so based on the mentioned theoretical perspective, *that is,* S. Johnson's psychoanalytic developmental theory (Johnson 1998), reconciled with an existential orientation. He claims that characteristic personality patterns do not appear only in the most serious form of mental illnesses: they have been documented to occur in the normal population. Hence Johnson draws a continuum of human disorders ranging from the lighter forms to the more serious ones, with interaction as the decisive factor determining the successful adjustment of every individual.

It therefore becomes necessary to formulate my own approach to the question of mental health. Following the author of "The pathology of normality", I don't see it only within a historical and cultural perspective as successful functioning in a given society (the concept of mental health oriented towards society), but also I define it through criteria specific to every individual (the concept of mental health oriented towards the human being).

tive type of the process of maturation to life in the late-capitalist world and an understanding of oneself and one's activity within it. Despite the narrator's young age, the biography is a long series of various unrelated professional activities ranging from working as a model/hostess to public administration jobs to corporate positions and, finally, self-employment. In his life, as in some other similar life narrations that were analysed, constant changes and the habitual adventitiousness are interwoven with periods of stability, the search for discipline and normalization, which soon give way to another episode of euphoria/mania/trance, and, when it reaches the point of culmination, he will again look for rescue in fasting, where there is the moment of dysphoria and momentary breakdown and depression. The process of building one's professional identity is akin to the process of maturation, since the swings of mood and actions subsequently undertaken by those narrators are similar to the dilemmas that characterize the growing-up period – between the juvenile independence and the infantile need for dependence. The types of jobs they undertake belong to the world of the middle class, the world of services; while it seems to offer a space of freedom, liberty, and creativity, on the other hand it soon turns out to be a world with a rationalized structure governed by a totalizing regime - a world which is often marked by suffering. The case of this narrator and his narrative confirms conclusions stemming from works of such authors as, for example, Erving Goffman, who found that the increasingly more respectable and normalized jobs founded on scientific foundations, are structurally similar to those found in the world of small services: in both cases we are dealing with

work depending on the effectiveness of communication games, strictly defined resources and professional skills such as, for example, face-saving strategies.[8] In this sense the foundation of identity is weak (in Brubaker and Cooper's understanding of the term 'identity' [Brubaker, Cooper 2000]), fluid and superficial/histrionic: in fact, it comes down to mere communication competences. It is hardly surprising then that those narrators' successive attempts to leave the cyclothymia of rises and falls turn out to be mere appearances.

Just after passing his final secondary school exams, the narrator, who up to that point had lived a care-free, light-hearted life, is confronted with the necessity to earn his own living, or even to financially support his parents - businesspeople gone bankrupt. The beginning of his studies (he deliberately chose to study law and administration) thus also marks the beginning of his professional activity. The job he finds involves physical work, long working hours together with low pay and causes physical exhaustion; as a result, the narrator has no time for his studies or rather, he has no time to simply live his life. The first year is an attempt to come to grips with the situation, find his place within it, and look for ways to earn a living which wouldn't involve the hard physical work. He takes on jobs at promotional

[8] The different jobs performed by this narrator come down almost entirely to effective and showy communication; what's also interesting, however, is that corporate workers from other, more specialized sectors, frequently not involved in human contact at all, when promoted to a management position (but also in their everyday activities, such as those related to presenting their achievement during the employee appraisal) begin to adopt this kind of sales communication techniques. This also affects their identity and the character of bonds they form; while not necessarily leading to the occurrence of cyclothymic cycles, it may still have relatively long-lasting consequences (see: coaching in the case of the narrator representing pattern 2).

events and then becomes a model, which does improve his financial situation for a while, but fails to solve his problems. The chaos of activity and instability is stopped by his decision to go to the USA, where he plans to earn money to support himself in Poland. While working in the States, he severally overtaxes his organism (significant weight loss), but the money he has been able to save allows him to lead a comfortable life for the following few months, during which he leads a very active social life and makes new contacts. These relations subsequently motivate him to look for a prestigious, well-paid job in sales, and then services, to allow him to maintain his new high living standards. At the same time his studies and the related basic commitments demand to be fulfilled, and so the narrator again loses control over the intensity of events. Thus opens up a period of nights without sleep, which is, however, rewarded by bonuses flowing from the world of corporation, including the salary, his own car, et cetera. Things are constantly changing: at one point his situation at university is catastrophic (risk of being removed), then again he is mobbed at work, as a young inexperienced employee. A momentary quiet is brought by a period of employment as a public administration official, which allows him to finally complete his university degree (after seven years of studying). Due to a combination of many different factors, however, he returns to the world of corporation where he gets a promotion and receives all the related benefits; the costs are proportionally higher, too, that is, bigger workload and longer working hours. At the time he is planning to get married, which helps him to decide once again to abandon the corporation and move back to his hometown. There are a few more turning points like this one

on the narrator's professional path, with alternating periods of employment as a public administration official and a corporation worker (reaching the position of the marketing director). Finally, he decides not to enter the corporation again and instead sets up his own business, which is where the narrative part of the interview ends.

Empirical Analysis[9]

The beginning of the narrator's biographical career displays a strongly trajectory background: an idyllic childhood is abruptly interrupted for reasons that are not fully revealed (we later find out they were related to the parents' financial crisis). From its first moments, the interview is marked, as can be seen below, by a biographical fact: the necessity to earn a living or the narrator's being 'thrown in at the deep end'.

From the very beginning the trajectory plays two seemingly contradictory functions. The first one is that of auto-presentation (the way the narrator reveals his past bears characteristics of a strategic interaction and in this sense it confirms his identity as a salesman, who is equipped with appropriate and effective facades, techniques, canonical stories and the client/listener handling methods), and the second one is the auto-therapeutic function (the narrator's recount of the trajectory and the different methods of overcoming it allows him to partly become accustomed to these situations by naming

[9] Since a fairly initial and pilotage-like characteristic of this study all excerpts from the presented narratives are mainly of the illustrative nature. The stage when they become the subject of a thorough analysis is yet to come (the main analytical process within Opus 6 Project), and later to be published.

them, it reinforces the process of self-understanding, and consequently helps him to get in touch with the true, deeper feelings, such as pain and suffering).

My first job was a job renovating some old building and I spent the whole holiday working there, I met, I got to know that sort of people, construction workers, you know, we used to whistle at the passing girls. We were working on X, we were renovating the old building all through the summer, so that was very nice in that you could, for example, spy on normal people through the window, although, to me, I must admit, it came as a shock, to the young man that I was, gone was the sheltered life I used to have, all of a sudden I landed in the merciless world, where I had to get up at 4 o'clock in the morning, start work at six, work for ten or twelve hours to make any sort of money at all. This was also the beginning of my studies, right, I'd say I needed to combine work with studies from the very beginning, and that's why I studied part-time, but, well, I think I did a decent degree, I graduated from the Faculty of Law, I mean, sorry, administration at the Faculty of Law. It took me seven years, true, but I did it.

The ambivalence of functions performed by the extract, as well as the whole interview, appears to constitute the very essence of this type of corporate biography, the lifestyle of (mainly junior) staff of corporate capitalism, where the euphoric, distorted items are intertwined with dysphoric ones, where, as we will see, the aleatoric mania, the inclination to construct fragmentary structures, pretending and hyperactivity turns into a distance and a sense of discontent with the current job, and a lowered mood. At the level of communicating about his life we can also

see the co-occurrence of the self-presentation trance, high level of excitement about the fact he's talking about himself and, however short-lived, concentration on his experience, which is different from the showy and effective selling of oneself.

From the psychological point of view, the second stage, that is, the state of depression, indeed often involves a higher degree of reflexivity and the ability to recognise one's needs, hence also a chance to satisfy them.[10] However, it is mostly temporary, as is the case with those types of narrators, and there is no chance it can transform into some stable attitude to life, to themselves, to people. The narrators are much more strongly motivated by the hunger of development and growth, and primarily by the underlying fear of getting stuck, feeling trapped or declassed. Therefore, they escape from the state of deprivation or being dependent into something that appears to satisfy and offer independence - attractive goods related to the world of corporation (exclusive business meetings, expensive gadgets,

[10] Fromm, whom I quoted before, shows in his writing how the modern world and modern social processes, including, in particular, the loosening social bonds, capitalist work conditions and work relations, as well as consumption industry draw people away from life's realities and their existence, thus compensating for the state of emptiness, boredom and melancholy. In this sense the famous 'escape from freedom' is in its first step an escape from depression into the world. An example is provided by the case in point, where we can see the compulsion to work or the illusion of self-development reinforced in a consumerist manner; as Fromm wrote in the 1950s: 'Unfortunately, the terms 'self-realization' and 'the realization of human potential' have been adopted by numerous movements who are trying to sell a cheap and quick way to salvation to those who are looking for easy answers. Many representatives of these movements who sell a mixture of self-realization, zen, psychoanalysis, group therapy, yoga and other ingredients are commercially-minded charlatans. They promise young people to make them more sensitive and older businessmen to teach them how to better 'deal with' their employees. What is to be regretted is the fact that serious concepts become fouled in this way, which makes it difficult to use them within serious context' (Fromm 2013:156-157).

etc.), frequently paid for with different kinds of rationalized suffering, and thus initiating the new euphoric cycle reinforced by the logic of consumer capitalism.

The different jobs of the narrator, from the construction worker to the model (some of dubious integrity or dignity, but also bordering on grotesque, some with unclear legal status) point to the neurotic aspect of the trajectory, characterized by a dispersion of energy and involvement, and consequently, the narrator's inability to realize and satisfy the most essential needs. The narrator also finds it difficult, partly due to the double function the narrative performs, to clearly assess that period: the expression 'tough times' comes right next to words such as 'great' and 'very interesting'. Lack of ambivalence in this respect would most probably lead to serious re-evaluation in the narrator's life both then and now, to conversion or a radical redefinition. Otherwise, the main impression his narrative gives is that of a nervous struggle, certainly reinforced by the character of the work and the general working situation between the poles described above: he breaks away and tries to escape from that ambivalence and the tension it generates rather than acknowledging it.

In the extract quoted below it can also be seen how the slow-down of the trajectory potential soon generates another tension. Most probably this is the fear of dependence/adhering permanently to the place where the narrator finds himself at the moment. The subsequent hyper-activity in different areas leads to weariness and extreme exhaustion, and thus the euphoric-dysphoric cycle starts again.

And the first 2,5 years of my studies were a very difficult time of psychological toughening, [...] and you needed to attend classes at 10 am, or 2 pm, 3 pm, regular classes, so the way I lived was just, well, I just dropped in after work with my hands dirty, or, 'cause these construction things, I continued, working at the site, I was finishing this work somewhere in the middle of the academic year. Well, but this just didn't work, right, 'cause there was all the studying, materials, everything, to find the time for, on the other hand I still felt the financial pressure, but, well, I didn't really have the time to think about another job, I got my foot in the door. So I managed to make a deal with the man who owned the place which we had renovated, and the deal was I was going to be a janitor in his old building, and this was the beginning of a period of stability, of some stability, since I worked as a night-time security guard, and then my life looked like that: I kind of worked all night and then in the morning, or maybe at midday I went to my classes. This was the period when I learnt what it means not to sleep. I could go without sleep for 48 hours, for instance, and I got hallucinations, or, I don't know, obsessions. It was, I look back at that time as a sort of trauma in general. But, the good thing was I somehow managed to get over this job after a year, I somehow got over the fact that I had to sit somewhere at night and watch a building. [...] But, then some personal sort of ambitions got me, I think. It wasn't all right somehow, I mean spending the night locked in some kind of a shed with just books to read, it got me frustrated quite quickly. After half a year, or seven months I started to look around to see what I could do to somehow go out and meet people, that was the time. And I thought, 'why don't I get a kind of job where I can earn some money and don't have to work hard.' [...] And this was the time when I had a go and I signed

up for „X" to do a modelling course. And I decided, somebody prompted me, maybe I could try, 'cause I have the right conditions, right. [...] And so I could earn, say, I don't know, in two days earn the same money I could earn in a month earlier. Of course, it was a very insecure job, there were shows two to three times a month, there was a lot of money, but there were times when there was nothing. [...] This was the period when I stopped sleeping again. So that was even funny the way I could go with my hands dirty, stained with paint go to a fashion show rehearsal, for example. This was great, to read books on the tram and study in the meantime. And I was working in a chemical company in A, handled some acid containers, I unloaded some trucks full of soya beans. And these were really, really tough times (…). And I think that was a breakthrough at some point, somehow I couldn't come to terms with all these things, somehow it didn't fit together. I felt sort of exhausted, knackered, it all didn't fit together and I said to myself I needed to find some smart way out of the situation, right.

His trip to the States fits well into the cyclothymia; it turned out to be the continuation of the trajectory, whereby the narrator compulsively repeated the one and only pattern described above, with his needs hardly visible and even if realized, not at all satisfied by the narrator's increased activity. The only way to achieve a sense of relative security he knew was to earn money, often in very hard physical conditions.

From the psychological point of view these cyclothymic patterns that manifest themselves in the extract quoted above, and throughout the interview, with alternating states of mania and physical breakdown along with depression, can be perceived as a sign of

the narrator's lack of self-control and, consequently, remaining in the prolonged state of trajectory potential. This is partly explained by the state of crisis in the narrator's family and, more broadly, perhaps by a certain socialization pattern to which the narrator had become accustomed. If we expand this psychological interpretation (which best fits into the oral personality characteristics [Johnson 1998]) with a sociological diagnosis of work transformation and the service capitalism, as well as the related neoliberal logic, we will arrive at the type of bonding which ideally fits into the psychopathology of orality: market participants (clients, workers or employers) are maintained at a certain level of (external) motivation by being constantly provided with various phantasies, as well as called upon to take individual responsibility for their life as a reflexive project (which was described by Foucault, for example, as procedures and techniques of subjectification instructing people how to become a subject). The whole of this ideological message promotes a certain lifestyle which evidently allows one to persist in oscillating between mania and depression, between trance and fasting. It offers showy ways to continue (professional) life in the state of permanent non-satisfaction of one's needs, while at the same time reinforcing the belief in one's omnipotence (which paradoxically leads people to seriously neglect themselves and their basic needs to the point where it is no longer possible to carry on and individuals usually end up in depression or suffer various forms of breakdown[11]).

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[11] Speaking from a strictly psychological point of view, the problem is that the state of depression is most often hard to bear and survive, hence it is compensated by states (episodes) of mania, where individuals, forgetting the freshly realized pain of life's exigencies, take on even more responsibility and get involved in successive independent activities, creating overly optimistic plans (Johnson 1998). Thus, such individuals perfectly respond to the needs of today's market and its ideology.

The narrative under discussion is an expression of a kind of chronic dependence on needs and non-satisfaction, concealed by the seemingly empowering attitude of independence and a sense of agency, underpinned by effects of both disciplinary power and subjectification. Later when he is in marketing, he becomes a victim of mobbing at work, but the situation is made to appear innocent in the interview, and the violence presented as neutralized. The kind of superfluous rationalizations I have found in several similar interviews are a communication strategy used by many corporate narrators. They combine, as was already indicated, both discipline and internalized power: a great deal of self-denial and hard work coupled with the strong belief it is all done for the sake of the individual's self-development. It is virtually a new communicative idiom: every new task, although it will often require too much of the employee (to the point of driving them to physical or mental exhaustion) is described as entirely positive, for example in terms of a development opportunity (which will most frequently boil down to gaining simplified professional psychological or semiotic knowledge transposed into the ability to make business contacts).

Such narrators' ability to enter the professional situations pretending, constructing interactions, and a propensity to do so appears to indicate a symptom of narcissistic tendencies, the image culture et cetera. However, the superficiality which comes through the description of some periods of their lives, as well as the excessive emotional excitability, dramatizing life events during the interview, all this history, especially seen in this narrator

appears more indicative of histrionicity (Johnson 1998). As such, it is very well suited to the contemporary service capitalism, seeking young and dynamic 'spin doctors' specializing in soft skills, facades and manipulation techniques.

The next stage in the build-up of the trajectory potential in the narrator's life, chronologically speaking, was the risk of being removed from the university he faced – this time he sought refuge in a public administration job, where he didn't stay very long. This again began the period of changing jobs, with limited awareness of the reasons behind these changes, further contributing to the sense of fragmentariness and contingency of the narrator's professional identity; from euphoria do dysphoria, with short-lived attempts at satisfying basic needs – these need to be seen more like acts of desperation, than a conscious decision. Following another episode in a corporation, the narrator again began to work in public institutions, where he toyed with politics (although he never became fully involved), later to return to business, thinking of establishing his own company. The process of understanding himself and his life comes to a close in this very decision. He sees himself as a mature 30-year-old man, who has been involved in many different things in his career, and now he doesn't want continuous changes, dependency and subjection, and who thinks that 'being his own boss' will be the final point. Private entrepreneurship of the type chosen by the narrator, that is, one which is legitimized and supported by the capitalist system, constitutes a non-oppositional alternative to the corporation at the supra-individual level.

Institutionalized Pattern [Subtype A]. The Narrator's Analytical Profile, Rationale for the Type Specification, Summary of Biography

Over the course of his ten-year professional career, the majority of which he has spent working and being promoted within one corporation, he has become, despite the different tensions and modalizations, one of its most fundamental officers and loyal believers. In these kinds of institutional biographies, the above mentioned ambivalence of the corporate order, the bifurcating type of ordering imposed upon human activities within a corporation – from deregulation to overregulation/ from subjectification to discipline (here also the ministry in the form of coaching which is closely linked to the company's profile; Foucault saw this kind of ministry (Foucault 1995; 2000) as both disciplining and subjugating the self) – take on a different character than that displayed in the type analysed before. References to the organisational culture of the company, as well as inter-worker relations, but also to some extent the sphere of professional autonomy, creativity and individualism are treated by the narrator as secondary to and merely instrumental in performing the highly abstract operations involving the application of complicated analytical tools to achieve the main goal, that is, bringing profit to the company.

Strategies of optimization and risk securing used by corporations have currently become a priority, hence also a field of control and power. The world capitalist system and its new context, the global economic crisis, reinforces this tendency, whereby, using Reinhart Koselleck's conceptual language,

both microsystems (psychosystems) and the more complex organisational and functional systems are driven by the same motivation: the need to control the future. To this end, the corporate order very skilfully, as I will show, takes advantage of the frequently referred to tendency to abolish all sorts of binarisms, blurring the existing boundaries and the ultimate conflation of the different orders, in particular certain properties of the traditional and the modern order. The synthesis of the individual and the social, the instrumental and the autotelic, the rational and the pre-rational in the contemporary corporation may lead to a process contrary to the Durkheimian division of labour, that is to say a process of the totaliszation of bonds and absorption in the role, as described by Goffman. Some corporate workers, such as the narrator, find themselves ideally suited to this kind of artificially created and complete reality, which they themselves describe using a homiletic language.

What we are dealing with here (and in similar life stories I analysed) is the case of becoming spellbound rather than experiencing a series of enchantments and disenchantments like in the first pattern. I think this is due to two factors. Firstly, it is the character of work, largely strictly mathematical econometric and involving high risk (hence a high level of fear and stress) as opposed to very general and frequently improvised knowledge of communication and persuasion, which involves less responsibility; secondly, the given cognitive, axionormative and emotional orientations of this type of narrators, which are very much interlinked with the mentioned character of work. Based on this narrator's professional career I will show how his initially

narrowly trained disciplined econometric mind, which perfectly filled every gap (he was completing econometric studies and simultaneously working in the banking sector during his senior years) becomes infected with the pedagogical discourse of coaching (which he, let be noted here, recontextualizes in his mathematical way). This oxymoronic whole assumes the proportions of a new cosmology: to use Mannheim's language, functional rationality takes on the features of substantive rationality. Two factors, shared by this type of narrator, that should also be mentioned here, are their commitment to observe an externally established set of rules and regulations while virtually completely ignoring their own needs and failing to see any dilemmas, as well as concentration of attention on the appropriacy of behavior (visible also during the interviews). They both seem to ideally adapt to these structural conditions described above and the rhetoric of fear of/necessity to secure the future.

Empirical Analysis

The whole narrative appears to tell the story of the narrator's process of socializing to a specific type of management. Initially, both at the textual and biographical level, we can read an ever closer blending into the audit culture; the narrator's mathematical econometric mind is used to optimize company profits:

> I mean the bank can manage the portfolios it has in such a way as to, you know, to really maximize the results and my aim is all the time to somehow improve the risk management level so that we can simply optimize the cost of risk, and this can only be done in such a way that you gain new knowledge, new experience and so on.

He presents the corporation in a homiletic language as a world which is autonomous/complete/free from bias, where power takes the hybrid form of the attitude to oneself, to co-workers and to the corporation: a form which is tool-like, mathematical econometric, qualitative and simultaneously infected (most likely through coaching) by the communal internally disciplined "us":

> My unit deals with developing algorithms used to calculate creditworthiness, implementing risk valuation principles, that is, the so-called scoring models, let's say. What else? We deal with creating the bank's policy, the general policy of the bank with reference to the products we manage [...]. So we sort of create the framework of reference for the credit analysts. We monitor and manage the quality of product portfolios we are in charge of, we deal with building the rules of the so-called cross sell for the clients, the clients of the bank, so these would be the main things for sure, and then there is a number of other related items, such as external reporting, internal reporting, creating managerial information, commenting on credit regulations and so on, working with those operational units, but mainly these are all very much content-related things, and the analyses we do, we don't analyse credit applications, we analyse the whole portfolio, I mean we check what is the current loss ratio of the portfolio, what does it stem from, I mean, what are the reasons for the given loss ratio, what affects the loss ratio, what affects the portfolio quality, what, I don't know, what determines such and such indicators of the portfolio quality, what

values can be observed and so on, so that's what it looks like more or less.

Uncertainty of the future/impossibility to fully control it, prompts corporation workers to take actions aimed at securing/ordering it, at least partially (a process certainly accompanied by high stress levels, which the narrator claims altogether not to experience). The rationalized, neoliberal world is not interested in approaches based on an idea/utopia/project in Karl Mannheim's sense; if there is a project, it is also strictly parameterized, it has its beginning, its course and its end. Whenever there is an element of novelty, it needs to be immediately formatted and turned into an algorithm, so as to reduce to a minimum the number of variables outside the brackets; regulating, codifying and standardizing are all features of Foucauldian economic, financial and legal dispositives founded on the post-Enlightenment version of smoothly operating industrialism.

What this type of narrative also shows is how the corporation subjugates through the ideology of individual entrepreneurship. The narrators' independence/autonomy is limited to the narrow field of company activity and even within these limits their creativity comes down to ordering or seeking confirmation, that is, performing routine activities rather than being what creativity essentially is, that is, broadening the horizon (with no restrictions), breaking algorithms and falsifying.

And how is this field managed in psychological terms? The narrator is characterized (both in his narrative and while at work in his corporation) by an intense and sharp attention focused on details,

which prevents him from noticing the more general (that is to say, crucial) features of things and phenomena, such as, for example, the psychosocial effects of his activity; he simply fails to notice himself and his personal goals. He appears to be a born clerk/officer, who sees the world as non-problematic. His narrative is an example of a non-biographical plan of action (linguistically, this shows in the frequent use of passive voice), where the whole is defined/disciplined/subjugated by the structural conditions which thus construct a safe anti-trajectory prophylactics founded on a certain degree of liberty (or rather an illusion of liberty), but first and foremost, founded on rigid rules.

> I was then trained as a credit risk analyst, and so after two or three months I got the offer as a credit specialist, where I dealt with quite big companies that had applied for credit within this bank.

> I received a call, I mean it's not that I was looking for a new job, not at that stage, but in that case I was recommended by people who I had known before, especially at university, and I was invited for an interview at the credit risk management department here...

