POST-1945 POLAND: MODERNITIES, TRANSFORMATIONS AND EVOLVING IDENTITIES

Working papers. Programme on Modern Poland / 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hubert Czyżewski</td>
<td>Evolution of Leszek Kołakowski’s religious thought — post-conference working paper</td>
<td>21–34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Falk Flade</td>
<td>Nuclear energy in Poland and the Polish-Soviet relations</td>
<td>35–46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Przemysław Gasztold-Seń</td>
<td>Between non-refundable aid and economic profits: export of arms from the Polish People’s Republic’s to the third world countries</td>
<td>47–58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Gromada</td>
<td>What can the post-1989 fertility fall tell us about post-communist Poland?</td>
<td>61–80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anna Jagielska</td>
<td>“The ideology of gender presents a threat worse than nazism and communism combined.” Polish Catholic discourse on gender equality In the face of social and cultural changes in Poland</td>
<td>79–88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Katarzyna Jeżowska</td>
<td>Challenging the ideology: the construction of the narrative of the 1st Exhibition of the Polish Light Industry in Moscow in 1949</td>
<td>89–100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kinga Koźmińska</td>
<td>Language ideologies and gender in the modern Polish community in the UK</td>
<td>101–112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vasco Kretschmann</td>
<td>The triple reinvention of Wrocław in its twentieth century exhibitions</td>
<td>113–124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piotr J. Leśniak</td>
<td>Archive of the future: an architectural imaginary of reconstructed Warsaw</td>
<td>125–146</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natasha Oxley</td>
<td>Modernisations of Polish identities in contemporary Polish plays: the right to individuality</td>
<td>147–159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jakub Szumski</td>
<td>The party, Solidarity or both? Transformation of political identities in 1980–1981 Poland.</td>
<td>160–172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ilona Wysmulek</td>
<td>Corruption during transformations of Polish society: Survey data analysis of perceived changes and their determinants</td>
<td>173–184</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This working papers series presents a broad range of research in post-1945 Polish studies gathered under the common title *Post-1945 Poland: Modernities, Transformations and Evolving Identities*. It contains edited versions of papers given at the two-day postgraduate conference that was organized by the Programme on Modern Poland (St Antony’s College, University of Oxford) in June 2015.

The publication is exceptional for several reasons. The papers presented here introduce the work in progress of thirteen doctoral candidates and early career researchers from all over Europe. Several authors obtained their doctoral diplomas while working on these projects.

Like the conference, the publication has a multidisciplinary character. The studies are grounded in history, social and political sciences, linguistics, and philosophy, offering a comprehensive perspective on various issues, events and processes that have left a strong imprint on modern Polish history and contemporary society. These new works have benefited from access to archival material, in many cases unavailable to older generations of researchers, and information gathered in long-term survey investigations. That gave the authors confidence and arguments to break with established narratives, challenge the experts, and propose new approaches towards existing areas of studies.

We observe growing interest in research on Poland that is separate from the traditional domains of East European, Soviet and Russian studies and constitutes an emerging field. The young researchers who presented their works at the conference, are affiliated with universities and research institutes in Poland, United States, Italy, Germany and Great Britain. Oxford, where some of the most renowned works in Polish studies were created, holds a prominent place among these academic centres. Researchers and academics working on Poland now have more opportunities since the establishment of Programme on Modern Poland as part of the European Studies Centre at St Antony’s College in 2013.

Through academic exchanges, seminar series, lectures, conferences and publications, the Programme nurtures the discussion on modern Poland in academia and beyond. Postgraduate conferences, which we plan to host annually, accompanied by working papers series are the most rewarding examples of POMP’s activity, both for us organisers, and, as we would like to hope, for participants who will find this a resourceful centre for their further research.

— Dr Mikołaj Kunicki, Director of Programme on Modern Poland
— Dr Agnieszka Gurbin, Programme on Modern Poland Administrator
— Katarzyna Jeżowska and Hubert Czyżewski, DPhil Candidates
Introduction

In an interview published in “The Guardian” in 2007 Bauman commented on the situation in Poland after the Second World War: “Poland was a very backward country before the war, which was exacerbated by the occupation. In an impoverished country you expect deprivation, humiliation, human indignity and so on, a whole complex of social and cultural problems to be dealt with. If you looked at the political spectrum in Poland at that time, the Communist party promised the best solution.”2 Bauman actively supported the establishment of ‘the brave new world’ for a few years after the Second World War. He became a member of the Communist party, worked for The Internal Security Corps (1945-1953) and cooperated with the Military Intelligence (1945-1948). Within this time his attitude towards communism had been fluctuating. It was not, however, a result of his doubts as far as the aims and values of this ideology were concerned, but a consequence of the way they had been realising. He witnessed the inefficiency, incompetence and increasing inertia of the bureaucratic apparatus of power.