> What's really important is that I never really had to think, I mean throughout my career I must admit, I've never had to ask my superior for a payrise, 'cause it's always been like I've never felt unappreciated, or badly paid, 'cause it simply came at the right moments and it certainly helped build my motivation and commitment and it helped me to steer my sort of development here inside the organisation, I didn't sort of focus on these issues and like I said, I never felt I was badly paid, or somehow wronged for that reason.

This type of career and personality refers us to a different corporate pattern of bonding: there are no euphoric/dysphoric swings, instead, there is a relatively stable institutionalized growth. It progresses smoothly thanks to good socialization to the culture of audit/econometric tool-like attitude from the narrator's university times and later on inside the corporation, to be taken a step further with his promotion to a management position and the resultant introduction to the culture of coaching/pedagogy, as well as providing training to his subordinates/ co-workers. His initial scepticism about the different soft techniques used in the company gives way to the belief in the rationality of the world: in this case coaching, much like Bentham's panopticon, is an extension of the parameterized world and the mathematical econometric reason.

What's more, where I work, in corporations, what's stressed now is employee development and I also very much stress it, anyway, when I set employee goals I also include development goals and also as a manager, I don't only get the task to, I don't know, to realize specific hard goals, such as numbers and figures, say, the financial goals, but also goals related to employees' commitment levels, their professional development and so on, and it is, I think it's really good, and it also allows me to accomplish, in this other field, to accomplish sort of my own, as if private goals, I mean, in the field which is more of a soft skills field, where I develop, as, say, a manager, although I don't like this word, I don't know why.

Just like the hard techniques, coaching is meant to eliminate all and any tensions, conflicts, or clashes, and, consequently, keep the corporation in the state of a relatively predictable order. People who display behaviors similar to the narrator's (which could be described to some extent as obsessive-compulsive [Johnson 1998]) may engage in endless efforts aimed at reaching the sanctioned aims (often referred to in terms of moral judgements and far from personal ones) if exposed to that sort of constant and binding superiority of an objective necessity (in this case – the company profit). The fragment of the narrative quoted below to some extent bears the characteristics of a (commercial) confession of faith:

I mean I generally believe that, well, this really is so, every employee of the bank should keep it at the back of their head that, I don't know, whatever his job in the bank, is it just pushing paper round the office, or, I don't know, just typing things all day, well, that it all really serves some purpose and this purpose should be written somewhere in the minds of these people", "I mean so that we realize what we are here for in fact, which is not as obvious as it might seem, so that we know what the aim of this bank is, like any other commercial institution, it is to maximize profits and we are all trying to somehow work towards this aim.

Institutionalized Pattern [Subtype B]. Individualized Institutionalization Pattern

The narrator also represents an institutionalized pattern of the professional career, further specified as ‹individualized›, implying that her (and others' of this type) involvement and bond with the company is of a more reflexive character, developed as a result of the many different dilemmas, events, increasingly more conscious choices and decisions she has faced in the course of her professional career. She has been working in the same company for over ten years, but both her first professional experiences and the first years of employment in her current job show a truly adventitious attitude to the world of work. These types of people do not have many expectations, attitudes or rigid constraints related to a single clearly defined professional career pattern. This allows them to see situational inconveniences differently than through the lens of a trajectory, hence acquiring new skills or emerging new possibilities do not assume the miraculous proportions in their eyes, which was the case with the narrators of the cyclothymic pattern. The qualities of light-heartedness, adventitiousness and aleatoricity (rhetorically associated with the conceptually broader ideology of individualism[12]) have nowadays become a certain recommended model (or task), and, as such, are much more difficult to fulfil.

In the case of the narrator, this attitude most probably stems from locating her key life goals in the private sphere of family life and the (unfulfilled) plan to achieve self-realization as a mother, which situates her in a truly anti-individualistic order. This attitude, however, changes when she reaches a management position after a few years. At that point,

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[12] I differentiate between the ideology of individualism and individualism, which in this case is associated with the attitude of the critical involvement in values I described above; it is the space of reflection and free will as opposed to the subjugating ideology, which imposes a certain catalogue of values recognized as individualistic (this in itself being an internally contradictory operation). The understanding of individualism I assume in this work coincides with the term 'individuation', and this in turn coincides with the conscious process of shaping one's identity and building a sense of integrity. My research questions focus around the process of professional maturation, and the question of integrity plays a major role both at the level of the narrators' lives, and at the level of their narratives.

her former, as she herself puts it, naivety along with a degree of independence and low levels of involvement fall prey to rigidity and excessive dependence, with the resultant symptoms of professional burnout (observable both in her life and her narrative). At this trajectoric moment she seeks therapeutic help. As a result, she stays in the company, and at the moment of the interview, she is redefining her place in the firm, searching for boundaries of responsibility and dependence which would give her space of relative liberty and a sense of freedom.

Empirical Analysis

Her first professional experiences while still a student (she studied applied linguistics) and immediately afterwards, indicate exactly that kind of incidental concatenation of different events, in which she and others of these types of narrators find their place, on which they draw and subsequently go on. There is no moment of seduction/enchantment by the great world (for example – in the case of this narrator – while working on the editorial board of a stylish magazine), and so there is no suffering/disillusionment which could trigger a trajectory.

And then there came the last year of studies, when I stopped teaching, I quit teaching both in P, 'cause it was getting sort of hazy, and also I wanted to properly and quickly write my thesis and not drag it all beyond the fifth year, and I did not have the job in A, 'cause this friend of mine, she was back, but then, it was this guy I knew, so he worked on B' crew and helped with concerts, but he also studied philosophy in Z, and so he came to A to do an exam with one professor. So I knew he was there, and I call him and say,

have you passed? "Yes, I have, and you, have you got a job", I mean he asked me 'Have you got a job?' and I was like why, and he was like do you want one? And I was like how d' you mean, "cause my aunt is looking for an assistant,' he said. The aunt turned out to be a lady who was just beginning to develop W, which was a supplement to magazine X at the time, and it later on came to be an independent, I mean an independent magazine, published as a separate monthly … a monthly, or a quarterly it was. At the time, it was a quarterly supplement. And so she needed an assistant, we agreed on a specific amount of money, I agreed to be available if it didn't get in the way of my studies, and it did not get in the way too much for I didn't have many classes. And that was another job where I learnt things that came in handy later on, it was a job in the editor's office, which is a very chaotic place, focused on what I completely, I mean, what was, that wasn't a passion for me, that is design, perfumes, gossip and the like, everybody specialized in something there, and she specialized in design. […] So I found out, I noticed how much one can gain by just smiling on the phone, I mean how much this can be heard in the voice, what you are like, what attitude you show, how much you can get done and I must admit that came in useful on many occasions later on in my work. So that was one year, indeed we had made arrangements for this one year, it worked out at about 10 hours a week. And then I was somehow taking long to write my MA, but then I got a big kick 'cause the teacher said September was no good, she said either July... I mean, she said July was no good, either June or September, that's what she said. So I said, 'September, I don't want September, I want my holidays.' I did it, I wrote this thesis in one month and that was it. And then I had the longest holidays in

my life, proper 4-month holidays, and then I said, 'Alright, now I am going to look for a job.' So, but somehow I couldn't come up with any idea of a job, I knew it wasn't going to be at school, unless I had to, well […] and so I went to one, in my whole life, to one job interview and when the lady heard I would like to work for 7 months, she said, I take 7 months to train my assistant and then I want her to bring some profits. So I said thank you, she thanked me and I thanked her. [...] So I sort of didn't know what to do. And somehow it all worked out for the best, 'cause after Christmas, so I had, it was half a year after the defence, but I had been translating the movies so I was making some money, a friend called on the Boxing Day, saying they were looking for people where she worked, to do a temporary work, it was urgent, she said, and there were few people available 'cause everybody had gone away. (…) So I went there. The job was to compare data on a printout with what was in the original document, so that was the so-called proofreading, a trivial thing in itself. But they paid well, it was warm, there was food, people were nice, so I worked there for, well, as long as they needed, maybe a week or two, 'cause it was urgent. And then her sister, she asked me what I was studying, I said I'd graduated and I said I did linguistics, so she asked, 'So if there is something to translate, do you want to do it?' and I said yes, please.

While other narrators get into trouble ending up in a trajectory episode, these types of narrators are able to stay open to all this simultaneity, all the conjunctions and implicatures, which their initial professional career brought in abundance. This, as I mentioned before, has to do with this narrator (and others similar to her) possessing a different structure

of relevance, to use Schütze's terminology: "'cause I always wanted, I thought when I finished my studies I would get married, have children and wouldn't really mind my career all that much, like my mum". The traditional pattern of a woman's life path (or, as in other cases, private/family life overweighing work life, as opposed to the rhetorics of work-life balance ideology of corporate order) helped her to keep a distance and increased her readiness to meet the world in its various manifestations. In this sense, a non-narcissistic (i.e., not connected with a fear of being judged or being ashamed of losing one's professional face) attitude to work and co-workers allows them to freely enter adventitiousness, while the related lack of rigidity means that, with time, the series of events work out well and form a certain order.

Until the moment when the narrator situation changed dramatically (she began to manage a team) her position within the corporation was in some ways similar to that of a *self-employed person* and she was able to carry out her duties partly independently of other workers. As the time progressed, however, she showed a tendency to surrender to the exigencies of increased efficiency even within the same position at work:

> I mean I have a reputation for always informing on time, it's not always like that, I mean sometimes I literally lean over backwards, 'cause the sensible deadline is gone and now I really have to do it, but I am really far from all those planning, vision, mission, and that concept that's on now in my office - leadership capability, for me it's just a lot of gibberish, just a waste of time. I say, keep it simple, tell me what I'm supposed

to do, by when, how, who to ask if I don't know how to do it, and now I'm not only talking about work 'cause I can be different in everyday life and I tend to be active, so then someone at work noticed that I would sometimes take on more work, which was a little naive 'cause I didn't realize when they say at work now you need to put in a bit more effort, I thought they would later make it a little lighter, but that just never happens, and I was just being naive. It always needs to be harder, more efficient, at some point people in our office began using the saying "you don't need to work harder, work smarter.

And when she fully entered the area of hierarchical bonds, greater dependence and responsibility, the situation clearly exceeded her capabilities. The corresponding fragments of the narration contains indicators of a trajectory; there are many (non-internalized) interpretations of the narrator's situation at work, while a part of it is psychological in character (probably due to the narrator's drawing on some form of therapeutic support). This may mean that at the time of the interview the situation was still stabilizing, and the narrator was redefining her role within the new framework, setting up boundaries at work, as well as between her work and her private life. This separation of the private and the public within the corporation, or, more broadly, building a distance, defining the differences, or even openly demonstrating the above, appears to help her work out a self-defined identity (unlike the narrator representing subtype a):

> ...but somewhere I need to have this space for my private life and, for example, I am very sensitive about both working hours and keeping my weekends

untouched, if we work 5 days a week, it means 5, and if there happens something like that, the thing we have in our procedure about trips, it says that for work on a day off we are entitled to an extra day off, but the interpretation is that we do not get it for travelling on a day off. So, if I'm supposed to be somewhere far on Monday morning and I need to travel on Sunday, 'cause it's a trip to, say, S, nobody will give me back the time for that Sunday. And what I know, after so many years, I know I will take it back anyway without telling anybody, and I think I have the right to it. If something doesn't make sense, especially in the case of that kind of trip to S, if it all takes 8 days and I lose 2 weekends, and there are the time zone changes, so it's actually hard to even count it all, so then, I say to myself, I just get it back in kind. In the sense that, well, I don't know, say, for a week I will go for a long lunch, 'cause we work next to some bigger shopping centre, so if you go to get something, it can take a bit longer, I say, well, who cares, and I don't tell anybody.

Conclusions

Polish researchers have been much more interested in Poland's transformation processes after 1989. Although their contributions have been broad in scope, they remain relevant to the Polish context only and the analyses thus produced are mostly of the macrosociological type (e.g., Domański 2002; 2004; Marody, Giza 2004). They have not been directly concerned with relations between macrostructural (i.e., formal and institutional) properties of these changes and the phenomena taking place in the various areas of everyday life. These phenomena include practices and interpretations ordering

the flow of biography, and, simultaneously, defining how far and in what manner individual experience is biographically grounded in the patterns of activity and interaction prevailing in the society. In this study and in the project I referred to, we intend to combine the micro perspective with the macrostructural perspective close to the neoinstitutional approach (so-called transitology) currently prevailing in Poland. In this sense, it is the chance to introduce biographical research into mainstream Polish sociological research.

What sort of adjustment strategies do we observe within the corporate order if we take into account the fact that work in the late capitalism is still alienating (as primarily linked to an external interest/ company profit), does not lead to a sense of being rooted (since it is changeable and project-based), and simultaneously it is, more than ever before (at least in terms of its rhetorics), inclusive, communal, totally absorbing, promising self-realization and other (external) attractions, and yet requiring full individual self-responsibilization.

Hopes raised by corporations are compensated for in different ways, such as the said ideology of self-development, individual entrepreneurship or consumerist lifestyle and pastimes, which often leads to conditions close to mania and a sense of omnipotence, only to quickly give way to the state of low mood [1 cyclothymic pattern]. This pattern of enchantment-disenchantment has at least two subtypes (or rather a continuum from integrity, that is, a resolution of the conflict between the two poles, to getting bogged down in cyclothymia, that is, an uncontrollable repetition of the same pattern). The first

narrator's professional life and the narrative about it as a whole appears to point more to the decrease in the characteristic cyclothymic swings. There is a point where the narrator, thanks to making another change, gains a certain dose of integrated independence and stability, which until that point had been separated in his life: the periods of independence and initial euphoria were not rooted, and the subsequent normalization soon generated an uncomfortable sense of dependence and being caught, so he (as others of these types of narrators) fell into the snare of one or the other type of power. He didn't choose a radical way out of corporate order: perhaps he couldn't, or perhaps he acted nonreactively, autonomously, based on his long-term experience of seductions, traps, struggles, or even suffering. The narrator seems to be aware of his choice: he has chosen to be further involved in the professional life within the capitalist logic, learned about and acknowledged its ambivalence (which was probably instrumental in bringing down the amplitude of cyclothymic swings[13]), while at the same time he has been able to form critical opinions about work in different fields, including, in particular, public administration.

Apart from the pattern of enchantment-disenchantment I differentiated another pattern: a complete enchantment - becoming spellbound, where the corporation, over a longer time, consistently and entirely absorbs the worker leading to his conver-

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[13] In psychology this phenomenon is sometimes described as ‹the paradox of change›, whereby acknowledging a certain state of affairs allows us to develop a more flexible attitude, and hence we become more susceptible to change or open to the different possible choices which were not accessible to us before due to a certain rigidity of our attitude.

sion [2 institutionalized pattern]. In this type of case the language of bonds and relations (i.e., that referring to the traditional order of a community) becomes inscribed into the culture of rationalized management. The process was earlier described by Durkheim, and later on by Foucault, as the situation where the conditions of the social contract are insufficient, and, as a result, what's external must become internalized. In the analysed (typical) corporation it's the functional rationality that becomes a new religion; this example synthetically shows, like the Hegelian *Aufhebung*, how the postmodern times abolish the difference between rationality and pre-rationality, modernity and tradition, the instrumental and the autotelic, public and private. These basic conflations listed above, as well as further conflations (mainly in the form of coaching, as can be seen in this second analysed narrative, where the sphere of production conflates with the sphere of education), largely affect the process of totalization of bonds and deeply shape individual and collective identities in a corporation.

And, finally, there is one more pattern which was discussed here [3 the pattern of individualized institutionalization], which shows the course of a relatively autonomous process of bonding with a corporation, where the identity has an alternative framework of reference (in this case it's the family). The process of conflation matters here, as well as opposed to the earlier historical divisions and distances constituting the basis of order and identity, as well as role differentiation (Bernstein 1990a). The same can be said from a psychological point of view; the lack of clearly defined boundaries may lead to a confused sense of responsibility, which further renders one

less resistant to the operation of all kinds of power and control mechanisms; in the case of this narrator we could see excessive responsibility in the second stage of her professional life. What's more, this attitude is nothing less than the other side of the coin of avoiding the responsibility. In this sense the first stage of the third narrator's professional life does not appear to be so completely different from the second one: autonomy, distance and independence in her career stemmed from the fact that she did not report to anyone, she was not bound with anybody, while her tasks did not go beyond her own sphere of activity, which prevented her from the need to enter into dependency, set up boundaries and define her identity. It was only when she was promoted to a management position that she was compelled to re-evaluate her professional attitude and it appears she has been able to some extent to reconcile the ambivalence between autonomy and dependence, individuation and communality.

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Citation

Biografie zawodowe polskich pracowników korporacji w późnokapitalistycznym społeczeństwie

Abstrakt: W artykule, korzystając z kolekcji wywiadów narracyjnych o charakterze biografii profesjonalnej z menedżerami i przedstawicielami kategorii professionals, przedstawię pewne ściśle uwzorowane typy kariery zawodowej. Przebieg oraz poszczególne fazy tego stypizowanego procesu wrastania w porządek korporacyjny opisywane są przy użyciu siatki pojęć opracowanej przez Fritza Schützego. Interesują mnie tu jednak nie tylko podstawowe struktury biograficznego doświadczenia procesu dojrzewania w korporacji, czyli sfera orientacji poznawczych, aksjonormatywnych i emocjonalnych, ale także jej powiązanie ze sferą rozwiązań instytucjonalnych. Innymi słowy, chcę odpowiedzieć na pytanie, jak w tym konkretnym typie biografii odbija się coś, co określam mianem ładu korporacyjnego, czyli pewien typ uporządkowań charakterystyczny dla późnego kapitalizmu w jego związkach z procesami europeizacji, globalizacji, wielokulturowości i transkulturowości oraz neoliberalnej organizacji życia gospodarczego.

Słowa kluczowe: doświadczenie biograficzne, kariera zawodowa, ład korporacyjny, późny kapitalizm

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Becoming a Teenage Father. Having a Baby as a Turning Point in Biographies of Young Men of Low Socioeconomic Status Inhabiting Poverty Enclaves

Abstract   The paper reflects on the impact of fatherhood on lives of young men, brought up in multiproblem families in poverty enclaves in a post-industrial city, namely Lodz. Empirical grounds of the text are 27 biographical interviews carried out within a research module of the WZLOT project (full project title: "Strengthening Opportunities and Weakening Transmission of Poverty among Inhabitants of Towns of the Lodz Province") with young men who had become fathers as teenagers. The interviewees had been school dropouts, in conflict with the law, with problems of substance abuse. The paper attempts to reconstruct the process of becoming a father in the case of young men lacking father figures themselves and whose fatherhood was often being questioned because of their low socioeconomic status.

Keywords   fatherhood, turning point, transformation, teenage parenthood, poverty

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Introduction

"Researchers disproportionately study mothers" (Dowd 2000:22) and so it is usually motherhood analyzed as a "turning point" (Budrowska 2000) or "critical event" in life (Kuryś 2010). As the model of fatherhood has been evolving and so has the role, position and duties of a man within a family, it seems reasonable to look at the way having a child results also for men. Studies on parenthood and parenting primarily focus on motherhood and the consequences of having a baby for women. Research on families and family roles seem mostly middle-class oriented. Also, studies on early (teenage) parenthood are mainly studies on early (teenage) motherhood. The aim of the article is to reflect on the process of change in biographies of young men of low socioeconomic status brought up in so-called "poverty enclaves" who became fathers as teenagers. Empirical grounds of the analysis are 27 qualitative interviews that were part of the research on teenage parenthood as a risk of poverty and social exclusion conducted within the framework of "Strengthening Opportunities and Weakening the Processes of Intergenerational Transmission of Poverty among the Inhabitants of the Cities of the Lodz Province – WZLOT" project. Theoretical framework for the analysis is the concept of transformation and identity change by Anselm L. Strauss (2009).

Changing Models of Fatherhood

Parenthood undergoes socio-cultural changes and trends and so do expectations and constructions of fatherhood (Dowd 2000:40). As Anna Kwak puts it, "(...) being a parent is situated in time and space. It is integrally linked to and shaped by historical events, demographic changes, cultural norms and values, stratification systems, alterations in social structure, development of family and its organization. Depending on social and historical context, the way parenthood is being practiced changes" (Kwak 2008: 29-30, translation PBM). Indeed, much has changed since Talcott Parsons described family as a set of expressive and instrumental roles, wherein father secures the latter such as breadwinning, leadership and status provision. In structural-functional theory father is generally responsible for the development of social elements of the child's personality and therefore plays no or minimal role in early stages of the child upbringing process whereas later on he serves as an embodiment of "superego" (in the Freudian sense) (Parsons 1969, after: Kotlarska-Michalska 2010:35-36). Along with the widely discussed changes in structure, role, size and character of modern family (for instance Tyszka 2001; Ogryzko-Wiewiórkowska 2001; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, Krzyszkowski 2001; Slany 2002; Tyszka 2002; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska 2004; Balcerzak-Paradowska 2004; Kwak 2005; Kwak 2014), parenthood has also been evolving[1]. According to Nancy Dowd, we witness "a major transformation in the conception of fatherhood in a relatively short period of time" (Dowd 2000:40). As a result, right next to the "new mother" and "the new baby" there is the "new father" (Sikorska 2009; Szlendak 2010): not only a provider, but an every-day companion, emotionally bound to his children, responsive to their needs, ready and happy to spend time with them (Sikorska 2009:146-193).

The traditional, patriarchal and still dominant mode of fatherhood "involves minimal or no caretaking of children and is being epitomized by the system of distinguishing between legitimate and illegitimate children and linking the payment of money to entitlement to a social relationship" (Dowd 2000:214). The "new", social, nurturing fatherhood is an opposition to the traditional one and involves "significant involvement of men in the nurture of their children" (Dowd 2000:22). Polish literature on fatherhood

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[1] According to Elisabeth Badinter (1993), due to the recent end of patriarchy fatherhood underwent not an evolution, but a revolution (Badinter 1993: 148-149).

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distinguishes two contrary models of being a father (Arcimowicz 2008). The first one is based on the concept of traditional masculinity and assumes that: (1) father is the breadwinner and, preoccupied with his provision duties, he does not participate much in the children's care, nurture, up-bringing, (2) father is the family leader; he makes the most important decision, dominates other family members, (3) father has a "natural" authority over children and uses different (more decisive) parenting methods than mother does: he is serious, severe, demands obedience and respect. The second model of being a father available today in Polish society is rooted in the new masculinity paradigm. The "new" father accompanies his baby's mother in pregnancy and labor, provides care and nursing to his children, shows them and explains to them what is right instead of punishing them for what is wrong (Arcimowicz 2008:124-145). The "new" father "is there" for his children and their mother. According to researchers, the traditional fatherhood still dominates in Poland, although the "new" fatherhood becomes more and more common (Arcimowicz 2008; Kubicki 2009). "New fathers" experience positive effects of their engagement in the family life, such as work-related stress reduction, good relationships with their offspring, high level of satisfaction in life (Szlendak 2009:69). At the same time, the "new fathers" are being overwhelmed with responsibilities since the new familial tasks have been added to the traditional ones: men are still the main family providers (whereas women are still primary caregivers). Therefore, contemporary men are described as disoriented, unsure, helpless and stressed in the way they perform the role of the "new father" (Szlendak 2009:69; Bakiera 2013; Bieńko 2008; Kluczyń-

ska 2008). Still, "[m]odern fathering is no longer just procreation and bill paying [...] Becoming a father means reordering priorities and making commitment to physically and emotionally care for children" (Coltrane 1996:5).

Despite a growing number of publications on "new parents" ("new fathers" among them), it seems that little is known about parenthood, and especially about fatherhood by parents of low education and income (Szlendak 2003; Roter 2005; Biedroń 2006). Polish authors seem to concentrate on middle class and big city families.[2] Parenting in families of low socioeconomic status is usually being discussed in the context of difficult or crisis situations, support need, dysfunction or "pathology" (for instance, Badora, Czeredrecka, Marzec 2001; Biała 2006; Sakowicz 2006; Stojecka-Zuber, Róg 2007; Hurło 2010; Nowak 2011; Olszewska 2012; Badora, Basiaga 2012).[3]

Invisible, Demonized, Minimal – Fatherhood of Teenage Fathers

Teenage fathers are almost "invisible" in social research (Shields, Pierce 2006:142). As a narrative therapist working with teenage fathers David Nylund

puts it, "[t]he study on teen parenthood has become almost synonymous with the study of teen moms, [whereas] little attention has been devoted to the study on teen fathers" (Nylund 2006:159).[4]

If teenage fatherhood does become a subject of academic interests, the results oftentimes "demonize" the young fathers who "do not conform to the traditional, married, breadwinner role" (Speak 2006:149). According to Susan Speak, the negative image of a teenage father comes from traditional gendered perception of family roles. "Economic" fatherhood means obligation to earn money and support one's children financially. If a man is not economically ready to become a father, he is deprived of a right to be a father in general (Speak 2006:149). According to D. Nylund, under-involvement of teenage fathers with their children results from internalization of patriarchal ideas of parenting. A "narrow" definition of masculinity (referring mostly to economic achievements and occupational status) makes men pay the price of shallow relationships (with their children, with their partners), and in case of very young fathers condemns them to "minimal fathering" (Nylund 2006:159-163). Another stereotypic idea about very young fathers is that they are irresponsible and leave their female partners as soon as they find out about the pregnancy or right after the baby is born. Some research shows that even if they do not get married or cohabit, teenage fathers often form stable, long-lasting informal relationships with their children's mothers. Also, young mothers are

equally likely to break up a relationship as young fathers are, as they are searching for more economically attractive partners to bring up their children with (Speak 2006:151).

Young (and especially underage) men who become fathers may face many difficulties in fulfilling their parental role. "External" barriers to fathering for teenage fathers may turn out to be (Speak 2006:152-155):

1. the legal system – depending on regulations, the fact that young parents are not married, and especially the fact that a young father is underage, may mean he has no legal right to his baby and as a result he is not a father in the sight of the law[5];

2. parents of the mother of a child – who may show a hostile attitude to teenage fathers and be reluctant to his involvement in the life of their grandchild, especially if he is not willing to marry their daughter and/or if he has a criminal record;

3. educational policy – usually there are some forms of support for pregnant and mothering students (different depending on a country and social policy regulations), whereas teenage fathers are not offered any institutionalized support at school;

4. "professional helpers" – such as school pedagogues or social service workers who may

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[2] For example, in the book titled "Modern Polish families – condition and direction of change" edited by Zbigniew Tyszka, there are articles on "Models of family life of middle class" (Wachowiak, Frątczak 2001), "Middle-class families in changing reality" (Leszkowicz-Baczyńska 2001), "Family life patterns of urban family" (Żurek 2001), "Children's education to work in urban family" (Pielka 2001), "Marriage model of large city family" (Budzyńska 2001), "Situation of a child in high economic status family" (Marzec 2001).

[3] More about teenage fatherhood in poverty enclaves in the light of the "new fatherhood" concept in: Bunio-Mroczek P., *Być nastoletnim ojcem w łódzkiej enklawie biedy. Rodzicielstwo młodych mężczyzn o niskim statusie społeczno-ekonomicznym w świetle koncepcji „nowego ojcostwa”* (under review in: "Wychowanie w rodzinie", in Polish).

[4] "The research on teenage pregnancy has focused almost exclusively on young women, both in terms of pregnancy prevention and child rearing. Fathers have been assumed to be irresponsible" (Dowd 2000:70).

[5] In Poland a male under 18 years of age is not permitted to get married under any condition (*the Polish Civil Code*, articles 10 and 11). If the mother of a child of an underage father is also a minor, he cannot become a father in the sight of the law: as she is not an adult, she is not in the position to indicate the father. A baby of underage parents must have a legal guardian appointed by family court until the mother reaches 18 years of age.

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discourage young mothers from continuing a relationship with a teenage father.

Family Formation as a Turning Point in Biography

According to A.L. Strauss, identity is a person's definition (Hałas 2013:XXVI). This definition undergoes changes in the course of life. The moment evoking identity change is a turning point.

A.L. Strauss undermines the idea of development as a linear process (he uses a metaphor of a runner's path where one needs to get from the start to the finishing line and a metaphor of an uncooked egg which at a certain moment will be ready to describe what development is not, Strauss 2009): "Presumably [the concept of development] refers to a progressive movement wherein the beginning, middle, and end bear some discernible relationship to each other. But, the notion of development is a trap for the unwary and a battleground for some centuries of philosophic contention" (Strauss 2009:91-92). To the author, development means a series of related transformations (Strauss 2009:93).

Transformation happens when a person realizes that "I am not the same as I was, as I used to be" (Strauss 2009:95) as a result of a critical incident that has occurred. Such critical moments are turning points in biographies, which lead to creation of new identities (Strauss 2009:95). As A.L. Strauss puts it, "[s]ome transformations of identity are planned, or at least fostered, by institutional representatives; others happen despite, rather than

because of, such regulated anticipation (Strauss 2009:94). Turning points are frequently related to "misalignment - surprise, shock, chagrin, anxiety, tension, bafflement, self-questioning" (Strauss 2009:95). They could be both thrilling and dreadful; they pose a challenge providing an opportunity to "try out the new self", they are also the moments when a person is forced to revise and evaluate one's achievements (Strauss 2009:95, 101-102).

Turning points offer a chance for a passage of status: "[...] the movement from status to status, as well as the frustration of having to remain unwillingly in a status, sets conditions for the change and development of identities" (Strauss 2009:111). Passages of status are mostly highly institutionalized (Strauss 2009:103). The movement from status to status is regularized, and there are predecessors and successors ("People have been there and will follow you", Strauss 2009:103). The predecessors may become transformation guides: "When passages of status are more or less well-regulated, those who have gone through the recognized steps stand ready [...] to guide and advise their successors. This guidance is essential, for even regulated passage is [hazardous]" (Strauss 2009:111). According to A.L. Strauss, "The lives of men and women can – theoretically at least – be traced as a series of passages of status" (Strauss 2009:111). This concept appeals not only to occupational life but this is "a way of looking at adult development" in general (Strauss 2009:111).

Having one's first baby is often referred to in literature (usually within the developmental psychology, but also sociological studies) as a milestone,

a turning point, a (critical/stressful/readjustment) life event. Becoming a parent is presented as a burdening and overwhelming life course phase, which however provokes personal growth and demands activation of coping responses (Budrowska 2000; Kuryś 2010). Expecting and the birth of the first child play the key role in parents' biographies. They are circumstances that make individuals give up some activities and take up new ones. Also, they require (sometimes radical) change of one's values and beliefs (Kuryś 2010:33-34).

Having a baby demands taking up new roles and gaining new competences. It is an experience which stimulates development in the period of early adulthood and transforms the way young adults live and who young adults are (Kuryś 2010:7). Pregnancy and the newborn child introduces changes not only in lives of individual men and women, but also influence the family system they constitute (Kuryś 2010:8). Even people and couples who plan and expect having their first baby, usually go through serious crises and experience severe hardships adjusting to being parents (Kuryś 2010:8). The situation is even more difficult when the pregnancy is unexpected, the baby was not planned and a parent (or both parents) due to their young age and poor socioeconomic background is/are considered not mature enough to form a family.

Teenage Parenthood – a Risk or an Opportunity?

Teenage parents are usually young people brought up in low socioeconomic status, multiproblem families. Factors associated with early child bear-

ing can be divided into the following groups (Imamura et al. 2006:35-46)[6]:

1. Sociodemographic factors – such as socioeconomically disadvantaged background, persistent financial difficulties throughout childhood, parental economic status deteriorated during childhood; residence in more deprived neighborhood, immigrant status, early physical development.

2. Factors related to family structure and stability - having lived in a single parent family during childhood; living in a stepfamily or a lone father family; parents' divorce; maternal death; having a large number of siblings, having a mother with little interest in her child's education; a decline in maternal interest in education from childhood through to adolescence; low level of parental education, early father's school leaving age; experience of child sexual abuse; extreme cases of parental alcohol misuse.

3. Educational factors - poor academic ability; leaving full-time schooling at the minimum age; early school leaving; low education level; negative attitude to school; low educational aspiration.

4. Psychosocial factors - behavioral and emotional problems; difficult parent-child relationship; teacher-rated antisocial behavior (aggression,

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[6] REPROSTAT 2 (*Reproductive Health Indicators in the European Union*) international research project was aimed at identifying teenage parenthood risk factors (early pregnancy, early child birth, early sexual initiation, contraception use, knowledge on family planning methods) in 25 EU countries. 4444 results of research on teenage parenthood were gathered, out of which 57 were thoroughly analyzed. Risk factors were identified at individual levels (Imamura et al. 2006).

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disruptiveness and truancy); having started smoking regularly at age 13 or younger.

5. Factors related to sexual knowledge, attitudes and behavior - early sexual initiation; showing a preference for early parenthood; positive attitudes to early marriage.[7, 8]

In teenage parenthood studies there are two dominant discourses on the "results" of early childbearing wherein teenage parenthood is presented either as a "risk" or as an "opportunity". The "risk discourse", mostly based on quantitative studies with participation of women only, stresses negative consequences of early family formation. Having a baby as a teenager constitutes a threat of strengthening poverty and social exclusion for the young parents and a risk of intergenerational transmission of low socioeconomic status. The negative outputs of early parenthood are: low educational attainment, poor housing conditions, low employment level, low (both individual and family) income level (Hoffman et al. 1993, Ribar 1999, Wellings et al. 1999, after: Berthoud, Robson 2001:1). The likelihood of becoming a social welfare client and of being employed in the least-paid sectors of labor market grows; whereas chances of getting married and having good job qualifications

drop for those who become parents before turning 20 years of age (UNICEF 2001): As John Ermisch puts it, "(...) having a child as a teenager disrupts [teenage mother's] human capital investment, by causing her to curtail her formal education and by keeping her out of employment for a time, thereby depriving her of valuable work experience" (Ermisch 2003:1).

The academic discourse of teenage parenthood, as an "opportunity" is constructed by critically oriented authors who use mostly qualitative methods and attempt to include not only young mothers but also teenage fathers into their studies. Results of their research, except for hardships young parents experience, show that there are also positive "consequences" of early child bearing, such as: the growth of competencies, skills, self-esteem; improvement in general well-being; changes in behaviors and habits (working one's way out of addictions, going back to school, searching for a job, taking up vocational training and employment, giving up peer groups of bad influence); change of aspirations (especially growth of economic aspirations); rise of social status; recovery of family relationships (with parents, grandparents, siblings); formation of positive identity; reaching maturity and adulthood; gaining a meaning in life empowerment (Music 1993; Graham, McDermott 2006; Duncan 2007; Arai 2009a Arai 2009b).[9]

Empirical Grounds and Sample Characteristic

The paper is based on a study carried out in Lodz within the framework of a research project named "Strengthening Opportunities and Weakening Transmission of Poverty among Inhabitants of Towns of the Lodz Province".[10] One of the project's research modules was focused on poor families of teenage parents inhabiting Lodz poverty pockets. Empirical study[11] encompassed in-depth biographical interviews with men and women whose first child was born before they reached the age of 20. The interviewees inhabited urban areas of concentrated poverty, so-called "enclaves of poverty"[12]

and were supported by welfare institutions in the form of child allowance and welfare benefits, provided in Poland to members of households of very low income. The article is based on empirical data collected during biographical in-depth interviews with 27 young fathers inhabiting Lodz poverty enclaves. Most of the interviews were conducted in places where narrator's lived at that time. The interviews lasted from 1 to 2,5 hours. They were all recorded, transcribed and analyzed with the use of NVivo 7 and NVivo 9 software. All the interviewed men had become fathers before they turned 20 years of age. Research participants were adults at the time the research was done,[13] usually in their early twenties. The largest share of respondents (16 out of 27) belonged to the 20-24 age group; six of the interviewed men were between 25 and 29 years old, 5 of the narrators were 19 and less. Most of the research participants (16 out of 27) had their first baby when they were 19 years old, 7 of

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[7] Another group of factors was identified: factors related to sexual education. However, results in this area are contradictory (Imamura et al. 2006:46).

[8] As it was already mentioned, most studies on teenage parenthood involve teenage mothers. Most of the above-cited factors were identified in studies on teenage motherhood; only some refer to fathers. However, according to a British researcher, Lisa Arai, sociodemographic characteristics of teenage mothers and fathers are very similar. Also, if a young father stays in close relationship with his child and takes up the role of the father on an every-day basis, the consequences of early child bearing are the same for men as for women. (Arai 2009a:34-35).

[9] More about perspectives in teenage parenthood research in: Bunio-Mroczek Paulina. 2014. "Nastoletnie macierzyństwo - zagrożenie wykluczeniem społecznym czy szansa na integrację społeczną? Kontrowersje teoretyczne i podejścia praktyczne." Pp. 97-111 in Wykluczenie i marginalizacja dzieci i młodzieży – wyzwanie czy klęska społeczeństwa obywatelskiego edited by A. Golczyńska-Grondas, M. Nóżka (ed.), Acta Universitatis Lodzensis Folia Sociologica 49, Lodz: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.

[10] This policy-oriented project was coordinated by Prof. Wielislawa Warzywoda Kruszynska and carried out by a team of researchers from the Department of Applied Sociology and Social Work of the Institute of Sociology of the University of Lodz in cooperation with the Institute of Social Initiatives Foundation. The project was financed by the European Social Fund within the framework of the Human Capital Operational Program 2007-2013, under priority 7 – "Promotion of social integration". The main project's objective was to support social inclusion in the region of Lodz by producing knowledge on mechanisms of social exclusion and by providing knowledge-based solutions to overcome the exclusion to be implemented by social policy subjects. More information about the project can be found at www.wzlot.uni.lodz. pl (in Polish).

[11] Field work was carried out in Lodz from October 2008 to February 2009.

[12] Lodz poverty enclaves are the city areas with a relatively high proportion of inhabitants who experience poverty (defined as being a member of a household supported by social welfare). The poverty enclaves were identified and have been studied by a team of sociologists from the University of Lodz led by Prof. Wielisława Warzywoda-Kruszyńska. Maps of poverty in Lodz were prepared for the first time in 1998, when a poverty enclave was defined as at least two neighboring quarters inhabited by at least 30% and at least 40% of social welfare clients. A decade later different methodology was used to draw up a poverty map: poverty enclave was a district of primary school where high proportions of pupils received free meals within the national program "State's support in food provision" ("Pomoc państwa w zakresie dożywiania"). Areas of the "old" and the "new" poverty enclaves overlap to a big extent, which means that poverty has been petrified. The poverty enclaves in Lodz are situated in the vast center of the city (tenement houses from

the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century, old workers' housing estates built by factory owners). Nowadays these areas gradually undergo the processes of revitalization and gentrification. Early parenting is a common pattern of family formation among poor inhabitants of poverty (Szczepański, M.S. and W. Ślęzak-Tazbir "Między lękiem a podziwem: getta społeczne w starym regionie przemysłowym." Pp. 29-52 in Gettoizacja polskiej przestrzeni miejskiej, edited by B. Jałowiecki, W. Łukowski. Warsaw 2007; Grotowska-Leder, J. "Enklawy biedy jako przedmiot socjologii ubóstwa – aspekty teoretyczne i empiryczne." Pp. 149-173 in Enklawy życia społecznego. Kontynuacje edited by L. Gołdyka, I. Machaj, Szczecin 2009; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, W. "Od badań nad biedą do badań nad procesem dziedziczenia biedy – łódzka szkoła badań nad biedą i pomocą społeczną i jej rezultaty" Praca Socjalna special issue July-August 2010:5-20; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, W. "Enklawy biedy – mechanizm powstawania i trwania" Praca Socjalna special issue July-August 2010:51-60; Warzywoda-Kruszyńska, W. "Wielkomiejska bieda." Pp. 139-162 in Polska bieda w świetle Europejskiego Roku Walki z Ubóstwem i Wykluczeniem Społecznym, edited by H.E. Kubiak, Cracow 2012).

[13] Except for one 17-year-old ward of Youth Sociotherapy Center. In his case, the interview took place in the institution, with permission of the interviewee's tutors (and of course with his own permission).

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them – when they were 18, three – when they were 17, one – at the age of 15. The eldest (first) children of the respondents were from a couple of months up to almost 10 years old. Most of the narrators (13 out of 27) had one child at the time the research was done. Eight men had two children, three interviewees – three children, one (aged 25) – four children, and one (aged 24) – five children. Almost all of the research participants (25 out of 27) were in a relationship with a mother of their children at the time of the interview. Seven men were married, the others (18 out of 27) were in informal relationships, involving living together (except for one interviewee, who lived apart from his partner and children, but were in regular contact with them). Two men, who had broken up with the mothers of their children, were single.[14]

It must be stressed that the discussed research involved purposive sampling. The population under research is not representative for the population of teenage fathers from poverty enclaves in general. Research participants consisted of a specific group of young fathers: all of them decided to fulfill the father's role and either lived with their children (24 out of 27 research participants), or had a frequent and regular contact with them (3 out of 27 interviewees[15]).

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[14] In the case of the first single father, the child lived with the (underage) mother and her parents; in case of the second one – family court deprived the mother of her parental rights and so the single father took care of the child supported by his mother and sisters.

[15] However, the interviewed fathers were not always officially family (household) members. In cases of couples who were not formally married, female partners of the research participants were officially "single mothers" for the social service record.

Before Fathering – Childhood and Adolescence

Early biographies of the interviewed young fathers are similar. They were brought up in poor, usually multichildren families supported by social welfare, often affected by child neglect and interfamily violence, with at least one adult family member having a drinking problem. In some families "only" a father or a mother's new partner overused alcohol: "[...] my mom was sick, had a disability. It wasn't easy, my father drank heavily, sometimes we had to flee from home. But, my mom somehow got along with it. My father would spend all his wage on booze, so she had to support us herself" (O.25).[16] In other families both parents drank too much: "I lived with my mom and dad. Mom and dad drank alcohol. I had poor living conditions because we all lived in one room [...]. They [the parents] would get into terrible fights, sometimes we would not let the father in, he would sleep in the staircase" (O.57). In some cases, social services intervened and young boys were put into foster care: "I had a difficult childhood. My father was drinking. He had a criminal record. My mom was also a drinker. Dad went to jail and mom started drinking. Neighbors called, the social worker came and took us. I was in a chil-

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[16] In the empirical part of the article fragments of respondents' statements are cited. They are translated from Polish into English in such a way that they should give a true sense of what the research participants wanted to communicate. Interviewees did not speak perfect Polish as far as grammar and vocabulary is concerned but I did not attempt to present their language mistakes in the English translation. However, I tried to keep the unofficial character of the way they spoke. Also, I tried to capture those language structures/constructs which, in my opinion, might have been meaningful. For instance, when a respondent said "Her father wanted to abort the baby" I did not correct his words into "Her father wanted her to have an abortion" or "Her father wanted the pregnancy to be terminated."

dren's home until I was 19, with my sister" (O.73). Foster care usually meant going through many subsequent foster care families and institutions: "I was raised by my mother with a 3-year-older brother. Until I was nine I had been living at home, then I was in different places [...] I spent a year in an emergency foster care unit, with quite a nice family... But, then I was moved to S. [name of a town] to a children's home. I ran away from there, I couldn't find my way there, there was violence and stuff... [...] I came here [to the Youth Sociotherapy Center] because my brother was here. I knew a social worker here and he made me stay, go to school here [...]. I've been living [in a foster family established by one of the teachers from Youth Sociotherapy Center] for a year and a half" (O.54).

Another loss experience shared by some of the interviewees was the death of one or more of the closest relatives: "My childhood wasn't happy. You know, I'm not from a rich family. My parents drank... you know, alcohol. When I was 11 my mother died. Then my father passed away. Couple of years ago my brother hung himself in front of me. Then my grandparents died. I was alone" (O.78). Sometimes older siblings took over parental roles and duties from irresponsible and/or absent biological parents: "At the beginning [of my life] I was with my parents; later on my sister raised me, since I was nine" (O.87). Some of the interviewed men themselves took care over their younger siblings in times of family crises: "My father was hiding from the police because they were going after him, somewhere in the countryside, so it was a relief for us, but then mom started drinking a lot again so I was staying with the kids and all we did was sit at home" (O.75).

Except for alcohol overuse and violence by their parents, the narrators were experiencing poverty. One interviewee recalled he "would rather spend time in kindergarten than at home because there were toys, a lot of toys, and kids to play with, and I did not have that at home" (O.75).

Some men kept positive memories of their family and childhood: "[It was] normal. Everything was ok. I lived with my mom, my dad. I would go to kindergarten. No problems at all" (O.72). At some point, however, the good times would end: "It was alright... It was alright as long as dad was sober" (O.81); "Dad... he worked in many places. He taught me many things, we were doing stuff together. As time went by, I remember, when I was older...he started drinking, drinking too much" (O.82). A group of respondents had not lived in a poverty enclave in their early years. They describe their childhood as happy: "I had a normal, positive childhood, with my parents. We lived in a totally different place. There, there weren't these kind of problems [as there are here, in the poverty enclave]. It was alright. My parents had jobs, they were working, my grandma used to come to visit us" (O.89). Respondents who had spent their childhood in other parts of the city moved into the poverty enclave as adolescents, when they were about 14-16 years of age: "So my dad died and we lost that apartment. We had to think of something else and this is how we ended up in this tenement house" (O.72). Moving into a poverty enclave was usually the moment when problems began or became more apparent than they used to be: "We had lived in a block of flats, but my parents couldn't pay the rent, those apartments are expensive, and so we moved, the apartment here

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was larger and it was in a tenement house. And everything changed. My dad had this accident. My mom began to drink. Dad was hiding and they took the kids [siblings] away" (O.75). "There came a time when my father lost his job. This situation made us give up the apartment in a block of flats, as our debts were increasing. My mom was working in a school but her salary wasn't enough. We moved here. And here… it all has started here. I met different people. From a different world, you might say. A little bit… more experienced in life" (O.83).

Life-course patterns of the research participants included early school leaving, getting in conflict with the law (not in all cases, but most of the respondents were involved in activities that actually could have made them get in conflict with the law), in some cases custody/arrest, a suspended sentence, court supervision and probation. All of the interviewed men abused substances, some very intensively.

The interviewees had experienced severe learning problems and hardships in the school environment in general. Some of them were not doing well at school from the very beginning of their educational track: "I was never interested in learning. Since I was little, I always had conflicts at school. I had no affection for school whatsoever. I did not want to learn" (O.73). Some were doing fine at school at the beginning of their education, but in their adolescence the companion of peers became more attractive than anything else: "I finished primary school with distinction […] but after that, I didn't get any more rewards […] You know, friends, marihuana, alcohol, this was important to me, not school" (O.10). The majority of the interviewed men had not

finished gymnasium[17]: "In gymnasium... first addictions such as cigarettes, beer... and skipping classes [...] I failed the first grade [of gymnasium, where students are supposed to be about 14 years old], I had to repeat a year. In the second grade – the same situation, the same problem. In the third grade I was expelled" (O.89). In the lives of the narrators, usually no later than in the last grades of primary school, peer groups became the most important reference point. Male friends they would drink, smoke and play truant with are a part of the "neighborhood effect" in a poverty pocket, where positive examples of those who stayed at school which led to success in life are missing. Also, parents of the respondents had not encouraged them to study. Mothers were too busy trying to make ends meet: "Nobody watched me, my mom [being a single parent] wasn't able to deal with all the problems herself [...] She had to go to work at 6 a.m. and of course I wouldn't get up [to go to school], I'd sleep as long as I wanted. When I knew she would be back soon, only then I would get up and go out [pretending I went to school]" (O.73). Other parents did not care about educational achievements of their children: "My mom would rather have fun instead of taking care of us. There wasn't anyone to tell me to go to school" (O.75).

Part of the respondents proved to be "demoralized" as their probation officers would call it; or were involved in criminal activities. As a result, many of the interviewees went through institutions such as youth educational centers, special training and education centers reformatories, arrests, some had been

to prisons. Part of the interviewed men had suspended sentences and were on probation. If they repeated the offence they had been sentenced for, they would go to jail. Stories told by those narrators who decided to openly describe their criminal past show they were captured and judged for only a fraction of the crimes they had committed. Their illegal activities were of different kinds. Some were thefts, stealing minor things like women's handbags in the street and more expensive goods such as luxurious cars: "They caught me stealing a car. I got three years in suspension" (O.76). The others were drunk-driving, selling stolen goods, dealing drugs,[18] taking part in fights and robberies. One of the respondents was sentenced for an assault with the use of a dangerous tool. He expected he would get away scot-free because he had had an accident with a head-injury. He thought that would make him "insane" in the eyes of a judge: "I stabbed this cheat, he was playing with me... I thought they wouldn't do anything to me [because of the head injury]. If I wanted to kill him, I would... damn, I would take a bigger knife! But I stabbed him with this god dammed penknife, paperknife, and... eight months [in jail]" (O.82).

The rehabilitation process some of the interviewed men underwent had different results than assumed. For example, one of the respondents, who had three suspended sentences (for theft, robbery and drunk-driving) and did not pay the awarded fine, was imprisoned for 2 weeks. It had no crime-deterring effect for him; he recalled the time spent in jail as very pleasant: "I had a great time [laughter]. I met a friend [a neighbor from where he used to live

as a child] in a cell. It was cool. I played cards and ate decent dinners for two weeks, that's all" (O.10). Another narrator went to a special education and training center for demoralized male youth. There he made friends with people who pulled him into the criminal world: "That's were all my 'connections' come from. After I got used to this place they even started to like me and we began doing business together" (O.76). Another research participant simply run away from an institution for deprived youth and came back home. He was never found and never got back to the center (O.50).

All of the research participants used alcohol[19] and most of them used drugs since their early adolescence.

Becoming a Father

As transformation begins with a "critical incident", the process of becoming a father usually starts with the information about pregnancy. As it was stated before, according to A.L. Strauss, turning points involve experiencing surprise, shock, anxiety, tension. These are almost precisely the words the interviewed men used to describe their own reactions to when they were told by their partners they would have a baby. What they experienced respondents called "a total surprise", "shock", "mortal fear", "becoming speechless", "getting terrified". None of the research participants expected or planned being a father at the time it happened. For the interviewees, the fact that their partners got pregnant was

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[17] Gymnasium in the Polish educational system is a lower secondary school for children aged 13-16; education in gymnasium lasts for 3 years.

[18] None of the respondents talked about drug dealing out loud, it was suggested between the lines.

[19] At least a few of the research participants claimed they tried to avoid drinking alcohol because it made them lose control and go "mad". They preferred smoking marihuana, which in their opinion made them feel peaceful and more relaxed.

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"an accident", "a whoopsie". In case of two teenage fathers, information about pregnancy caused psychosomatic reactions: one of them suddenly got high fever; another one fainted. Almost each of the respondents was thinking about abortion in the first place.[20], [21] In the end, none of the respondents decided to terminate the pregnancy. For some, it took a couple of days or weeks to come to terms with the fact they would become a father: "[…] I didn't expect that. But then, I started to be enthusiastic about it, to my own surprise. I got used to the thought that this child will be born, that I will have to think about everything now. I acknowledged that and when the baby was born, I was happy" (O.76). For others, it took years: "I did not want to see her [the baby's mother] at all, I didn't want anything at all [...] I was working all the time [...] I was drinking all the time, to forget [...] Then I was high with amphetamine for two years, all the time" (O.10).

First evident stage of teenage father's transformation was taking up the role of a breadwinner and family provider. Expecting and then having a baby

definitely changed the interviewed men's attitude to work and earning: "First thing I did was getting a job" (O.10); "I just want to find a job and live in a normal way" (O.52). "When the baby was born I became more motivated, to earn money, so that we had enough for everything" (O.76). "When a baby comes, one needs to go to work. I have been working in the same place for one year! [said with pride]" (O.84). Interestingly, even to those who seemed not to accept the fact they would become/already are fathers the idea that now they are responsible for supporting their family financially was obvious. For example, one of the interviewees, who was angry with his girlfriend becoming pregnant, wanted her to terminate the pregnancy and was drinking and drug using for the whole period of pregnancy and for the first 2 years of his son's life, found a regular, well-paid job and provided money to his new family, although at the same time he did not like to see them and met them occasionally, usually under influence of alcohol or drugs. Another respondent, a daily marihuana smoker, whose son was only 3 months old when the interview took place and who stated that "[When the baby was born] my whole life ended" (O.50) found his first-ever job (in a car wash) when his partner was pregnant and later on he went for a few weeks to Belgium where his older brother lived to work in construction to earn some money for the new-born. It seems that even when not ready to accept the fact they have a baby, respondents were able to accept the economic dimension of fatherhood, which might be considered a first step to becoming a father.

For those who came to terms with the idea of having a baby earlier, another move on the way to fatherhood was involvement in their partner's pregnancy. Many research participants recalled going to the obstetrician together with their girlfriends/wives (especially to the ultrasounds to see the baby), discussing a name for the baby, making decisions about moving in together, arranging apartments (or rooms in parents' or grandparents' apartments) they were going to live together with their babies, keeping an eye on and worrying about their pregnant partner's and baby's health (especially if the pregnancy was threatened), attempting to indulge their partners whims. Many interviewees were present at the hospital when their first baby was born: some assisted during labor and cut the umbilical cord, others were around and saw the baby for the first time very soon after it was born.

After the baby was born, values and priorities of young men were changing. For those interviewed fathers who had been involved in criminal activities, the birth of a baby became an impulse to reflect on risk associated with breaking the law. Studies on biographies of young offenders by John H. Laub and Robert J. Sampson (2006), present four pathways of desistance from crime in lives of "delinquent boys". The first of four major turning points is marriage (next to the military, reform school, and neighborhood change). Marriage (usually with children) is one of those situations that: "(1) knife off the past from the present; (2) provide not only supervision and monitoring but opportunities for social support and growth; (3) bring change and structure to routine activities; and (4) provide opportunity for identity transformation" (Laub, Sampson 2006: 148-149). Authors estimated "the marriage effect" on young offenders at 40% (the percentage of research

participants who desisted from crime after they got married) (Laub, Sampson 2006:272). Not only marriage but also having children and having a stable and long-lasting informal relationship is considered an important factor diminishing the probability of persistence in crime (Kacprzak 2014:171). The interviewed young fathers from poverty enclaves began to realize that in case of being caught they would not only lose freedom, but also a chance to be with their families and spend time with their partners and children on an every-day-basis. They under stressed not only the baby's but the baby's mother's role in the desistance from crime: "I had had problems with the law, there was stealing and other things... [...] Many times I wouldn't come back home for the night, my mother was upset. But, then I met M. [girlfriend's name]. And I looked at everything from a different perspective. Everyone else but me [from the peer group] went to jail. But, to me it was over [with law-breaking]. Since the baby was born, all I have is work and family" (O.57). "[…] I got arrested. I was sentenced, I had a probation officer, two suspended sentences. And I met K. [girlfriend's name]. And so I began to calm down, hang out with other people. Then my son was born and I settled down completely" (O.71). "If it wasn't for my wife, I would end up in prison. You know where 'street life' gets you to. To me, family is everything. They bring sense to my life. My home, my wife, my family [children], my dog... [...] There was a time in my life when I was acting crazy. I met my wife and there came stability" (O.25).

A baby has become the central and reference point in the lives of young fathers. "When she [the daughter] is alright, then everything is alright" (O.52).

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[20] Although termination of pregnancy on "social" grounds has been banned in Poland, it is widely spread in so-called "abortion underground" ("20 lat tzw. ustawy antyaborcyjnej w Polsce" 2013). Contrary to popular opinion that in Poland only well-off women can afford an illegal abortion, interviews with young mothers from poverty enclaves suggested that termination of pregnancy is performed also among women of low socioeconomic status: female research participants often mentioned other women they knew (sisters, cousins, sisters-in-law, friends) having an abortion.

[21] The decision whether to terminate the pregnancy or keep it was often made not only by the man and his partner (wife, girlfriend) but also with participation of the future young parents' parents (grandparents-to-be), especially if the pregnant woman was living with them or expected their support: "My 'father-in-law' [informal, because the couple wasn't officially married] wanted to abort the baby. So there were two sides: I was for the abortion and her father was for the abortion. She did not want it and her mother did not want it either" (O.10).

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"All I do focuses on her [the daughter]" (O.54). "You know, when you're a shithead without responsibilities, you can fool around. But when you have a baby, then you.... for example, you don't think about yourself only, you're not egoistic anymore" (O.83). Respondents claimed friends and amusements they had used to enjoy were no longer attractive or even became meaningless to them: "I stopped going to football games" (O.52). "My head turned a little [I've changed the way of thinking]. I no longer have friends from the old days [...]. You either want to live in this shit or you cut off from the shit. And I cut myself off from my friends" (O.10). "Earlier in my life I used to like amusement, having fun [with the 'lads']. Now I'm into more serious stuff" (O.75). For those respondents who had been suffering from addictions, having a baby made them stop or at least limit substance use: "When someone invites me to drink, I refuse, I don't want my child to see me like that [drunk]" (O.75). "Ever since [the baby was born] I try not to use heavy drugs" (O.76). "I've quit smoking. I was afraid I'd bite the dust at the age of 40" (O.89).

The transformation was not sudden and was not easy. Some interviewees experienced ambivalence: "It was very difficult, this whole change. I hadn't been well-behaved all the time, I hadn't been constantly sitting at home. On weekends, I'd become anxious and in the end I'm always out for the night" (O.72). Separation from the old "mates" was not for everyone only a reason to be proud of, some respondents had a feeling of a loss and regretted not being in contact with old friends anymore. Some young fathers expressed grief for the good old times that were already gone. They were

missing their "lads", having fun, freedom to do something else, but work and spending time with a family. "Yes, all has changed. I broke up with my lads, and I had known a lot of them. I had had many friends, male and female. And then, it was just work, the baby, home, work, the baby, home. Nothing else. We're not going anywhere anymore, just work, the baby, home [with sadness]" (O.88). Some interviewees noticed that having a baby put a sudden end on their own childhood and forced them to become adults which was not what they were looking for at that time: "I took my childhood away from myself [...] The moment I started my own family, my childhood had ended" (O.83). "I feel a little bit... damn, older than I am supposed to be, you know, I have to stay at home because there's the baby and someone needs to take care of the baby. But, in the end I already got used to it" (O.82). Also, remembering how profitable illegal business was, the interviewees sometimes longed to go back to their criminal past. Still, the awareness of the consequences not only for them but for their loved-ones, made them deter: "Sometimes I had this feeling I would like to go to make some more money, but [I think of] my kid and it always cools me off. If I get caught, it is not just me getting the shaft, but my wife gets it, and who knows, maybe they [social services] would take my kid away. This stops me from doing something stupid" (O.76). However, two of the youngest research participants (one 18, the other 19 years old, their babies were a couple moths old) were still doing "business" and had no regular jobs. Both of them expressed a need to change the way they lived, although at the moment the research was done they seemed not ready to accomplish it.

Defining Fatherhood, Redefining Oneself

Having a baby made the young men work out a definition of fatherhood and set up a new self-definition as fathers. For the respondents it was difficult to precise what fatherhood is and what it means to them. "This question bothers me [...] couple of people already asked me this question [about the meaning of being a father] and I really... [don't know]. Maybe because I didn't have a father myself. There were always men [mother's boyfriends] at home, another one every year or two. The last one used to beat me, my mom is still with him, but I never considered him as my father [...]. My real dad killed himself when I was three. I don't even remember him" (O.54). Lack of their own father or bad memories of men who replaced him (mother's partners) made it difficult for respondents to capture the essence of fatherhood or it induced them to construct the idea of fatherhood in opposition to what they had experienced. "I want my children to have everything, food, clothing, I don't want them to see what I had to look at [things such as] drinking. I want them to live in a clean place, I want them to observe who we are and learn from us. Mother and father should not fight with each other. I want to help my kids to do homework, I want to help them with everything. The most important thing is that they would finish school, not like me, so that they wouldn't follow their lads" (O.57). "I want to be an exceptional father. Not the father my dad was to me. I want to be a *reversed* father [to whom my father was]" (O.10).

Being a father meant to the respondents, first and foremost, big responsibility and serious obliga-

tion, understood primarily as securing the material needs of their children. "It is taking care of them having everything" (O.88); "Very big responsibility. You need to feed them, send them to school, make something of them" (O.74). The interviewees felt that despite working hard, it was difficult for them to satisfy all the family's material needs.

Next to the economic dimension of fatherhood the interviewees stressed that "to begin with being a father means having time for your children, so that they see something positive, for example what a real home life is like. Being a father is taking care of the home, securing this warmth at home, so that children do not feel anything negative" (O.73). Good fathering is the time a man spends with his children and the good example he gives to them: "I want to be a role model, so that they could learn from me and follow me in what I am doing. I have some rules in life and they will follow the same rules, for example they won't end up in jail" (O.10). "To bring up a child is to show him/her the straight road [to adulthood, in life], not drugs, not alcohol [...] to try to be with them when they need it, talk to them" (O.75). In respondents' opinions, a father not only guarantees material security but also provides emotional stability: "Children are supposed to experience this... love... and be able to give it back [...] they must be sure they have a father and that the father will always help" (O.82). The interviewees admitted they were experiencing problems reconciling the both aspects of fatherhood: providing for their families and being there for them. "Lately I haven't seen my kid a lot. I mean, I see him, but I don't have a good contact with him because I work night shifts [in the evening I'm off to work] and he spends days

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at kindergarten or at my mom's" (O.72). Tension between work and family life made some of the interviewees reorganize their work obligations in order to find work for their children.

To men from dysfunctional families with interfamily violence and alcohol problems, who were themselves neglected as children, the birth of a child induced self-reflection and re-definition of their relationship with their parents, now in the grandparents' roles. The transformation to fathering involved setting up new rules on contacting families of origin (if their members were still alive). Also, the process of becoming a father evoked reflection on the burdening "heritage" young men felt they received from their parents and on the lack of positive mother and father role models. Some men decided to put a ban on contacts with their families of origin: "I prefer not to go there [to his parents]. I also don't want anyone here to know what kind of parents I have [so they are not invited]. They would never arrive sober" (O.76). "I feel sad because I talk to them and they don't get it, I feel sad because they cannot separate alcohol [from their grandchildren], I feel sad because my mother doesn't want to come here and expects me to go to their place [...] she has only come here twice, within five years [...] she is blocked with this whole alcoholism, with everything. I feel I do not love my parents, at present. I don't love my parents" (O.10). A stable relationship with the mother of a child however may have offered to young fathers a chance to become a member of another, in some cases more functional and reliable family. Respondents relations with formal or informal in-laws were sometimes much closer and more constructive than with their own relatives. "I have a[n older]

brother, a sister, and a younger brother. I don't get along with them, but I do get along with my wife's [parents and siblings]. They help us a lot" (O.25).

Most interviewed fathers declared being very much involved with their children (and often also partners). As it was already stated, the process of transformation from juvenile delinquent into a father, meaning a caring companion and a family breadwinner took weeks, months, and for some interviewees even years. One of the respondents, whose girlfriend got pregnant when he was 16 and she was 17 years of age and who did not want the baby to be born, but she refused having an abortion, took up a job as a construction worker in a small town near Lodz. For about three years he lived at the same place he worked at, serving also as a night watchman at the construction site. He was working, drinking and drug using as he "wanted to forget about everything" (O.10), seeing his child and his mother sporadically. At those infrequent meetings he would become aggressive, he often accused the woman of having cheated on him and doubted whether the baby is really his. As he admitted during the interview, he "wasn't a good dad at all" (O.10). Still, he would stay in irregular contact with his son and his mother and support them financially. The young father's supervisor at work was a sober alcoholic, not drinking for 7 years. With this missing father-figure man's help the interviewee gave up amphetamine and reduced drinking which allowed him to establish a better relationship with his son and his mother. As he puts it, he "started feeling love for the older son when he was about 3 years old" (O.10). At that time the couple started living together (with the woman's mother, at her place as they had

nowhere else to go) and their second son was born. The respondent was aware that he "messed up the first years of his children's lives" (O.10) he wanted to make it up to them, especially to the older one. He said he loved his children but evidently he needed time to get to know how to love them. As his biggest success in life he considered the fact that he had become different to his parents, alcohol addicts who neglected their four children. He was also proud he had broken up with his friends and had a well-paid (although unregistered) job (as a pavement maker) thanks to which he gained skills he could use to set up his own business. After almost eight years, which have passed since he found out his girlfriend was pregnant, he had a feeling of "being sucked up by family" (O.10).

Conclusions

Literature review on contemporary parenthood shows that today's fatherhood requires skills and attitudes which were not expected from fathers a couple of decades ago. Demands posed at men who are to become fathers are high: not only are they expected to play the role of the family primary breadwinners, but also to establish and cultivate close, intimate relationships with his children (and their mothers).

Put into the conceptual framework set by A.L. Strauss, becoming a father as a teenager may be looked at as a turning point in the life of young men, offering them a chance for transformation, new identity and passage of statuses. As the "social clock" in Euro-American culture societies indicates teenage fatherhood as premature, the movement

from one status to another is not completely regularized and the young fathers are forced to follow the "rules" of the passage set for older and middle-class men. Teenagers from poverty enclaves, due to their family background, often lack proper "predecessors", "guides" who could make their transformation easier. Also, because of the gendered character of welfare institutions and marginalization they themselves and the whole communities they are a part of experience, they lack institutionalized support that could facilitate the passage of statuses.

Literature review on teenage parenting offers two different perspectives of early childbearing: one shows teen parenthood as a calamity, a route to social exclusion, a trajectory; the other presents it as a life opportunity, possible path to social inclusion, a chance for positive identity. The academic outlook on teen parenting obviously depends on theoretical orientation and research methodology. In the referred empirical, qualitative study young men brought up in multi-problem families in so-called poverty enclaves themselves reconstructed and assessed the transformation process they underwent from early school dropout, juvenile delinquent, addicted trouble-making teenagers into young fathers and family men. The process oftentimes turned out to be painful and involved redefining and revising one's self, not only in reference to new roles but also in relation with "good enough", as well as destructive, trajectory-inducing significant others. Being aware of the specificity of the researched group (as an effect of the method of selecting the sample) in the light of the above paragraphs it seems justifiable to state that early fatherhood may become a source of positive identity for young marginalized men.

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Stawanie się nastoletnim ojcem. Dziecko jako punkt zwrotny w biografiach młodych mężczyzn o niskim statusie społeczno-ekonomicznym zamieszkujących enklawy biedy

Abstrakt: Artykuł dotyczy wpływu ojcostwa na życie młodych mężczyzn pochodzących z rodzin z wieloma problemami, zamieszkujących enklawy biedy poprzemysłowego miasta (Łodzi). Empiryczną podstawę tekstu stanowi dwadzieścia siedem wywiadów jakościowych o charakterze biograficznym zrealizowanych w ramach modułu badawczego projektu "WZLOT" ("Wzmocnić Szanse i Osłabić Transmisję Biedy wśród Mieszkańców Miast Województwa Łódzkiego") z mężczyznami, którzy jako nastolatkowie zostali ojcami. Uczestnicy badań wcześnie zakończyli edukację, jako adolescenci wchodzili w konflikt z prawem, nadużywali substancji psychoaktywnych. W artykule podjęto próbę zrekonstruowania procesu stawania się ojcem w przypadku młodych mężczyzn, którzy sami pozbawieni byli pozytywnych wzorów ojcostwa i którzy ze względu na swój niski status społeczno-ekonomiczny często uważani byli za osoby, które nie powinny pełnić roli ojca.

Słowa kluczowe: ojcostwo, punkt zwrotny, transformacja, nastoletnie rodzicielstwo, ubóstwo

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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

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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]

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[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.

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[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.

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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 inter-

vention 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.

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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

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[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.

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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	intelligenstia	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 (Ber-

taux 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]

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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.
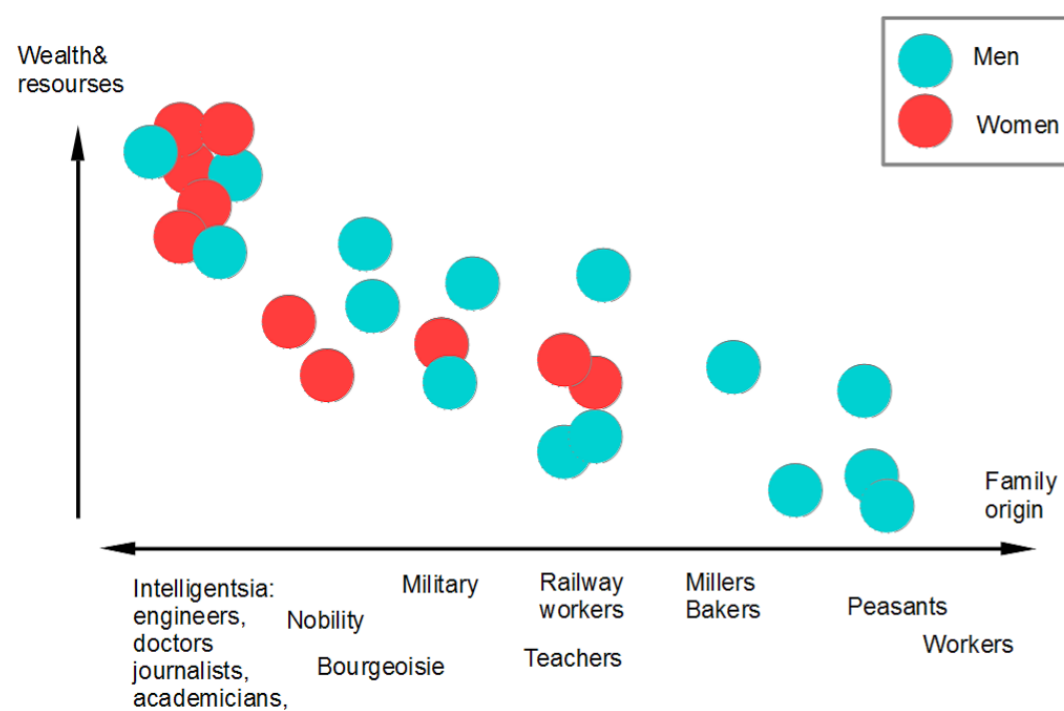
Source: Own elaboration.

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 be-

lief 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 sup-

posed 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

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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 univer-

sity. 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

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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 ben-

eficiary 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 be-

cause 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

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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

[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).

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'.

Acknowledgments

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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

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The Importance of Subjectively Constructed Meaning: Integration Viewed From the Perspective of Immigrants[1]

Abstract   In political discourse, as much as in social studies, the term integration is commonly viewed in the context of migration. On the basis of 'objective' indicators and statistical analysis, the level of integration is measured and assessed as 'low' or 'high', 'sufficient' or 'insufficient'. This is the perspective of the receiving countries (not migrants), which clearly dominates in this field of study. Seeing this perspective as partial, we decided to ask migrants themselves what integration means to them. The analysis of the narrative interviews conducted with Ukrainian, Srilankese and Senegalese men and women living in the South of Italy has demonstrated that integration for them is more related to the notion of 'good life' than to a desire of becoming 'one of us'.[2] Our interviewees' approach to integration is very pragmatic as pursuing their own life projects, even if they turn out to be relatively modest, is after all their main concern. From their narratives emerges an idea of integration as acceptance and satisfaction, but without aspirations for equality, participation and full social and political rights, which calls for more active integration policies.

Keywords   subjective meaning, integration, migration, biographical experiences, autobiographical narrative interviews

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Introduction

Contrary to a great number of publications approaching the question of migrants' integration on the basis of 'objective' indicators (cf. Kearns & Whitley 2015; Ager & Strang 2004; Ager & Strang 2008; Cebolla-Boado & Finotelli 2015), in this paper we focus on the subjective meaning of integration as it is constructed in the narratives of immigrants. We argue that in order to understand the processes of integration it does not suffice to focus on the 'objective' indicators only, such as employment, living conditions, legal status and language skills, but also, or even first of all, the attention needs to be paid to the biographical experiences of migrants - before, during and after the transition - as well as their own understanding of integration. We recognize the fact that the 'objective' and subjective definitions of integration do not necessarily coincide, therefore, both of them need to be studied and then confronted.

The scope of this paper is to present the processes of integration from the bottom-up perspective rather than provide a detailed literature review on migrants' integration as it has been done elsewhere (Kindler et al. 2015; Penninx 2007; 2010) demonstrating that the concept of integration is highly normative, based on contradictory assumptions and ambiguous as it is understood differently by various users (Anthias et al. 2013). In order to focus in our analysis on the subjective perspective of immigrants, we conducted in-depth interviews (autobiographical narrative and semi-structured interviews) with 16 people coming from three groups, significantly present in the Southern regions of Italy and at the same time being very diverse in terms of migration, settlement and employment patterns: 6 coming from Ukraine (5 of them are women), 7 from Sri Lanka (5 men and 2 women), and 3 from Senegal, all of whom have been living in the South of Italy (Naples and Campania Region) at least for nine years, allowing us to view the processes of integration. The collected interviews capture the diversity of migration paths (there are both pioneers and those who reunified their families), the reasons for migration (those escaping from poverty and others having a desire for improvement of their economic and social status), family and housing arrangements (some live with their relatives, others alone or with their co-nationals) and working conditions (ranging from domestic workers[3] to an accountant and an entrepreneur). This diversity is linked to nationality, gender, class, cultural capital and the age at the moment of arrival.

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[2] The 'one of us' perspective, underlying explicitly or implicitly many of the integration approaches, is the one formulated in light of 'national gaze', taking as a starting point the majority of society (cf. Erdal 2013: 992; Yuval-Davis 2010).

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[3] Our Ukrainian female interviewees work predominantly in the sector of domestic labor. In this paper, however, we do not analyze in-depth their work and life conditions as it has been done very well elsewhere (see Näre 2013; Näre 2014; Spanò & Zaccaria 2003).

All of our interviewees had a residence permit (in one case, there was also an Italian citizenship obtained through marriage). All those differences have been analyzed and published before (Spanò & Domecka 2014) in a book summing the project findings. Here, we present an overview of our major results, focusing more on the similarities we found out than on the differences. The choice of the autobiographical narrative approach was meant not only to provide time and space for our interviewees to share their experiences, to 'give them the voice' but also to facilitate the expression of their agency: their reflexivity, their concerns and their projects as they are defined in the context they live in. We recognize the fact that in the autobiographical narratives the levels of agency and structure are linked as individual projects are presented in broader social and institutional contexts, where they can be facilitated, suspended or blocked.

In the paper we present the results of the analysis of collected narratives, which point first of all at a pragmatic approach towards integration, deeply rooted in the migrants' life projects. To our initial surprise, and in contrast to the significant presence of integration discourse in the public sphere, the topic of integration was not picked up easily by our interviewees. The word itself was not familiar to our narrators and the concern about rights and citizenship would not have been a part of their everyday reflection. As our interviewees did not have any ready-made definitions of integration at their disposal, they had to construct it while narrating their life experiences. Therefore, instead of the notion of integration as we know it from migration studies or from political discourse, our analysis

found an idea of integration as 'good life'. To be integrated, according to our interviewees, means to have a job, a decent place to live, a status regulated with residence permit, to be surrounded by family and friends, to feel satisfied by accepting the constraints and by feeling free and accepted by others. The relative modesty of these expectations may be explained by temporarization: migration tends to be viewed as a transitory phase of our interviewees' lives. Temporarization makes the limitations encountered in the country of destination easier to accept and the discussions on rights and citizenship less relevant. The main reference points of the people interviewed were not here and now, but their past (often marked by poverty thus the current satisfaction and emphasis on 'good life') and their future in an unknown destination or in their countries of origin (thus the concern about Italian citizenship less pronounced).

In the paper we also demonstrate how much the meaning of integration differs if we take it as a theoretical construct, a social policy goal and a lived experience of the immigrants. Viewed from the bottom-up perspective, integration has first of all a pragmatic character as it is not that much a matter of becoming 'one of us', but it is about the possibility of realizing the projects of 'good life', where individual agency and structural context play equally important roles.

The Subjective Side of Integration

In some countries, such as the Netherlands, Norway and others, some rather elaborated ceremonies have been introduced for the 'new national citizens' (Erdal, 2013). It is a symbolic rite of passage, which is to mark that the final point of integration, becoming 'one of us', has been achieved. However, contrary to the expectations, the participation rates in those ceremonies are very low (Hagelund et al. 2009, cfr. Erdal 2013). How can we explain the fact that apparently well-integrated immigrants do not want to celebrate their new national citizenship, their becoming 'one of us'? If we took into account only the 'objective' indicators of integration models, we would describe these people as clearly well-integrated, in a sense that they are in employment, have good housing conditions, speak the language of the recipient country, et cetera. Therefore, this last step, granting citizenship and citizens' rights would be expected to represent a moment worth celebrating. In order to explain why it was not considered as such, the statistical data do not suffice as understanding why people act in a particular way requires taking into account their own perspective, their experiences, their lived life and their own meaning of integration, which may differ significantly from the ones of researchers and policy makers.

If somebody had asked these new citizens why they did not participate in the ceremony, perhaps they would have heard that citizenship for immigrants has first of all a practical meaning, well-grounded in their life projects. It could have been discovered that if a migrant person has a plan to get married and buy a house in the country of origin and then after some years go back there for good, then the new citizenship, in many cases requiring the cancellation of the previous one as many countries do not allow dual citizenship, would not be perceived

as an attractive option. In some other cases it could have been found that for people coming from the countries which passports do not provide access to global mobility, the importance of new citizenship lies rather in the acquisition of a Western passport than the desire of becoming 'one of us' (cf. Erdal 2013). It could have been also noticed that the notion of becoming 'one of us' is not clear at all, as 'us' is such a heterogeneous category. Perhaps becoming 'one of us' should not even be considered as a goal of integration as other ideas, such as staying himself or herself in good relations with others may be not only clearer but also more respectful for the various identities of newer society members. This change in the thinking of integration would also mark a shift from the ideas pursued for the good of receiving societies to those recognizing the good of receivers and newcomers as equally important.

Discoveries of this type may have led to a conclusion that integration is understood differently by policy makers, who propose to celebrate new citizens, by researchers, who are surprised that the 'integrated ones' do not want to celebrate their new citizenship, and by immigrants themselves, who develop their own projects and meanings that researchers and policy makers may not be aware of. From this point of view it becomes clear that integration as a political goal, as a theoretical construct and as migrants' lived experience takes quite distinct meanings.

Our choice of approaching integration from the subjective perspective (which may be of individual, as well as collective character) comes not only from a general need to 'give the voice' (Bogdan & Biklen 1998) to allow people, who otherwise may be left in

silence, to have their voices be heard. However, 'giving the voice' is not enough as the real point of qualitative research is not only to gather the information on the lived experiences but to facilitate the expression of agency, which means to listen carefully to the narrations, evaluations, argumentations, and interpretations people build over their experiences, the contexts they live in and their interdependence. The idea is to conduct research *with* people rather than *on* people.

One of the best ways of capturing agency is the one through autobiographical narration. Following the classics, we can say that "the self-biography is the highest and most instructive form in which the understanding of life is confronting us" (Dilthey 1962 [1924]) as it links the level of individual experiences and the level of structurally given circumstances, enabling us to relate life projects to the contexts where they can be defined and realized and vice versa, to establish a connection between structural possibilities and impossibilities and the projects developed. The construction of a life story is a way of presenting those aspects of one's past, which are relevant for the current situation, as well as for the future projects guiding the present actions (Kohli 1981). Therefore, in the narration, the processes of migration and integration are contextualized, incorporated in the life histories and in the agency of narrators. By agency we mean the capacity of changing one's own projects in relation to the context and making a difference in the context in the light of one's projects. The projects play here a crucial role as they are oriented towards the future, but come from the past and condition the present. Narrating one's life also means doing biographical work (Strauss,

1987; Schütze, 2008), which can be described as an effort of re-reading of, reflecting upon and eventually integrating one's past experiences. Biographical work undertaken during autobiographical narration means that different interpretations of one's life course are taken into account and struggled with. It is a self-critical effort meant to evaluate one's biographical development in order to establish a plausible version of one's life (and one's identity) with its many contradictions, impediments (both internal and external), turning points and the paths considered, but never taken. In this particular research project, we looked at biographical work as the capacity of evaluating one's choices and linking one's dreams, hopes and projects to the existing opportunity structures, as well as the capacity of changing the context in order to make their subsequent steps possible. Biographical work, conceptualized in this way, plays the role of a crucial resource in the integration process.

In order to understand what integration means to them, we asked all our interviewees to share with us their experiences not only of migration but also their lives before and after this turning point. We chose the autobiographical narrative approach[4] as we

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[4] The initial research design assumed conducting autobiographical narrative interviews as developed by Fritz Schütze (2005 [1984]) followed then by a list of questions directly related to the project objectives. As in some cases it was possible to conduct autobiographical narrative interviews, in some others, due to language difficulties (not all the interviewees were fluent in Italian and no interpreters and written translations were available because of very limited budgeting) and due to the lack of experience with this particular method of some of the interviewers (researchers coming from different disciplines), our approach had to be modified. The result is that some of the interviews conducted do not contain a long autobiographical narrative part, but consist of the answers to the questions asked, which then enabled the reconstruction of the life course.

knew from our previous research experiences that conducting life story interviews gives us a chance to approach people in their world of everyday life and to be offered not only a story of events, decisions and turning points but also their reflexive elaboration in relation to the changing context. By careful listening, transcribing and analyzing the narratives we take into account both life experiences and personal theories people construct around them including their own explanations and argumentations. As all the events and experiences are put into context and include different types of significant others, the biographical account is not only a methodological model of hermeneutical understanding of individual lives but also a privileged way of approaching social reality (Domecka et al. 2012:21). Studying integration from the immigrants' point of view, which presupposes knowledge and understanding of their experiences, their ways of thinking and talking about integration, the value they ascribe to it and the paradoxes they see in it, not only enriches our understanding of the processes of integration but also helps us to explain why in a certain context integration takes a particular form. The objective of the following parts of this article is to present the notion of integration as it is viewed from the perspective of immigrants.

Integration as a Pragmatic Matter

The questions about integration (*What does integration mean to you? What comes to your mind when you hear the word integration?*)[5] were asked later in the in-

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[5] The project aimed at confronting the official measures of integration with immigrants' own understanding of these processes. Direct questions were asked about integration and the responses were then analyzed by the team of sociologists, anthropologists and linguists.

terviews, after the narrative part where interviewees would share their experiences related to migration, their lives in their home countries and then in Italy.

Our first finding about integration from the immigrants perspective is that, despite the fact that their integration appears frequently in the public discourse, it is not the word which is spontaneously used in immigrants' narratives. Unlike other elements of public discourse, such as the crisis, which perforated the interviewees' ways of talking and thinking, the very word integration is not a part of their vocabulary. Moreover, despite their different characteristics, our interviewees' reactions suggested an unfamiliarity with the term, even among those who know Italian language well: *I didn't understand, tell me* [laughing]; *I don't know how to respond*; *integration, I didn't understand what…*; *I don't know what you mean by integration.*

The sense of strangeness demonstrated towards the word integration can be explained by the fact that the current debate on immigrants integration is focused mainly on the issues of citizenship and voting rights, an issue that is not within the main concerns of our respondents. In fact, they appear guided by a pragmatic principle (cf. Penninx 2007), which - rather than the assertion of rights - makes them interested in what actually can be useful in their daily lives, dealing with the difficulties they encounter: securing sufficient income and decent, housing conditions for themselves and their families, education for their children, access to healthcare. Italian citizenship and citizens' rights seem to be abstract as they do not provide anymore practical

solutions readily applicable in their everyday lives other than the residence permit (*permesso di soggiorno*) our interviewees have already acquired.

The way the citizenship, voting rights and language skills, treated as crucial elements of immigrants' integration in migration studies and political discourse, are perceived by the people we interviewed clearly demonstrates their pragmatism. The possibility of being granted Italian citizenship does not represent any added value, neither politically nor symbolically. What counts, however, is the citizenship's meaning for their current life situation and their future projects. The new citizenship, providing access to free movement in the European Union, may be taken into account only by those who have a desire to move as it is confirmed by Stella, a 39-year-old Ukrainian domestic worker:

> [I want] just one citizenship [Ukrainian], you say more than one maybe to travel the world…but I'm not a globe trotter. [Stella, Ukrainian, 39 years old]

Regarding the future, if one thinks about Italy as a transition country, a place of temporary work aimed at accumulation of resources that can be used later in the home country, then Italian citizenship is not only unattractive but also problematic if one's country of origin does not allow dual citizenship as it is demonstrated in the cases of Susante, a 35-year-old Srilankese man and Lesia, a 40-year-old Ukrainian women, both of whom have been working in Italy for about 15 years as domestic workers:

> Italian [citizenship]? I don't need it at all because if I take Italian citizenship and lose the Srilankese one,

I can't…you need to have tourist [visa] in Sri Lanka, you have to pay. It's useless because later on, after some years, I have to go to live there. [Susante, Srilankese, 35 years old]

> The dual citizenship? I don't think so because our country doesn't allow dual citizenship [even if it was possible] I'd have to see because we have some property there, in Ukraine, so one has to see how to…so I don't know. [Lesia, Ukrainian, 40 years old]

On the contrary, for those who want to stay, the already worked out projects change the optics completely. In particular, for the children of immigrants, brought up in Italy, the new citizenship seems to be not only practical but also symbolically relevant, not considered only in practical terms but also in terms of identity resources, as identity statement and confirmation. Nathan, a young Srilankese man, currently unemployed, who came to Italy as a teenager, seems to have a clear project of not returning to his home country, at least until his retirement, and getting married preferably in Northern Europe. Asked about his choice of citizenship, he mentions the Italian one, but in a broader sense, as resource providing access to the European space, to free movement and other social rights:

> If you take European citizenship, I mean, it makes your life easier in the European community, so an Italian one or a Spanish one are equal, let's say, your life's easier in a sense, I think…just to go to England I need to have a visa, so… [Nathan, Srilankese, 27 years old]

Later, however, Nathan, who declares he is *Srilankese by birth and Italian by upbringing*, says:

I wanted to apply for the citizenship, but I left my work, so I couldn't do it anymore…[I'd like to do it] at least, I mean, I've been here for more or less 15 years, so I feel…I'm 27 and I feel half and half, I'm here and I'll stay here, so I'd better do it. [Nathan, Srilankese, 27 years old]

Similarly Tani, who was brought to Italy by her family when she was only four, recalls living all those years as if developing *a double personality*:

> If I could choose, I think it would be a dual citizenship (…) I feel there's a part missing and until I resolve it, I won't be able to say that I feel more Italian or more Srilankese. In fact, I don't know it yet [laughing] to be honest. Also for the future…Where do I see my future? For now, here in Naples and then I don't know [laughing]. [Tani, Srilankese, 23 years old]

The way of thinking about citizenship as related to the voting rights is marked by the same kind of pragmatism. The point expressed by Yuri, a Ukrainian pizza chef living in Italy for the last nine years, is the most common one:

> The citizenship…to have the right to vote…not…maybe yes, but…to be honest I didn't think about getting the [Italian] citizenship because in the end what is it needed for?...to have the right to vote? For me it's not that important because in the end there's not that much difference who you are as a citizen…also without the citizenship you can be fine. [Yuri, Ukrainian, 36 years old]

Also in this case, the exception is represented by those who were brought up in Italy. The right to

vote, in fact, was assessed as important only by Nathan, who did not mention it spontaneously, however, but was asked directly about his opinion on this issue:

> [I miss the right to vote] of course, in a sense that all of us have duties, in a sense that we pay taxes and not all of us have let's say rights ((pause)) that is all have duties, but not all have rights…that is, in a sense if you elect a government it still influences also the foreign community so that's let's say a bad thing. [Nathan, Srilankese, 27 years old]

Differently than the citizenship and voting rights, the residence permit for its direct impact on the immigrants' concrete life conditions, is highly valued by our interviewees. It is in fact the most crucial resource for those who possess it and the main obstacle for those who lost it or never managed to obtain it. Liliana, a Ukrainian woman who used to work as domestic help, but then managed to open a very much dreamed about shop, admits it was possible thanks to her own and her husband's regulated status:

> We took this decision to try with the shop as we had the documents. The residence permit allows us to take these steps, let's say. [Liliana, Ukrainian, 35 years old]

It is commonly agreed among our interviewees that the residence permit is enough to live well in the South of Italy. Previously introduced Susante, after declaring to have no problems *as there is the residence and the health insurance,* confirms with full conviction that *here it's enough to have the residence, the residence is enough to live peacefully.*

On the other hand, there are stories of the difficulties experienced due to the lack of residence permit. There are some projects reported, such as getting married abroad, which had to be changed due to the lack of valid documents. There are also the police controls described, which were experienced in the transitory periods before acquiring residence permit, as in case of Sanjeev, and between its renewals:

> When I came here, I had problems to learn the language, for more than 5 months I was without work… but then slowly, slowly I learnt the language, found a job, my sister helped me to find the job, to find signori/ those signori…a few times the police [carabinieri] controlled me and asked "residence permit?", I said: "I have no residence permit, without residence permit we're poor, I don't want to be sent back and so on", but they let me out, didn't say anything, they said "don't worry, but try not to go out and walk the streets without the permit" like that because I explained my situation that I don't want to go back ((pause)) that's important, right? If you go to Germany they send you back immediately! Look what the carabinieri did, what they said: "go home, don't go out during the night." [Sanjeev, Srilankese, 36 years old]

The story of police controls told by Sanjeev shows the importance of regulated status in order to avoid problems and lead a peaceful life, the condition very much emphasized by our interviewees. The cited passage demonstrates the belief that in Europe there exist different control systems: one less and one more severe (Southern Italy and Germany respectively), but even in the milder and more un-

derstanding system the minimum of requirements needs to be met. It is not accidental that the story about the police control is embedded in the larger narrative on searching for a job and getting one. The family that employed Sanjeev did it legally and in this way enabled the regularization of his status. Applying for the residence permit, which gives access also to health insurance, is the first and final step taken by the immigrants as it is commonly believed to be sufficient for a 'good life'.

The same pragmatic attitude is expressed towards the language learning. Italian is treated as an essential tool for finding and doing work, but as it is explained by Yuri, language proficiency is not considered to be necessary:

> In Italian there are still some complicated things, but if once learnt…if one studies, if I go to school that's one thing, but I've learnt it on my own and it's not that I need so many things, I don't write books, right? [Yuri, Ukrainian, 36 years old]

Having discussed briefly the elements usually treated in migration studies and political discourse as the pillars of immigrants' integration: citizenship, citizens' rights and language skills, in the following parts of the paper we will show how our interviewees build their own meanings of integration. The initially demonstrated unfamiliarity with the word 'integration' together with the pragmatic approach towards citizenship, the right to vote and language learning, do not preclude, as we will show, a development of one's own understanding of integration process, associating it with building a 'good life', satisfaction and acceptance.

Integration as 'Good Life'

After analyzing the narratives of our interviewees and their responses to the questions if and to what extent they feel integrated, it became clear that integration from their perspective is no more and no less than 'good life',[6] where the adjective 'good' refers to the condition where all basic human needs can be satisfied: housing, work, family, friendship and freedom. These are in fact the necessary ingredients for life to be considered as 'good', described by our narrators also as 'normal'. The passages taken from the interviews with Natalia and Susante, both of whom employed as domestic workers, show the conversations they had with the interviewers, which demonstrate very well the distance between the formal and the substantive definitions of integration:

> Now I don't, I don't know how to reply about integration, as you were saying, it means I don't know, I'm fine in a country, this means integration.
> Q: What are the necessary elements for a person to say 'I'm integrated'?
> A: Ah! That's it! Now I understand it, now, for the life I have now, I think I'm integrated also because

now I'm better with Italians than with foreigners… The life I have now, having a flat, having a job, having friends from this country, now as I feel free, I feel integrated. [Natalia, Ukrainian, 55 years old]

> Integration, I didn't understand what…
> Q: Getting integrated means, let's say, becoming a part of this society, do you have this feeling of being fine here, of being a part of this society?
> A: No, there's nothing, me, let's say, it's not bad, I don't know what to say, there's nothing…let's say, for me it's better, let's say, however, we spend time in a nice way, let's say, it's not bad… [Susante, Srilankese, 35 years old]

The passages that follow demonstrate that –in addition to material elements such as work and housing conditions - a crucial element of a 'good life' is the respect showed by the natives, meaning social recognition and self-esteem that comes from it:

> Let's say that I accept everything in life, um, which makes me feel good, let's say. This work is hard, demanding. I get up at 7 am, 7:30, and go to bed at 11 pm. It's very hard, but I have my two hours of detachment in the afternoon. I enter my room, close the door, switch on my computer, then I take a rest, I do something I like, don't think about work. Let's say that with this family we've found an agreement that I don't invade their life and they don't invade my life. I do things without saying that much, also I don't ask lots of questions, I don't interfere, I just do my work, that's the condition of my signora that we've found. They're satisfied how I work and I'm satisfied how they pay me because they pay well, they appreciate me, they respect me, that's it. [Natalia, Ukrainian, 55 years old]

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[6] The idea of integration as 'good life' appeared much earlier in the report on the migrants' integration in Italy (Zincone, 2000), where three different interpretations of integration have been distinguished, depending on the types of relations between immigrants and natives: (a) integration as *equality* (of rights and resources), (b) integration seen *instrumentally*, where newcomers are assessed on the basis of what they bring to the host society (workforce, tax contributions), (c) integration as the process of shortening the distance between natives and immigrants and becoming *similar*. On top of these three types, Zincone proposes a model of integration understood as integrity of a person: good life, as a positive interaction, as a peaceful coexistence. In this context, the migrants' integration is viewed not only from the perspective of newcomers but also the point of view of natives, whose concerns must be taken into consideration in order to build the conditions for successful integration (Zincone 2000).

[talking about the satisfaction he feels about his work as an accountant] the main motivation is this one, I'm well accepted and socially satisfied. [Amadu, Senegalese, 42 years old]

Making a reference to Archer (2000; 2003), we can say that for our interviewees, the condition of being integrated includes the satisfaction of needs in three orders constituting reality: *natural order*, referring to body conservation, *practical order*, related to subsistence through work, and *social order*, where one develops self-esteem as a social being. The hierarchy of these needs varies across cases, but our analysis has demonstrated that if we want to talk about a real-life integration process, the three orders of reality need to be taken into account and all the needs pertaining to them, satisfied. Without social recognition (including mutual acceptance, respect and genuine interest) integration is not possible, even if the needs of natural and practical orders are satisfied.

It can also be affirmed, in reference to the different dimensions, the concept of integration is usually made of (the economic, cultural, social and political ones)[7], in case of all our interviewees there emerges the centrality of the economic dimension (work) and the social (relationships), and the importance

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[7] Lacroix (2010) shows how the "various dimensions, domains, levels or 'types' of integration have been categorized in many different ways, the most popular of which have been discussed under the groupings of economic, social, legal and cultural integration. Of course, none of these aspects of integration are isolated, and more often than not, one will influence the other. Insofar as this work is concerned, integration can be categorized into two major 'dimensions': (1) the structural, which includes all aspects of the social participation of individuals and groups into a larger society, including legal, political, labor, citizenship and so on; and (2) the affective, which refers to the processes of value orientation and identification (Lacroix 2010, p. 13).

of cultural and political dimensions. If the relative importance of political dimension (the one that refers to citizenship and rights) can be explained by the pragmatic attitude analyzed above, the lack of emphasis on the problems of cultural order is explained by the general tendency to minimize the weight of cultural differences and the tendency to perform some intercultural mixing that we find in all of our narrators. The fact of maintaining one's roots, in fact, is not perceived as an obstacle to inclusion. On the contrary, being a migrant does not pose a problem of abandoning one's cultural origins as it is well-demonstrated by Natalia, of Russian origin who lived for many years in Ukraine and nine years ago arrived in Italy:

Let's say that you can't feel inside of another nation ever because even if you're fine in a country where you are well-integrated, inside I'm always Russian, not even Ukrainian because even while living in Ukraine inside I always stay Russian, I don't know why! Maybe because it's the mother tongue, because I grew up with Russian culture, it's difficult to change the inside. [Natalia, Ukrainian, 55 years old]

The erasing of one's cultural identity is not taken into account not only because it is deemed hardly possible (*it's difficult to change the inside*) but also no need is felt of doing so. Instead, the diverse forms of cultural exchange are developed and Natalia provides some beautiful examples of this intercultural giving and taking:

With our women because now in the morning we have the [Italian] lessons and then we go to the room we've rented, and we do an evening of romance be-

cause lots of our women sing and I write poems, let's say, there are people who play [instruments], we often do them, um the poetic evenings with songs, also dedicated... as we did the evening of Totò because many people don't know he was not only an actor, he was also a poet, also a director, and did lots of things in life. And now we even have a project with Italians, we do an Association of Maxim Gorky, um, let's say a show dedicated to Pulcinella, our character is Petrushka, because Petrushka is very similar to Pulcinella, the same character, only Petrushka has a red shirt and Pulcinella a white one (…) it's very interesting to make comparisons, let's say our cultures are attached also in this way, we've borrowed so much of music and arts from Italy (...) Italians often come because there are people who are interested, also when we did an evening dedicated to Vladimir Vysotsky, people came and brought CDs swith these songs translated in Italian, one brought a book of poems by Vysotsky translated in Italian, let's say we discovered something, that Italians also want to know our culture. [Natalia, Ukrainian, 55 years old]

Discovering the similarities and differences on the personal as much as cultural level, mutual interest, showed by the native and the immigrant groups, as well as intercultural exchange lead us to the next dimension of integration strongly emphasized by our interviewees: integration as acceptance.

Integration as Acceptance

The perspective emphasizing the importance of acceptance for successful integration, was found in all the interviews conducted. Integration was described as 'good life', the condition of "being fine",

"leaving peacefully", "feeling at home", for which mutual acceptance was needed. The acceptance was understood as on the one hand, the condition of being accepted, being treated by others as a fellow citizen not a stranger, and on the other hand, as one's own capacity to accept the limitations imposed by the context. What emerges from the narratives, goes very much hand in hand with the basic definition of integration by Rinus Penninx as "the process of becoming an accepted part of society" (Penninx 2007:10).

Yuri, who recognizes the fact of being partially integrated, complains about being treated as a foreigner. He is critical about the way Italians treat the immigrants, but then ends up by accepting the social and spacial limits of integration. He concludes declaring not only that 'he has no complaints', but also admitting that he himself has a similar attitude towards the people he does not know:

[I don't feel integrated], not completely, but I don't complain. Not completely because in the end, if you're a part of society, I think you need to have all the rights as an Italian has, if you live here, right? You need at least…Instead there's this thing of saying 'he's a foreigner', right? For so many Italians you're a foreigner, they look at you in a different way. If you have in front of you a foreigner and an Italian, you see them in a different way, that's right…because that one is your countryman and this one is a foreigner, let's say 80% of people see it like this…If I feel at home, I'm integrated. Me personally, I'm quite well-integrated, but in the end, if you take into account that when you go to a part where people don't know you, if you live in one area, everybody knows

you, neighbors, clients, where I work, everybody's known me for years, so I feel like at home because they know me well, and knowing me, they talk, chat, right? They behave in a way…It's a different thing when you go close to a person who doesn't know you and he understands that you're a foreigner, one understands immediately, the way you speak, it's already…the atmosphere is more… how can I explain you it…let's be clear, Italians when they see that one is a foreigner, they don't treat him as an Italian because you never know, because they same thing is with me, if I see a foreigner and say: well…you know, I'm always a bit careful. Sometimes there are some situations that Italians think they're on a higher level than a foreigner, even if it's not the case, they think so, right? [Yuri, Ukrainian, 36 years old]

Among our interviewees there are also some who express directly what in other stories is communicated implicitly, that is, the semantic proximity between integration and acceptance:

Integration means accepting. I came here, so I have to accept the rules here, I need to appreciate the things here, have Italian friends. [Liliana, Ukrainian, 35 years old]

It is important to stress the fact that also those who, like Liliana, put the weight of accepting mainly on the immigrants' shoulders, they are more hesitant to do the same in case of second generation, especially their own children. Liliana talking about her previous experiences as a domestic worker, found it understandable to conform to the demands of *signore* as she was *paid per hour and had to do what they wanted*. Her attitude changes, however, when she talks

about some negative incidents, which have happened to her children. What in her own case could have been understood and accepted as necessary, in case of her sons, was simply unacceptable:

In the emergency room there was me and my younger son Amir who was three, I think two or three, and my husband and me, we were explaining to this doctor that Amir had pain in his ear and he was insisting: 'But did you bring your documents? Did you? Are you from outside EU, illegal [extracomunitario] or do you have a residence permit?', 'No, look, we're here with residence permit, everything's all right'. Anyway, the attitude was very bad, but it's not even this attitude that bothered me but the moment my little son came close to this doctor's desk and he said: 'Go away!' with a disgusted face and I felt sorry for this child who didn't [do anything bad]. Yes, he came close to the desk, but didn't touch anything, he came close to see what the doctor was writing and he said with this face, with disgusted voice: 'Go away!', you know, as if he was…And this situation, really, when I left the room, I felt very bad, really bad because I'd never been in a situation where somebody would have told me: 'You're a foreigner, illegal [extracomunitarioa] as if…no. In this case, the doctor didn't even refer to me, but to my little son, an ignorant, I can't say anything else. [Liliana, Ukrainian, 35 years old]

The inter-generational differences are very clearly described in the narratives. On the one hand, there are the expectations which the first generation immigrants, even treating their stay abroad as temporary may legitimately have, and on the other, there are the rights of the second generation (previously analyzed in Spanò 2011). Being brought up and edu-

cated in Italy, the children of immigrants need to be recognized as Italian citizens and given all the citizens' rights. Their parents' country of destination has become their home and their main reference point, therefore, the limitations experienced in their case are more readily verbalized and contested.

The Reasons for the Acceptance of Status Quo

On the basis of the collected narratives it is possible to reconstruct the argumentation lines meant to explain why it is necessary to accept the life conditions and the structural and social constraints of the context our interviewees live in. The first reason for acceptance presented comes from the immigrants' conviction that they cannot aspire to equality:

Let's say, it's not that I'm asking a lot. Of course, we know that we weren't asked to come here, we came here, it was our will to come here, nobody forced us and that's why I'm content with what I have. Work for me doesn't mean doing who knows what, it's enough to do honest work, so I'm glad with what I've got, I'm not asking a lot, let's say…To be equal, I can't say to be equal because I understand that I'm a foreigner and I'm in this country and I can't compare myself with an Italian person, that is, I don't pretend…I don't think that [foreigners] get fully inserted, that they can get inserted, anyway one is always a foreigner who comes and always there's something left that isn't…nobody gets fully integrated. [Lesia, Ukrainian, 40 years old]

Why do I have to feel equal to an Italian citizen? I never even pretended to have the same weight on the scale because as I say, the path, the path I did,

I left Senegal to come here and it's on me, it's on me the possibility of getting integrated. It's not that I have to come to impose the direction, I should be able to find a common point knowing that I've got an external view, an external request for a country. [Amadu, Senegalese, 42 years old]

The feeling of *not having the same weight* on the social scale is a sign of the failure of integration policies. The low expectations immigrants have towards institutions may suggest that they did not encounter any tangible help from them. The discourse of equal rights did not penetrate the level of everyday life and equality has never become reality for them. Our interviewees are stigmatized and then also stigmatize themselves as those 'naturally' occupying lower positions. As a result, they do not aspire for anything better than the immediately available niches left by the Italian majority society.

There are also other reasons given, implicitly, for the low expectations and the general acceptance of the status quo. First of them is the economic crisis and the resulting difficulties to find and keep a job, the second one is the vision of migration (and life in Italy) as a transitory phase and the third one is the overall satisfaction our interviewees feel about the shape their current lives have taken.

1. The perception of crisis

The immigrants, who shared their life stories with us, are fully aware of the existing segregation in the labor market. They know that the work available to them *are those jobs that Italians don't do*. Our narrators perceive also the phenomenon of over-education

and this is exactly the reason why one of our Senegalese interviewees discourages his brother from migrating: *it's better to stay in Senegal than to come to Italy because when you come here, you need to forget you've studied, you need to forget everything*. Both vertical and horizontal segregation in the labor market is well recognized. Our interviewees see that they are meant to fill the gaps left by the natives, but, what is crucial here, this perception of inequality does not lead them to anger and contestation. On the contrary, the existing conditions are silently accepted and explained with the help of crisis discourse. The economic crisis is viewed as the phenomenon beyond control (again the state or the EU institutions do not appear in this context at all), affecting immigrants as much as the natives. The dominating perspective is the following one: *if there is no work for Italians, even the graduates, what can the foreigners say?* Therefore, in the light of the difficulties encountered by all, those who have jobs, express their satisfaction and gratitude to the extent of feeling 'lucky':

[talking about the work opportunities for immigrants in Italy] the only opportunities are that we have to do domestic work, home carers, babysitters because there's so much unemployment that thinking about something else would be just stupid. [Natalia, Ukrainian, 55 years old]

[talking about his work as a pizza chef] it's not that it's the max, right, it's not that I like it so much, but for now, at least it can be accepted…when we talk about migrants, it's normal that it's more difficult to find a job because there's the crisis and nobody wants to pay. In fact there are many Italians who are looking for a job and they don't find it, in facts it's

like 10%, 14%, what's the unemployment now? …For the immigrants it's even more difficult because it's not only those who are looking for a job but there's a queue of those who want to work, right. [Yuri, Ukrainian, 36 years old]

The perceived opportunity structure is so restricted that any change in employment, any improvement, becomes 'unthinkable'. Better jobs are thought to be so scarce that they become defined as 'not for us'. This mechanism leads our interviewees to give up any aspirations as thinking about any significant improvement is readily labelled as unthinkable or 'stupid' (an exception here is Liliana who took the risk of leaving her job of a domestic worker and opening a shop together with her husband).

2. The transitory character of migration experience

The tendency to view the migration as a transitory phase of one's life as in the condition of permanent temporariness (Cekiera, 2014) is another reason to accept the existing social and structural conditions. This feeling of a transitory experience comes from the fact that in many cases the extension of the residency in the host country is not that much intentional and planned as it is the result of contingencies, a product of unintended events and situations. Many of our interviewees came to Italy with an idea of staying for a limited period of time only. *I thought: I'll stay two or three years and I'll go back; I was thinking to stay for a year, I'd never have thought to stay here for 14 years*, these are the most common phrases appearing in the interviews. The plan in most cases was to go back home with significant savings, but in the end, all

our interviewees were forced to stay longer due to various economic reasons (the savings were not as big as expected, the employment possibilities in the country of origin were very limited, wages in the home country were too low compared to the costs of living) or family reasons (mixed marriages and families started in the host country, children beginning Italian schools). Equally strong was the need to maintain a 'successful story' of migration for oneself, as well as for the others. Homecoming before achieving certain goals could be interpreted as a failure, especially in case of our Senegalese interviewees, sent to Italy to study and reach high positions, and treated as a collective investment. The decision to return is also postponed because of the fear of finding oneself in worse conditions, limiting the opportunities for children, and the fear of feeling as a stranger (Simmel 1972) in their countries of origin.

The strategy of temporarization, shortening the time horizon and focusing on the present, on the one hand comes from a fatalistic belief that 'everything is volatile and sooner or later it will end' and on the other hand, it has a very practical meaning: it facilitates accepting the constraints and preserving peaceful life (repetitively stressed by our interviewees) as much as it allows to avoid the responsibility of decision making and the risk of change.

3. The overall satisfaction

The acceptance, understood by our interviewees as a central element of integration, is very much related to the satisfaction about their current lives. The satisfaction expressed by people occupying low

positions in the labor market, not adequate to their preparation (typical of the Mediterranean model of immigration as described by Pugliese 2002 and the metropolitan economy by Ambrosini 2011) may seem initially surprising, but it can be explained by the frames of reference our interviewees have. They feel 'lucky' as they compare their current situation with their past living conditions: *before coming to Italy, there was fear because sometimes we didn't eat*; they compare themselves with other migrants: *here there are friends without work, without food, also because they can't pay the rent, some go back, without work, without residence permit renewed, without contract*; but first of all the comparison is made with people who stayed in their home countries and live in much worse conditions:

There are countries and people, let's say, there's nothing to eat…because here, anyway, my countrymen live well. If one is not good, I don't know, is not good because is without work, but anyway, after a year, two years, three years they're fine easily, it's not that there's nothing. I don't, I don't think of those who arrived in Italy, who have no problems, but I always look at those who can't come to Italy or other countries…Many people stay there because…many people anyway came here, my countrymen, and they don't work, go to church to eat, somehow they will make it, here nobody dies…nobody dies…Instead, there are really difficulties, like the Third World, Sri Lanka, let's say, lots of difficulties. There's a part living well, but how they live in my city, close to the sea, there are still people, on TV, with no home, no bikes for kids, few clothes, no toys, so here where we work, we bring some toys and things and send them to where these people live. [Susante, Srilankese, 35 years old]

The poverty as a direct biographical and social reference point brings about a feeling of gratitude: *Now, in Italy, thank God, we're fine, thank goodness we came to Italy, I always need to thank God in a sense that I always make a comparison what I was doing before*, which we can find across our interviews. The poverty once sharply experienced as incapacity and a trap is never forgotten:

> The moments really difficult, really difficult moments were more in Ukraine because I believe that difficult moments are when one feels incapable in a sense that you don't have a job and as a result you can't buy food, clothes, nothing and if something happens, someone needs to go to hospital, even for buying medicine you'd get no money there. There's a feeling of being incapable, of being really…here, I've always worked, so the superficial things, clothes were enough and have been enough till now. Getting out of poverty I do appreciate those 10 euros a day, let's say… [Liliana, Ukrainian, 35 years old]

To the feeling of satisfaction contributes also the recognition of the tangible achievements, possible thanks to work and sacrifices made abroad, such as a house constructed in the country of origin, University education for children, weddings and other ceremonies paid and many other forms of help provided for their families. A different type of achievement for women working as domestic and care workers, is the possibility of leaving the employers' house (where they often initially live) and renting a room or a flat on their own. This move changes their work relations, and even though it increases the costs of living, it is highly appreciated as it responds to a widespread need for autonomy and the reappropriation of one's time. It's a strategy of 'liberation' that brings about a transition from *an imprisoned person* to *a normal person who works and lives*.

The satisfaction our interviewees feel comes also from their idea that the context where they live, contrary to their high expectations before migration, is in fact very difficult. The idea that *there's no work for Italian graduates, what can the foreigners say*, is followed by the conviction that once in employment, one cannot complain. At the same time, our interviewees working in the rich neighborhoods and living in the poor ones, understand perfectly that there is no equality and the difficulties are not experienced by all in the same way. They also observe that economic divisions do not go along the ethnic lines as many of their poor neighbors are in fact Italians or fellow immigrants coming from different backgrounds. It is one of the reasons why the existing inequalities are not viewed as ethnic discrimination and do not become contested. Neither their idea of integration puts the inequalities into question. For the immigrants we interviewed, integration and equality do not necessarily come together, as it is possible, as their own cases show, to be integrated but only in the lower strata of the society of destination.

There is one more element that works as a tranquillizer, helping the immigrants to accept all the constraints. It is the frequent help of the natives. In the system that often turns out to be slow and inefficient, due to budget constraints providing only minimum services, this is the tangible help of many Neapolitans that makes the lives of our interviewees bearable. The families employing immigrants help them learn Italian (in some cases there are the stories of regular lessons given), help them to deal with bureaucratic issues and help them to accommodate the relatives that follow. Then there is the role played by the Catholic Church and other religious organizations providing the space and the activities for children after school, organizing language and professional courses, as well as offering jobs (as in the case of one of our interviewees who got a chance of employment as an intercultural worker). As this help is crucial, it still does not fill the gap. Instead of full rights and reliable services offered on the European, national and local level, the immigrants receive some discretional acts of kindness keeping them dependent on individual good will. The failure of integration policies can be seen in the fact that our interviewees do not see equality as important for integration, they do not aspire to be treated equally as the natives and only one of them sees the current situation where "all of us have duties, but not all have rights" as disturbing.[8] It should be noted that even though, for the reasons just given, there is a strong tendency to accept the conditions of life and work, and sometimes the narrators explicitly theorize that, as foreigners, they have the *duty* to accept what the host environment offers, the vision of integration that emerges is that the one of a one-way process, where the responsibility to fit is designed as an exclusively immigrants' task. On the contrary, the narratives show - even if implicitly - that the vision of our interviewees the opportunity to achieve a 'good life' cannot be separated from the natives. Not surprisingly, the positive experiences as much as the negative episodes are always centered around the natives (employers, neighbors, classmates and teachers), who for better or worse, seem to have a great influence on the overall evaluation of life experiences of our interviewees.[9]

Conclusions

Our study on the integration viewed from the perspective of immigrants was motivated by our observation that there is much ambiguity over the concept of integration and the definitions used in migration studies, in social policy and in public discourse do not necessarily overlap. We were convinced that our understanding of the integration processes requires the voice of the immigrants themselves. Our choice of a qualitative approach comes directly from the assumption that in order to understand and explain what people do, and what they refrain from doing, does not involve only a reference to the acts observable from outside, but calls for the reconstruction of the subjective and the reflexive part of human life. It requires a link with the projects people make and the concerns they have (cf. Archer, 2003: Archer, 2007). The meanings people construct, the expectations they have and the strategies they develop are rooted in their life stories. Each immigrant is also an emigrant and a migrant, a social actor, but first

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[8] In the previous, longer and more detailed, version of the paper we analyzed also the narratives of those who are not satisfied with their life conditions, who give examples of discrimination in the sphere of work and in relations with the natives. It is important to note that those narrators have better life conditions (in respect to work, income and housing) than others we interviewed. Their dissatisfaction is closely related to their aspirations (much higher than in other cases) and the meaning constructed of their migration, which is experienced here as a failure.

[9] The importance of the social context and the interactions with the natives for the construction of 'good life' is clearly visible in the narratives as a large part of them is dedicated to the descriptions and explanations of the decision to settle in the South, where the jobs opportunities are more limited, but at the same time, there is more openness and human warmth than in the North of the country.

of all, a person with his or her particular baggage of experiences. The migration does not reset previous experiences. On the contrary, the past together with the imagined future shape the present and have a direct impact on the integration processes. Biographical research enables us to take this time perspective into account. Stressing the importance of the subjective perspective we do not aim to cancel the importance of the objective, structural life context. Reconstructing the subjective in fact, developed over time, we always link it to the objectified life conditions influenced by the structural opportunities and constraints, labor and housing markets, regularization policies, as well as social and political rights granted.

The reconstruction of the immigrants' perspective on integration enables us to provide some indications for theory development, as well as some policy recommendations. On the level of the theory, we may suggest a closer link between the theoretical debates and the empirical analysis as current discussions on integration understood as inclusion, equality and multiculturalism (Anthias et al. 2013; Wingens et al. 2011; Lacroix 2010) seem very distant from the reality the immigrants live in and their own understanding of integration. Only by adopting a bottom-up perspective and taking into account people's projects, concerns and actually lived lives, it is possible to bring up the understanding of integration as 'good life' (even if it is in a relatively modest version), as acceptance (accepting the rules and constraints by immigrants to the extent of self-limitation, as well as being accepted and respected by the natives), as satisfaction (coming from important (even if relatively small) achieve-

ments and meeting the needs of natural, practical and social order) and as freedom (both as freedom from poverty and incapacity and freedom to define and to follow one's projects). In the narratives of the immigrants we met, we found a curious case of integration without equality (*Italians are Italians*, they say), but with the opportunity to realize their relatively modest projects in the market niches left by the natives. For them, to be integrated it means to *live peacefully* with others, even if the 'others' are reduced to their relatives, countrymen, friends, neighbors and employers. Their vision resembles restricted integration, often limited to a single city or a neighborhood and a (lower) fraction of social structure. The participation in broader social and institutional contexts is not even taken into account, therefore not considered as necessary for integration. This is exactly the point, which requires active social policies. The satisfaction and acceptance we see in the immigrants' narratives and their idea of integration without equality, without participation and without full rights, calls for change. A person who does not see a way out, loses the courage to dream (Sen 1984), therefore the task is to create the opportunity structure, which could stimulate the aspirations. The aspirations, on the others hand, in the form of slightly more ambitious plans for the future, play a crucial role in transforming people's life conditions (Appadurai 2004) and therefore constitute an essential element of integration processes. Bringing the structural change (in housing and labor markets, in education, in social and political rights) is the first and necessary step as the capacity to aspire arises in the present because in order to feed the aspirations there must exist a "minimum basis of objective possibilities" (Mandich 2012). It is

also self-evident that the context devoid of opportunities that does not provides the adequate resources, undermines the capacity to aspire to a better future, making people trim their life projects according to the existing constraints. It needs to be recognized and emphasized that the project of a more integrated society requires also the agency, the motivated social actors capable of creating new opportunities

and making use of the existing ones. The traditional top-down perspective of policy-making needs to be therefore overcome and complemented by a variety of alternative approaches. Moreover, it needs to be emphasized that if integration is to be a multi-sided process, it clearly does not involve the immigrants only but all the society members, from whom effort, acceptance and responsibility is expected.

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Waga subiektywnie konstruowanego znaczenia: integracja widziana z perspektywy imigrantów

Abstrakt: W dyskursie politycznym, podobnie jak w naukach społecznych, termin integracja występuje zazwyczaj w kontekście migracji. Na bazie „obiektywnych" wskaźników i analizy statystycznej dokonuje się pomiaru i oceny poziomu integracji jako „niskiego" lub "wysokiego", „wystarczającego" bądź nie. Dominuje na tym polu perspektywa krajów przyjmujących, pomijająca nierzadko punkt widzenia imigrantów. Aby przezwyciężyć jednostronność tej dominującej perspektywy, postanowiliśmy zapytać samych imigrantów, czym jest dla nich integracja. Analiza wywiadów narracyjnych przeprowadzonych z osobami pochodzącymi z Ukrainy, Sri Lanki i Senegalu, mieszkającymi od lat w południowych Włoszech, pokazała nam, że integracja dla nich jest bardziej związana z pojęciem „dobrego życia" niż z pragnieniem stania się „jednym z nas". Podejście naszych narratorów do integracji jest pragmatyczne, ponieważ jest ono skierowane przede wszystkim na realizację ich projektów życiowych. Z narracji naszych rozmówców wyłania się obraz integracji jako akceptacji i satysfakcji, jednakże bez aspiracji do równości, uczestnictwa i pełnych praw politycznych i społecznych, co oznacza, że polityka integracyjna musi być dużo bardziej aktywna.

Słowa kluczowe: subiektywne znaczenie, integracja, migracja, doświadczenia biograficzne, autobiograficzne wywiady narracyjne

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The Influence of Significant Others on the Course of the Process of Leaving Sex Work

Abstract   The purpose of the article is to present the barriers to leaving sex work which are related to the influence of significant others on decisions made by sex workers. The analysis was applied in the case of two categories of significant others (organizational and intimate), which through interactions in escort agencies and on family grounds, respectively, may exert a destructive influence on sex workers' intentions, referring to their life and the act of leaving sex work. Therefore, the relationships with significant others described in the article interfere in the process of these women's identity transformation, hindering the development of a self-concept outside prostitution. The article is based on qualitative research carried out in escort agencies in one of the biggest Polish cities.

Keywords   significant other, sex work, prostitution, symbolic interactionism, qualitative research, identity

Introduction

Scientific deliberations over prostitution are usually focused on one of two stages - entry into or leaving prostitution. There have been numerous studies devoted to the conditions that are advantageous for the decision to get involved in the sex business,

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and social, economic and personal variables may increase the probability of this step. Interest in the process of getting involved in prostitution results, to a great extent, from heading towards the implementation of prevention programs, which aim at protecting women and girls - who come from the "imperilled" surroundings - against falling by the wayside and becoming a prostitute. For the same reasons, great efforts were made to encourage women already involved in prostitution to give it up and start a "normal" life. Both types of actions (prevention and rehabilitation) have been carried out for decades, first of all by religious organizations or secular committees established by community workers, or more recently state bodies (such as the police or social care), and they are not necessarily based on scientific knowledge. They are often based on an ideology, which at the same time explains the rea-

sons for getting involved in the provision of sexual services, and determines actions that are indispensable to "get those people out" or "save" them.

The subject of interest in this article is the process of leaving sex work, and first of all the circumstances that result in it ending in failure. It would seem to be an especially significant field, both for social researchers (who deal with this phenomenon less often than with the notion of getting involved in prostitution), and practitioners operating in the sex workers' environment. It is clear that it is worth taking a scientific look at the situation of those who cannot leave sex work, to support any potential help within this scope.

The article will present the results of chosen studies on leaving prostitution which emphasize both some of the stages of this process as well as its barriers. The findings quoted from others researchers will be compared with the results of personal research performed among women providing sexual services in escort agencies in Poland. This will allow me to complement previous findings with additional dimensions related to the transformations of the identities of female sex workers and the influence of significant others on their decisions and choices.

Leaving Prostitution in the Light of Previous Research

Although scientific knowledge on women leaving the sex business is fragmentary, based first of all on street market research, and it is rarely the main topic of studies (Sanders 2007:76), there is a possibility to distinguish two main factors responsible for

the fact that women stay in sex work which actually appear in all studies devoted to this notion. These are, first of all: economic needs, drug addiction and the lack of alternative employment options, especially where individuals have convictions (Sanders 2007:76). This image is complemented by findings of employees from organizations that carry out outreach projects among sex workers, supporting them in the transformations of their lives. They highlight the significance of such trapping factors such as: poverty, lifestyle, poor access to proper services and emotional and identity anxieties, which accompany and may hinder the process of leaving prostitution (Women's Health in Prostitution 1999 as cited in Sanders 2007:76).

Highly interesting research related to the process of leaving prostitution was performed by Månsson and Hedin (1999). This was a life-history study of 23 sex workers, mainly street based (the most common form in Sweden). The raised problems were related to the intensive debate that was taking place in Sweden at the time, referring to the legal changes which had been introduced into the sphere of prostitution. One of the important objectives of the debate was to create a system of supporting women who desired to leave the sex industry, which would complement the interventionist Swedish prostitution policy. In relation to those notions, the topic of the research by Månsson and Hedin was provided by the manners of leaving the industry and coping with interconnected challenges. According to those authors, existing prostitution in not *one* event, but many - it often takes place over time and in many different phases (Månsson and Hedin 1999:69). As a result of the research, Månsson and Hedin presented an "exit

model," where they highlighted that the process is influenced by factors which are structural (e.g. access to work, housing, education and welfare benefits), relational (connected with support which the women may get from individual remaining in their social networks), and individual (both those related to the exposed destructive behaviors and the ability to dream and fantasize). They also pointed out the fact that the "emotional commitment" of individual women is the most influential factor that renders the act of leaving sex industry a success or a failure (Månsson and Hedin 1999:75).

The latter statement is opposed by Teela Sanders, who highlights that great significance for the course of this process is also borne by structural, political, cultural and legal factors which trap women into sex work (Sanders 2007:77). On the basis of the research conducted among both indoor and outdoor sex workers in Great Britain, she distinguished four routine pathways of sex work: *reactionary routes out*, a reaction to significant life events (pregnancy, violence, health issues); *gradual planning* to leave sex work; *natural progression* and the *yo-yo pattern*, which is characterized by frequent movement in and out of sex work (Sanders 2007:81). While describing these patterns, Sanders pointed to so called "triggers" (slightly different for street and indoor sex workers), which push the women to change their lives and make an attempt to leave sex work. What is more, the author strongly emphasized that the process of leaving prostitution and social reintegration is highly dependent on the legal framework in the United Kingdom that criminalizes many aspects of sex work (Sanders 2007:92). It would appear that this conclusion may be expanded also to other coun-

tries where the current legal systems are based on solutions derived from prohibition or abolitionist systems. Such solutions support the fact that the deviant status and identity of sex workers is maintained during and after their involvement (Sanders 2007:93). In other words, criminalization is one of the trapping factors, hindering the act of leaving prostitution.

Highly interesting results are brought by the research performed by Julie Bindel et al., which was focused on going beyond the barriers related to leaving prostitution, both in the on-street and off-street groups in Great Britain (2012). The researchers highlighted the nine most difficult barriers which make it harder for sex workers to leave prostitution. These were: problematic drug use; problems with housing; physical and mental health problems; having had experiences of violence as a child (childhood violence, including emotional, physical, verbal and sexual violence); criminalization; conviction for crimes connected with prostitution (as many as 49% of those researched); the role of money (managing debts or high levels of disposable income); experiencing coercion from others (a partner, pimp, relative or another person, being a victim of human trafficking) to remain in prostitution; a lack of qualifications or training; and entering prostitution at a young age (Bindel et al. 2012:7-9). As observed by the authors, the listed barriers were often present together, strengthening one another, hence the support to women desiring to leave prostitution ought to be coordinated and holistic (Bindel et al. 2012:7). As a result of the research, the process of leaving prostitution was also reconstructed, taking place in phases that begin at the point at which women be-

gin to express an interest and take steps, however tentative, towards exiting, through to the final stage in which the women come to adopt a non-prostitution related identity and develop a new sense of self (Bindel et al. 2012:11). Furthermore, the researchers highlighted the significance of formal and informal networks of support, and if those are insufficient, also on the possibilities to use more intensive forms of institutional aid (e.g. treatment programs) (Bindel et al. 2012:12). In particular - as found out by the authors – the majority of the researched women who were eager to leave prostitution achieved their aim relatively quickly, on condition they got appropriate support, thus, there is a need for formal exiting services to help women out of prostitution (Bindel et al. 2012:3).

Interesting conclusions can be also drawn from a literature review related to the best practices supporting the process of leaving prostitution, prepared for New Zealand's Ministry of Justice by Pat Mayhew and Dr Elaine Mossman from Victoria University of Wellington. First of all, many - but by no means all - sex workers want in principle to exit. For some women, sex work is a preferred career, which gives them satisfaction or the best occupational option. It offers flexibility and a source of good income (Mayhew and Mossman 2007:5). Secondly, the course of this process may be greatly influenced by the experienced social stigma (street workers are eager to exit more frequently). Thirdly, it is difficult to exit, as among the barriers to exiting sex work, next to economic factors, drug addiction and inadequate housing - often pointed out in the research - there are also other barriers emphasized by the authors relating to the social surroundings of sex workers.

Partners of sexual workers may want (or insist) that they continue their involvement. Sex work can become an entrenched lifestyle. There can be a loss of social support networks to ease transition into 'normal' society – but, on the other hand, some sex workers gain social support *within* sex work (Mayhew and Mossman 2007:7)

A review of the cited, selected research proves how many factors may influence the process of leaving prostitution, highlighting that it refers to sex workers who are willing to take such an action. These factors refer to numerous levels of social life: macro-social conditions (e.g. connected with legal solutions, socio-economic situation), mezzo-social (e.g. policy carried out by support organizations), to micro-social (related to interactions in small social groups). Each of these dimensions is worth being examined, however, in the article I would like to focus on one of them, i.e. on the level of interaction with significant others. It is important, as in comparison with the research focused on macro- and mezzo-social factors, this perspective is seldom adopted by researchers. However, it may provide significant explanations for remaining in prostitution, especially by those sex workers who would feel a need to change their lives but are incapable of doing so.

A Theoretical Perspective of the Research

Not wishing to devalue the meaning of structural, macro-social factors resulting from the imperfections of current legal or social solutions which hinder the realization of the process of leaving sex work, I would like to highlight one of the micro-social conditions of this process, related to the

influence of significant others on the self-concept and, as a result, on taken or non-taken actions, in this case the change of a life career. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to analyze the influence of significant others on the course of the process of leaving sex work. In my deliberations I focus on those aspects of the influence that limit the process of leaving, mute it and cause individuals to stay in sex work for a longer time. Hence, the topic of the article is not composed of "objective" features of the social situation of sex workers, but rather their identity which results from particular actions and interactions with social actors from the closer and further social surroundings. Although in the literature of the subject much attention is devoted to the criminal side of the sex business, related to keeping women against their will and forcing them to provide sexual services with violence and threats, this phenomenon does not constitute the main field of interest in this article. The article will refer to far more subtle processes which are interconnected with the redefinition of sex workers' roles and their self-concept in such a manner that, against their desires, they remain in prostitution, and are incapable of performing the process of leaving effectively.

In the research referring to the process of leaving prostitution and to the barriers in its realization, factors relating to interaction and identity are often treated far more superficially than the "hard" indexes pointing to the percentage of addicted sex workers, the level of poverty or the mismatch of their educational profile to the requirements of the labor market. However, much as the process of getting involved in sex work is of a collective charac-

ter (Ślęzak 2014), the act of leaving is closely related to the social surroundings of a given sex worker – professionally (connected with the kind of prostitution, which she is involved in), as well as with her family and origin, relationships with a partner or husband, and the circle of friends from outside the world of the sex business. In other words, to render the process successful it is important who the significant other for the sex workers is, and what influence they exert on making and realizing the decision about leaving. It is important whether a given worker has support networks, allowing for a relatively smooth leaving process, or whether she feels she has been left to her own devices and has no strength to take up this challenge.

A theoretical concept that is especially useful to explain the process of the influence of others on the decisions (taken and abandoned) in the process of leaving sex work is symbolic interactionism. This perspective, from the beginning of its existence, is interconnected with the performance of research which is focused on the processes of change, status passages, turning points and role changes (Månsson and Hedin 1999:68). According to this theory, it is assumed that "human beings act toward things on the basis of the meanings that the things have for them," "the meaning of such things is derived from, or arises out of, the social interaction than one has with one's fellows" and "these meanings are handled in, and modified through, own interpretative process used by the person in dealing with the things he encounters" (Blumer 1986:2). Therefore, this perspective provides a set of principles that seeks to find understanding about the world and social interactions by exploring the meaning that

people attach to their behaviors, interactions and experiences (Sanders 2007:77).

The adoption of such an analytical perspective allows us to notice the process of leaving sex work, first of all its barriers, in another light. As in the article I will be dealing with those processes that are created through interactions with significant others, I would like to focus on this concept a little closer here.

The concept of *other* has a long tradition in interactionist sociology, which is based on the assumption that a human learns a definition of himself, as well as definitions of other social objects, within the course of interactions with various social classes of others, among which there are individuals that play the especially important role of significant others. Their influence is not limited to the process of primary socialization (Berger and Luckman 1966), but it is visible also during secondary socialization throughout the whole life of an individual (Ziółkowski 1981). Significant others provide a cognitive perspective, which allows an individual to define, i.e. to classify and evaluate the world, acting in accordance with those definitions of situations (Shibutani 1962). These are the ones that the individuals are identified with, thanks to which the significant others may exert some influence on the shape of their identity (Hughes 1958; Kuhn 1972). In an adult's life, an individual may interact with various people who become significant others for them, which usually results from the individual's biography and transformations of their identity (Hughes 1958; Shibutani 1962; Denzin 1972).

It is worth highlighting that within the course of the empirical research, two dimensions of the notion of significant others have been distinguished. One of them is *orientational significant other*, i.e. a person who provides an individual with a cognitive perspective, maintaining certain stability in time, and exerting some influence on their biography. The individual is strongly connected with the person who plays that role, in an emotional and psychological respect. This person is a source of crucial notions and categories applied in relation to themselves and to others, and the identity of the individual is maintained or changed within the process of communicating with that orientational significant other (Kuhn 1964:18).

Another dimension of the significant other is the *role-specific significant other*. This notion refers to the influence exerted by other people on the currently played and situationally conditioned role of a social actor (Denzin 1972:195). However, as a result of the conducted research, N. Denzin put forward a hypothesis that, in some cases, the role-specific significant other may gradually, under the influence of biographical transformations, change into an orientational significant other. A reverse situation is also possible (Denzin 1972:196-197).

The concept of a significant other inspired the analysis of collected empirical data. In the article, I will distinguish two categories of significant others which I developed for the needs of the analysis. The first one is posed by the *organizational significant others*, who may be compared to role-specific significant others. They are first of all the workers and visitors of escort agencies, who are guides to

novices in becoming familiar with and building the sex worker's role. Their influence is, first of all, connected with this single role, however, in the case of longer experience in sex work, it may also exert a considerable influence on the self-identification of the individual.

Another category is provided by *intimate significant others*, coming from the family-friends circles (this term has been derived from A. Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:137). They have considerable influence on the biography and identity of an individual (in this sense, this concept is closer to the orientational significant other). In the article, I will first of all deal with destructive significant others, whose influence on a person's biography is not constructive - they are responsible for starting the trajectory processes in the biography (Golczyńska-Grondas 2014:137).

Interactions with significant others are strictly connected with the process of building and transforming identity (Strauss 1997). Each newly established concept of oneself undergoes the reckoning of significant others, who may acknowledge it or deny acknowledgment. All discrepancies in this respect require an individual to take actions - to adopt a self-concept imposed by other, to reject it or to make an attempt to make actions of compromise. However, an individual is not always capable of ignoring the reckoning of significant others and risks separation (Berger and Luckman 1966; Strauss 1997). Therefore, in the article I will draw much attention to such situations. The process of leaving sex work may be interpreted as a biographical action scheme (Schütze 1981) that a given individual needs to imagine, formulate, plan, and build a new vision of their role and identity. The success of this process depends on the image kept in their minds and communicated in interactions with their partners, especially the significant others. Confirmation or, the opposite, deconstruction of the biographical plans of an individual, and providing them with alternative propositions (e.g. remaining in prostitution for some time longer) may interfere considerably in the process of leaving sex work.

Techniques and Methods

The article is based on data collected during empirical studies that I performed in escort agencies in one of the cities in the province in Poland between 2007 and 2013. The project was qualitative field research, based on direct contact with the subjects and flexible actions taken by the researcher. It was significantly important in the light of the main topics, which for some were difficult and highly emotional. At the same time, the concept of the research was to schedule it in a manner allowing the individuals who provide sex services - who do not often take part in the process of production of knowledge about them, or influence legal notions or social policy - to freely speak about their experiences and reflections.

The project was realized in whole by the author, from the planning stage, through the phases of collecting data, transcribing them, analyzing everything and preparing a report.[1] It was performed in

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[1] The transcription was performed according to the principles proposed by B. Poland (Poland 2002:641 as cited in Rapley 2007:57-58).

accordance with the procedures of grounded theory methodology, where notions and categories appear within the course of systematic field research, with application of the constant comparative method, theoretical sampling, coding, writing and sorting theoretical notes (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Konecki 2000).

The main techniques of data collection comprised overt observation conducted in four escort agencies and unstructured interviews with their workers. For the purpose of this article, I will refer first of all to the data collected among the women who provide sexual services (56 interviews), with varied experience in the agency and prostitution as a whole (from a week to 14 years), age (from 18 to 56 years old, most of them in the range between 20 and 35), achieved earnings (from several hundred to several thousand PLN per month, even more in some periods) and the level of satisfaction with this manner of earning money. The sample, thanks to theoretical sampling, encompassed both women who, during the research, did not think about leaving sex work, as well as those who planned this step or wanted to realize it in the future, but who were not fully capable of finding out how to do it. This enabled the constant comparative method to be achieved, which is one of the basic procedures of grounded theory methodology (Glaser and Strauss 1967) applied in the research.

The main source of knowledge about the subjects' plans related to their future in sex work and the moment of leaving was provided by the interviews. They were an opportunity for the subjects to deliberate and develop justifications and rationaliza-

tions. Especially beneficial for the research in the topic of leaving was the application of long-standing participant observation, following to the principle of peripheral membership (Adler and Adler 1994). Thanks to the observations performed through numerous years, it was possible to observe (often crucial) transformations in the attitudes of the researched women, in the scope of their future plans and circumstances, in which these changes took place. Therefore, the declarations and deliberations constructed during the interviews, adopted a dynamic dimension.

In the article, I will refer first of all to the unstructured interviews (in some cases multiple ones), and the conclusions drawn from the observations of the women who, despite some problems relating to the provision of sexual services (e.g. emotional, related to addictions) and the open desire to abandon this manner of earning money, did not manage to realize their plans within the months or years during which I carried out my project. Hence, the conclusions presented below refer to women who had some difficulties with leaving the sex work. Regarding the character of the conducted research, it is hard to tell what part of the examined population was made up of women who struggled with the problems described below. The answer to that question would require much broader research. On the basis of the project I carried out, I may state that barriers to leaving sex work related with the influence of significant others on the process touched, first of all, the slightly older women (over 30 years old), with longer experience in sex work (more than 5 years), who had distorted networks of social support, and were often rather unsuccessful

in dealing with the stigma related to prostitution, obscuring it with for example psychoactive substances. However, it does not mean that the researched group was not comprised of women who did not experience similar barriers (at least during the research), or, despite their existence, the barriers did not pose an obstacle which would render it impossible for them to leave sex work. The article does not claim any rights to describe the situation of all women leaving sex work, only the experiences which belong to a portion of them, entangled in specific relationships with significant others.

Significant Others in the Specific Landscape of Social Relationships of Sex Workers

While deliberating the social surroundings of the subjects involved in prostitution for a longer time, its considerable erosion may be observed. Most of the researched women were willing to maintain a closed awareness context (Glaser and Strauss 1972), where nobody outside the agency knew about the work. As a result, for many of them, the commencement of sex work caused a limitation or the breakdown of relations with family members or friends for them to be able to keep the secret. In turn, some interviewees' lack of (or dysfunctional) relationships that created the support networks posed a factor that encouraged them to get into the sex work. In such cases, the women often perceived this step as the only effective manner to manage in a difficult situation:

I like earning money and I would like to provide my child with a normal existence. And this is my high-

est priority. If I can't earn it as an average person in Europe, I need to deal with it another way. For me it's not really a good idea to sit in a corner and start crying, or ask my family for help. I'm a grown-up, so I shouldn't go to my parents and burden them with my issues. [R32]

An especially clear indicator of the lack of the support network which undermined the basic feeling of safety of the respondents was posed by losing the roof over their heads:

My husband always used to say: "Where're you gonna go? Where will you have better conditions [than here with him - note by IŚ]?" It was like I was never brave enough to leave the house. Because it's true, my mum died two years ago, [pause] may brother is in jail, I've never had a father, at ALL. These clients that come here are even better than my father. Drunkard. So I DIDN'T HAVE a father. I left with almost no cash, I couldn't afford a hotel, so I came here, I bought a newspaper, I called the first place and said: "come what may" [with desperation] The advert said: urgent! Accommodation! The accommodation was most important for me. Because where would I sleep? In a station? [R48]

The results of research by other researchers also point out that women experienced housing problems and homelessness during their involvement in prostitution. These problems became visible through for example being forced to seek an apartment from pimps or abusive partners to prevent homelessness, or involvement in prostitution to pay the rent or a mortgage installment. Apartment problems cause the feeling of isolation and result

in living far from family support networks, or staying together with women involved in prostitution (Bindel et. al. 2012:8) who may to some extent take on the role that should be played by relatives.

On the other hand, the group of researched women encompassed plenty of such people who not only believed that they could not and should not count on their family, but even on the contrary, they are the ones who should support them (first of all in the financial respect), through their involvement in sex work. In such situations, relationships with relatives did not always go according to the pattern of the closed awareness context (Glaser and Strauss 1972). In numerous cases, it was an open awareness context (where both sides of the relationship knew the truth about the work carried out in the agency), or a mutual pretense awareness context (where both sides, despite being aware of the truth, behaved in a manner as if the sex work did not refer to them). In the relationships of the researched women, these situations adopted a form of various pressures to continue the sex work, even against the will of the interested parties.

In a further part of the article I will discuss those two basic patterns, focusing on the relationships of the researched women, first of all with organizational significant others, i.e. workers and visitors of escort agencies, which cause them to stay in sex work. Afterwards, I will move to a discussion of the relationships with intimate significant others, family members and partners who apply more or less subtle manners of exerting influence on women trying to leave sex work.

Organizational Significant Others

Women who, upon starting to work in an agency, break any ties with their relatives fill the resulting social emptiness with people met in the world of the agency. Regular interactions, remaining in the same space, sharing analogous problems and challenges related to everyday work in the premises and to their personal lives, bring the workers closer. As a consequence, they stop seeing each other in a stereotypical manner, through the prism of internalized and socially common beliefs on what a "typical prostitute" is like. Each position in the society is related to a collection of social expectations towards the people that occupy it. They describe stereotypical definitions of features ("auxiliary characteristics of status"), which, according to social beliefs, are held by a given individual (Hughes 1958:102-115). In the case of people providing sex services, these are comprised of, among others, a "dysfunctional" family, problems with addictions, vulgar manner of behavior, no education, and pleasure from sex work. However, as a result of intensive interactions, a new worker redefines her previous beliefs on the auxiliary characteristics of the status related to the status of a "prostitute" (at least regarding some of her coworkers). "Women from the agency" actually turn out to be similar to her, *normal*, they become her friends. From the perspective of protecting their own identity, it is not crucial to distance themselves from them anymore, emphasizing their otherness. On the contrary, good relationships with coworkers may provide a springboard for the difficulties of work with clients, and help them to deal with negative consequences:

It can really seem weird, but I have better friends here than I had in a NORMAL job. Because all the girls here are OK. They will always HELP, one will listen to what the other has to say. [R6]

The meaning of relationships maintained with co-workers from the agency is greater, as in the face of narrowed support networks outside the sex work, the women usually talk about their problems only with other sex workers or with clients. Being restricted to the small circle of the agency provides the workers with the possibility to interact with people who share their interpretative perspective, thanks to which the agency becomes what Goffman described as a "back place," where there is no need to conceal one's stigma (cf. Goffman 1963:81). For the women who hide from their relatives the fact that they are prostitutes, it may provide a great relief. However, the interactional "safety" experienced in the agency environment may, in the long run, close the workers only in this particular circle of friends, and incline them to limit their relations with people from the outside. Establishing and maintaining relationships outside the agency may be perceived as risky, for example regarding the anxiety of evaluation and rejection.

A highly significant element of the shared perspective is provided by the justifications and rationalizations which are created and maintained in the group of workers and which enable the development of involvement that supports the worker's presence in the agency. This process is especially intensive in the case of the socialization of a novice by a more experienced worker who becomes an organizational significant other for her. She may encour-

age the woman to stay in sex work, or even torpedo attempts to leave it, discouraging her "charge" directly, listing reasons for which the woman should stay in prostitution. There are several actions of that kind that may be distinguished here.

The first of them is *taming prostitution as work*, which is carried out for money and because of money (Ślęzak 2014). Thanks to removing the odium from this social activity, the novice learns that the sex work may be continued without damaging one's own identity. Living proof for that belief is the fact that other women, seen as "normal," "decent" girls, stay in the agency. If they are able to reconcile the sex work and a "normal life," the doubtful worker starts to convince herself that, even if it is hard, she may overcome her feelings and continue her involvement according to the principle 'what works well in the case of the other, will also work well in my case'.

When I'm here, ok, everything's alright, but when I go home, I sometimes wonder, holy shit, what am I doing, how can I CHANGE it, go to a normal job? And I say it when I'm home, I WILL DO IT. But I come back to work, and it's alright after a day, not the first day, but a day later. Especially since we talk normally with the girls here, it's not like you can see in a movie or on the streets, but we talk like normal girls who study, who have normal families and are generally normal, at least in those clubs which I worked in. [R33]

The active measures taken by organizational significant others, destigmatizing and normalizing prostitution, which should help resolve doubts related to this manner of earning money, may be interpreted

from two perspectives. First of all, it can be seen as support to women who need to deal with emotional and identity problems during their work in the agency. Secondly, it reassures the significant others that staying in prostitution is the right thing to do.

In this context, special significance is adopted by predictions (Strauss 1997:96) regarding the further course of their involvement in sex work. They are formulated towards novices, to help them in their first period of work, to deal with doubts and stay in the agency:

A while ago a nice girl started working here, she comes from far away, she has large debts, and she comes here for the weekends, and she's VERY shy, [...] she sometimes asks me if it had been so tough in the room for me, so I tell her: "it will PASS." [R10]

The predictions may also be formulated towards those women who, within the course of their work, plan to leave the sex industry. In such a situation, the sex workers who play the role of organizational significant others make them realize that leaving is a very tough challenge. At the same time, they familiarize new workers with the thought that sex work may be their path for a longer time, for many months or years. These predictions are often illustrated with examples of their own, encompassing an element of diagnosis, suggesting to the friends with shorter experience that some symptoms of long-standing involvement in sex work are also visible in their case:

M. came to us almost a year ago. And she had some debts when she came here, like most of us. And she

says that she came here just for several months. Then I said to her: "remember, I'll remind you of this in a year." And she said recently: "you were right" [wistfully]. Because when you start earning money, you also start to immunize yourself, there are moments when you're fed up with it, and you'd like to resign, kick it all in the ass, but you work on. Despite the fact that she paid off a part of the debt that she wanted to at the beginning, she still works here. It's HARD to leave, I myself have been sitting here for five years. [R20]

A confirmed prediction may provide a turning point, as a result of which the worker starts thinking of herself in a different manner, accepting the transformation of her identity (Strauss 1997:96). Although she previously thought she had a plan of a limited-in-time involvement in sex work, it turns out in the agency that it is seldom the case that they leave prostitution quickly and without any problems. Therefore, the worker starts to gradually perceive herself as a representative of this group of women who may not be successful in leaving, according to her plan. This belief, properly strengthened by organizational significant others, may become a self-fulfilling prophecy:

I'm most terrified when I hear that if you work here for a long time, several years, there's no way back. There are ladies who get out of here for some time, but they return later. It's shocking for me. I'm afraid of it the most. I also planned to stay here just for a year. [R17]

Workers who are significant others are also representatives of a comparative reference group for their coworkers, to which they compare their situation

and social position, estimating the level of their desired involvement in prostitution.[2] This is a group similar in various terms ("normal" women with similar life situations), at the same time being able to direct their life in a more advantageous manner, i.e. achieving (first of all in a financial dimension) - thanks to prostitution - more than a given interlocutor. While making comparisons, the researched women usually considered easily noticeable and "measurable" criteria (e.g. a well-kept look - frequency of visits to the hairdresser's, cosmetician, solarium; regularity and expensiveness of shopping for themselves (jewelry, clothes, cosmetics) and for others (e.g. a child), additional goods - an apartment, a car). Comparing the standard of living of the coworkers with their situation from before the provision of sexual services (when they were often dependents of their husbands or used to work in unpaid jobs) turned out to be in favor of sex work.

> There really are nice girls here. We talk a lot, because very smart girls come here. When I imagined a brothel, I thought it would be full of country cousins. But we have well-educated girls here. And NICE looking. Young. What's more, they have much MORE than I DO. I'm older and I have almost nothing [wistfully]. And they've got that and clothes, it's a SHOCK. [R48]

Therefore, the coworkers become a reference group which determines the scope of financial aspirations, showing the standard of living that may be achieved

[2] In the concept of symbolic interactionism, the reference group provides the individual with a cognitive perspective and a system of values (Shibutani 1962:128-147). Hence, it is a group through the eyes of which the individual sees, classifies and evaluates reality and themselves (Ziółkowski 1981:76). Here, I make a reference to the concept spread by R. Merton (1968).

if you stay in sex work. At the same time, it is worth highlighting that within the comparisons the interlocutors did not consider the negative consequences of prostitution (harder to notice at first glance in their friends), for example emotional burnout, health issues, etc. Although they notice these symptoms in their case, they put the blame on lack of experience, i.e. a transitional factor, temporary, which loses significance together with an *increase* of involvement in sex work. In other words, since workers with longer experience continue their involvement in work in the agency, it needs to be advantageous.

I observed an especially interesting situation in the case of the older workers, whose social networks were significantly limited. In such a situation, functioning in the agency and the relationships with its workers and visitors often completely replaced other bonds, not present at a given stage of their lives. Even if they justified spending more time in the agency with financial reasons (which, although it may seem to bring the woman closer to leaving sex work, it actually strengthens her involvement), also social aspects were of great significance. The coworkers with weak social networks provided each other with mutual companionship, especially significant in the face of the loneliness they experienced:

> I worked in the agency in November and December, and I went there in December, on Boxing Day. Only A. was with me that time, because I had nothing to do at home, I was alone, my son was at his girlfriend's or somewhere else, why would I stay at home, I'll go, sit with A., maybe someone would come so I could earn something. [R30]

The agency is gradually becoming a place of not only earning money but also fulfilling social needs. In the case of women with long experience in sex work, it may be the beginning of creating a strong support network, which is an answer to the lack of support coming from family, formal or institutional networks. Such relationships hold a woman in sex work even to a greater extent, as leaving may equal loneliness:

> I've got several friends that I'm really close to. And even when I didn't work [because of depression after her child's death - note by IŚ], W. called me when I was in the hospital and said "pull yourself together quickly and come back to work! You still have another baby!" And, there was one time she called me and said she'd give me some money. Because I lent her money once, and she was giving it back, but then I counted it up and realized that she'd already given all of it back. But I say to my son: "do you have something to eat?" And he says: "not really." "If you don't have any money to buy food, go to W. and take it from her, I will settle with her later." [R10]

For the described process, also actions taken by other actors of the world of agencies matter, namely the clients, are important. Since interactions marked with violence (physical, mental, emotional) often pose an impulse to leave the agency, or even stop providing sexual services, pleasurable contacts with clients may definitely postpone the moment of leaving sex work. Such a situation may take place when women meet with clients who they believe are attractive, rich, and treating them at least kindly during their sexual interactions. Some of the workers felt desired, admired or appreciated, which, in

the case of many of them, was untypical, not present in their previous relationships. Paradoxically, they found recognition - which was not shown by someone close to them - in commercial sexual relationships (cf. Ślęzak 2014). As a result, the interviewees were inhibited from leaving the agency and giving up these bolstering relations, even if they took place irregularly, were seldom or just a fraction of all interactions:

> I boosted my self-esteem here, as a human being, my self-esteem was boosted by men, because my first husband was a shit. He was incapable of boosting the self-esteem of his woman. He really had a problem with himself, as he just could raise my self-esteem. [R45]

It also needs to be emphasized that some women, under the influence of interactions with clients, started to perceive the agency as an opportunity to find a partner or a husband (Ślęzak 2014) who would help to solve their problems, which provided the trigger of entering into prostitution (i.e. first of all, provide the given woman with financial, existential and emotional security):

> When I worked there [...], there were some relationships where a woman met a man and they are together, he just pulled her out of this slough. The client simply fell in love with this one or that one, and they lived happily ever after. They have a child, they also got married. It happens. [R46]

Summing up, the social emptiness, the lack of significant others outside sex work, mean that the only close people (regardless the actual quality of those

relationships) are the workers and regular visitors of escort agencies. In such a situation, leaving sex work is equal to breaking these bonds, the only ones which are available to the woman at this stage of her life. Therefore, if she decided to take this step, apart from the anxieties and difficulties interconnected with this process, she would become threatened with going back to the situation of not having social bonds and the feeling of being left completely alone. The social stigma related to prostitution, which is deeply internalized also by sex workers, triggers anxiety against the establishment of new bonds, as well as against reactions of new friends on the particular woman's past (it is worth emphasizing that each interactional failure strengthens these worries, cf. Månsson and Hedin 1999:73). At the same time, the workers who restrict their relationships only to the circle of the agency limit their social roles drastically. Actually, apart from the role of the coworker or the companionship of a client, other roles are hardly available for them. The partners who they experience regular interactions with strengthen their self-definition as sex workers, in a way facilitating the construction of their increasing involvement in the role rather than encouraging them to leave.

However, it ought to be noticed that organizational significant others may also keep the women in prostitution in a considerably more direct manner. It consists in the women being forced, blackmailed, terrorized or violated by their bosses (less frequently by their coworkers). In these cases, changes in identity are brutally forced, and as a result, a woman may become a victim, incapable of taking effective actions in her defense. What is disturbing is the fact that the group of my interviewees comprised

women who in the past were influenced by such actions, and despite it all, after regaining freedom - directly or after a break - they would often return to prostitution, often regardless of the problems they would have to deal with mentally from previous experiences (cf. Szulik 2006).

Intimate Significant Others

The second pattern of the discouraging influence of significant others on leaving sex work refers to a situation where the interviewees had a network of social contacts (especially family) outside prostitution, however, they were characterized by numerous dysfunctions. The distorted relationships between family members (both in the families of origin or marriages and relationships, where the women remained during the research), frequently posed an element that encouraged the commencement of sex services, and afterwards hindered the decision about leaving prostitution and changing their lives.

The sources of destructive influence of intimate significant others on the process of leaving sex work may be found in the family structure, which the researched woman is a part of. The data collected during the performed research suggest that, before the provision of sexual services, the interviewees often occupied a lower position in the family structure. The situation frequently changed upon their commencement of work in the agency, together with the obtained earnings and investments that a given woman was able to make to the family budget. In this pattern, relationships with relatives are first of all based on what a woman can provide her family with in the financial respect, which means

that her position is decided on the money she earns and spends:

> That is why I came here [sighs], it's clear, for MONEY! I want to LIVE BETTER, I want to be comfortable, it's obvious I can't count on my parents, they just have their pensions, so what should I do? I'm an adult after all, I'm 30, so it would be nice. I won't go to my mother and say: "mum give me some money because I don't have any to buy shoes for the child," it would be HORRIBLE for me if my child couldn't afford ANYTHING. I'M GLAD that e.g. today I earned 80 PLN, I go to the shop. I will buy the best shoes, the child is really happy and I'm really HAPPY. I'll buy her some sweets, and the kid is incredibly happy. [R3]

Such relationships trigger transformations in the identities of the women involved in prostitution. We learn to value ourselves for what others value in us. Therefore, a woman becomes convinced that recognition (or even love) of the family, which she could not count on before, may be gained and maintained thanks to the earned money. Breaking with the sex work, which would mean at least a temporary (often permanent) decrease in income, poses a threat to a given woman's position in the family, even to her relationships with relatives. What is more, as a result of interactions, the worker learns that thanks to the earnings obtained from the provision of sexual services, she is perceived by intimate significant others as brave, resourceful and strong. She is mobilized to greater involvement in sex work and encouraged to obtain higher earnings.

An example of such relationships may be provided by the biography of one of the subjects. She came

from Ukraine, from a family with multiple children, looked after by her mother because the parents got a divorce very early. Since her early youth, my interviewee felt responsible for the material well-being of her family, so she used to go for seasonal work in the Czech Republic and Poland, and she felt proud to hand the earned money to her mother. When she was incapable of finding a job in Poland for a longer time (neither legal nor illegal), she decided to get involved in sex work, because this was the only way to keep her family at the same level and remain in the role of a hero daughter and sister:

> And when I started working, I started to earn money, and when I came home, I helped my mum, my sister and, in general, I supported my home when I got back. Nobody knows what I do, my mum always asks me on the phone if I work, if I have a job, so I lie all the time that I have a job, I work in a sewing facility for example, in gardening in the summer, no one knows. And I worked here because my brothers were getting married, there were receptions. I organized them with my money. So I wanted to earn something [...] not to go back empty handed. I said to myself, it's misery in my home, so I needed to earn some money. And it stayed as it is. [R7]

As the patron of her family, a generous sister and daughter, my interviewee developed a high position in her family throughout all the years. Of course, at no time could she tell her relatives that she is unable to support them anymore, as it would be related to necessary explanations, disappointment, maybe even reluctance of the relatives who had got used to the help during those years. From the perspective of my interviewee, leaving sex

work and ceasing to financially support to her family was harder than staying in the agency, although at the moment when the interview was conducted, she was deeply tired.

On the other hand, the potential act of leaving sex work is related to the anxiety about the necessity to reconstruct the identity and to learn to value oneself and others for different features than the material success achieved in the agency:

> Thanks to that I achieved A LOT, VERY MUCH, I can say, without modesty, that as of today, I'm RICH. At MY age, the people I know, my friends who work normally, will NEVER achieve it in a normal job. And I achieved A LOT. MUCH. I'm in a GOOD POSITION, in some sense. I really am. Because if it weren't for this job, if it was a normal job, I DON'T KNOW what it would be like. I don't know if I could afford anything. [R3]

In the case of the cited interviewee, the comparative reference group is located outside the agency. It is created by friends or family members, with "normal" jobs, and apart from that, when compared to her standard of living, they had achieved less. Such a situation is a source of pride experienced by herself and her family, which means that she finds it hard to plan and carry out the change of her professional path.

At the same time, the relatives may take more or less subtle actions, which are intended to steer the workers away from the attempts to leave sex work. It is related to worries of family members about their own standard of living. Regarding the fact that the

relationships with significant others often remain in a mutual pretense context (Glaser and Strauss 1972), these communications are not necessarily expressed directly. Actions that are designed to keep the woman involved in sex work often adopt the form of never-ending pleas and financial needs, which can be fulfilled only by the women who the whole well-being of the family depends on. In the situation of the previously cited interviewee (R7), it meant numerous episodes of dramatic financial needs of separate members of the family, which - as they seemed to believe - she was able to finance from temping and seasonal jobs. Taking it as something obvious that my interviewee should constantly play the role of a 'lifeguard' to all her family members who get into financial troubles, and send any amounts of money to Ukraine, nobody thought about the costs of that help that she needed to burden.

> I called home, and my mum started crying, asking me to help her [the sister - note by IŚ]. And it was like two thousand dollars, so that I could get her away from her husband, bring her here from Ukraine, and return the money for her. I didn't have so much money, but I managed to return it for her in dribs and drabs. But when I brought her here, I needed to get her a passport and everything. [R7]

The women's stories about their husbands or partners provided plenty of similar examples. They often believed that they need to work for them, especially when they constantly had trouble finding and keeping a regular job. One of my interviewees, who had worked in various agencies for eight years at that point, subordinated her leaving sex work from earning a sum of money which would allow

her to equip her house to a proper level and finance a transport company for her husband who was incapable of dealing with his full-time job. The other woman (whose husband had been her client in the past and knew the truth about her job) was the one who kept all family. Her husband played the role of her driver, bringing her to the agency or the client. She didn't plan to leave prostitution in the nearest future.

There is also a need to notice that, regardless of the awareness context, where interactions with intimate significant others take place, their attempt to keep the women's involvement in sex work are perceived as ambivalent. In the case of the open awareness context, some workers talked about certain grievances towards relatives, who despite knowing the costs related to prostitution, accept and encourage the woman to continue on this path. Therefore, although in this case there is no mental burden related to the need to hide the truth about working in the agency, which is painfully experienced by the majority of workers, the lack of disapproval for the manner of earning money may be experience as depressing. With the mutual pretense awareness context, the workers often complained about the hypocrisy of the relatives who expect them to provide financial resources, but at the same time they do not want to know how they are obtained (regarding opportunities on a labor market):

> I don't want to keep going back to the agency. I came back here because I borrowed some money, but my mum said, when she came with that money - it's not that I blame my mum – "God forbid, no," but it came about this way because I asked my mum to

take a loan, because I had some debts in my apartment. So my mum went for a loan, but I said to her: "you know, mum, I will be able to find 200 PLN for 18 months," because she took the loan for this period. 4000 PLN. And she came with that money and said that she would pay this loan on her own, but she needed 4000 in July, because she wanted a gravestone for my father. And what would you do? Not that you went to the brothel, but what would you say? I think that if I had never worked in such a place, I would have said: "mum sorry, but I asked you to take the loan, I told you I'd pay it back, and now you're telling me that you need 4000 by July." And this is this bias by my parents. I do not feel any grief or grudge, do you understand me? I really love her, but you know [pause], I'm liking it less and less. I'm sometimes forced to do it by life. People are willing to lend me some money, they know that I will take it, but I don't know how they think I'm gonna find the money to pay them back. [R45]

Relationships with intimate significant others may also adopt the form of more direct obligations, revealed as threats and violence, including physical, sexual, emotional and financial, as a manner of maintaining power over a woman, to force her to continue provision of sexual services (Bindel et al. 2012:9). As a result, it may block the attempts to leave sex work and stay in destructive relationships with the relatives. A frequent pattern was also leaving a violent relationship, which at the same time strengthened their involvement in sex work, for example living in the agency. In the face of a very weak support network which a given women has at her disposal, it may be one of the best available manners of dealing with a difficult situation.

Summary

Involvement in sex work is related to the transformation of identity, a change of the manner of thinking of oneself, which takes place processually, as a result of interactions and experiences collected during the provision of sexual services. Each phase of this process is related to specific challenges for a person's identity. When starting the sex work, the workers provide strong justifications (first of all to themselves) why they need to do it. The act of leaving requires a reversal in the manner of thinking from the first period of the job, and reassuring themselves that it is necessary and worth it to stop providing sexual services. Leaving is not a one-off process, rather is a sequence of starts and stops. On the one hand, there are incentives to stay at work, but on the other hand, the uncertain benefits of doing so, without any guarantees of formal and informal support, may tip the scales in favor of staying in prostitution (Mayhew and Mossman 2007:7). Barriers in the process of leaving are "objective" conditions, discussed in numerous studies, but there is also the influence of significant others which may block the transformation in the concept of self. As a consequence of relationships with organizational and intimate significant other, the process of leaving sex work may be stopped. Instead of supporting the process of identity transformation from the role of a deviant into the role of a non-deviant (Sanders 2007), these relationships "freeze" the self-concept of a sex worker, i.e. a person who in some respects (slightly different depending on whether we're dealing with organizational or intimate significant others) should or must stay in sex work. As a result, the researched women perceived themselves, first of all, through the prism of roles related to sex work,[3] and it was hard for them to imagine an effective reconstruction of self-concept, and change that role into another professional function, even though it would provide comparable earnings (material ones, but also in the sphere of social support or relations with relatives).

This phenomenon is strengthened by the feeling of social inadequacy - no proper education, lack of qualifications employers look for on the labor market, the feeling of having a non-standard biography, the feeling of time running away which postpones the perspective of "organizing" their lives, and eventually the belief that it is extremely difficult to realize plans for changes in such numerous dimensions of life. Interactions with significant others (from the agency but also from the family) may strengthen those doubts and encourage them to push away the thoughts and plans connected with leaving sex work thanks to concentration on the current benefits related to this work. It allows them to keep the status quo in relationships with relatives and coworkers. However, these relationships come with a certain ambivalence, as the worker is aware that the significant others value her for her financial resources, which she is able to earn (and, on that basis, occupy a proper place in the hierarchy of workers - Ślęzak 2014) or spend (e.g. fulfilling the family needs). However, the very manner of earning the resources itself may be used during a quarrel as an argument that depreciates a given woman (which I witnessed in the agency, and heard of during the interviews, when women talked about family disputes). Therefore, even if the organizational and, most importantly, intimate significant others discourage the workers from leaving prostitution, it does not mean that the relationships will become a source of further identity problems. If the relationships took place in a closed awareness context, the interlocutors often doubted whether their relatives would react in the same manner, if they knew the source of the money they got. In the case of the open awareness context, some interviewees asked me rhetorical questions - why their relatives accept sex work so easily, not thinking about its consequences for the woman herself. In turn, the relationships taking place in the suspected and mutual pretense awareness contexts provoked the workers to the questions of what their relatives *really* think about them and their manner of earning money.

The purpose of the article was to present the hindering influence of significant others on the process of leaving sex work. It is obvious in the literature of the subject, and in my research, that the opposite influence may also be observed. In numerous cases, a child or a partner posed a factor of transformation, motivating a woman to leave sex work (Månsson and Hedin 1999:74; Sanders 2007). It's interesting that in the interviews that I conducted there was no mention of social workers or streetworkers from organizations that support women providing sexual services, who would play the role of a strongly positive figure (e.g. a significant other), balancing the destructive influence of organizational or intimate others described above. A highly interesting element of the leaving sex work program, although practically not realized in Poland, would be peer-support for sex workers. It would support the creation of the vision of leaving as real and achievable (Bindel et al. 2012:14), which for many women may not be obvious. Peer educators would provide a counterbalance for the influence of significant others who encourage these people to stay in sex work.

It is worth emphasizing that such organizations have a lot to do in Poland, both in the scope of counseling and supporting actions, but also those which are of a more structural character. If the process of leaving is to end successfully, it is worth working through the various kinds of barriers, as they overlap and strengthen each other.

[3] The meaning of constructing and keeping the new identity in the process of leaving prostitution permanently was also emphasized by Bindel et al. (2012). Women, who at this stage made attempts to build a new lifestyle, created new relationships with friends, partners and coworkers, took part in new forms of employment, training or education, felt more sure in the process of leaving prostitution, trusted in their abilities to a greater extent and took more effective actions not to go back to prostitution (Bindel et al. 2012:12, c.f. Månsson and Hedin 1999:72).

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Wpływ znaczących innych na przebieg procesu wychodzenia z prostytucji

Abstrakt: Celem niniejszego artykułu jest zaprezentowanie barier wychodzenia z prostytucji, które wiążą się z wpływem znaczących innych na decyzje podejmowane przez osoby świadczące usługi seksualne. Analizie poddano dwie kategorie znaczących innych (organizacyjnych i intymnych), które poprzez interakcje odpowiednio w agencjach towarzyskich oraz na gruncie rodzinnym mogą wywierać destrukcyjny wpływ na zamierzenia związane ze zmianą swojego życia i odejściem z pracy seksualnej. Tym samym, opisane w artykule relacje ze znaczącymi innymi interweniują w proces transformacji tożsamości kobiet, utrudniając zbudowanie koncepcji siebie poza prostytucją. Artykuł opiera się na badaniach jakościowych zrealizowanych w agencjach towarzyskich jednego z dużych polskich miast.

Słowa kluczowe: znaczący inny, sex work, prostytucja, symboliczny interakcjonizm, badania jakościowe, tożsamość

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