Moreover, Bauman watched the purges conducted by the communist rulers and was aware that he – as a merchant’s son and a student aspiring to the status of an intellectual – may be a potential victim of the next one. Finally, in 1953 he was dishonourably discharged on charges of alleged involvement in Zionist conspiracy. But even this fact had not changed his commitment to the correctness of the ruling ideology, nor took away his desire to contribute to its materialisation. From this time, however, he

---

1 This research was funded by the National Science Centre in Poland on the basis of the grant awarded after obtaining a doctoral degree, based on the decision No DEC-2014/12/S/HS2/00391.

changed the battlefield. He started promoting Marxist ideas as an engaged sociologist. At the beginning he did this as a devoted follower of the Communist Party, and then as a representative of revisionist thought.

In this paper I interpret Zygmunt Bauman’s papers written between 1953 and 1989. This analysis will be mainly – but not only – focused on his view of the four turning points in Polish history: 1956, 1968, 1981 and 1989. The first date refers to the Polish October, when Bauman – previously an active supporter of the Polish Party – became one of the leading Polish revisionists. In 1968 he was expelled from the Warsaw University – together with five other academics – on the basis of the Polish political crises. In 1980 Bauman analysed the Solidarity movement in the broader context of the changes in contemporary Europe and interpreted it as a step towards ‘the maturation of socialism.’ Ten years later he wrote on the fall of communism as one of the rare examples of systemic revolution. He had not, however, ceased extolling the virtues of socialist values.

An analysis of Bauman’s papers focused on the aforementioned events is of particular importance for several reasons. Firstly, such examination is indispensable for understanding an evolution of his social and political thought. Keith Tester rightly observed that ‘in order to understand Bauman’s work on the Holocaust, postmodernity and liquid modernity, it is first of all necessary to spend some time with his essays on Eastern European Communism.’ Secondly, before 1968 Bauman was one of the most important figures not only in the academic world in Poland, but within the circle of revisionists in this country as well. That is why an analysis of his papers helps to understand the history of this movement in Poland and – more broadly – in Central and Eastern Europe. Thirdly, through a prism of Bauman’s work it is possible to analyse the hopes and tensions that took place in Poland under the communist rule, as well as their political and social consequences. Some of Bauman’s interpretations of the aforementioned events are quite original from today’s perspective, however, they reflect the diversity of opinions within the Polish society in the times of turbulences.

October 1956

In 1953 Bauman published his first paper, co-written with Jerzy Wiatr, entitled On the Historical Role of the Masses. This text reflects his belief in the validity of the constitutive assumptions of the Marxist-Leninist doctrine, such as the key role of the vanguard party in the establishment of a communist society or the necessity to subordinate to its decisions. He wrote: ‘In order to transform the revolutionary activity of the masses into the real revolution that leads to realisations of their aspirations we need the indispensable, strong, hardened

and providing party, able to lead the masses into the right direction. In the quoted article Bauman repeatedly emphasised the positive value of the transformations that had taken place in post-war Poland. He commended the abolition of the landowning class, the nationalisation of the industry and the cultural revolution aimed at improving the social situation of the masses. The article seems characteristic for propaganda at that time, however, some oblique advice and directions may be found there also. Namely, Bauman underlined the necessity to keep the closest possible connection between the party and the masses and indicated the danger connected with the breaking of it. He emphasised as well that the working class will be able to achieve the revolutionary goals only and exclusively with the aid of right, wise leadership. Bauman stressed the need to strictly fulfill the Marxist-Leninist ideology.

This emphasis was significantly increased three years later in the time of ‘little stabilisation’, when the process of destalinisation took place in Poland. In this context I would like to quote his first published book: Leninism and the Problem of Democratic Centralism. This piece is exemplary for contemporary revisionist thought, as far as both the criticism of Stalinism and the list of necessary changes are concerned and may be of special importance for studying the history of this movement. About the revisionists Leszek Kołakowski wrote: ‘they appealed to “return to the sources”, i.e. they based their criticism of the system on Marxist tradition. More than once, especially in the early stages, they invoked Lenin’s authority, searching his writings for texts in support of intra-party democracy, the participation of the “broad masses” in government, and so on.’ In Leninism and the Problem of Democratic Centralism Bauman recalled the assumptions formulated by the leader of the October Revolution, and indicated that a lot of them were rejected in the Stalinist period. He emphasised the alienation of the Party, its suppression of grassroots initiatives, and its lack of competences needed to achieve the revolutionary goals. Bauman wrote:

4 Bauman Zygmunt and Wiatr Jerzy, ‘O roli mas w historii’ [‘On the Historical Role of the Masses’], Myśl filozoficzna, 3 (1953), 69–99. All the Polish papers and their titles were translated. As far as some of the titles of Bauman’s writings are concerned I quoted the translations published in: Tester Keith and Jacobsen Michael Hviid, Bauman Before Postmodernity – Invitation, Conversations and Annotated Bibliography 1953-1989, Aalborg: Aalborg University Press 2005, 224-226.
5 Bauman Zygmunt and Wiatr Jerzy, ‘O roli mas w historii’, 85.
6 Czesław Milosz wrote in the early 1950s: ‘People in the West are often inclined to consider the lot of converted countries in terms of might and coercion. That is wrong. There is an internal longing for harmony and happiness that lies deeper than ordinary fear or the desire to escape misery or physical destruction’ (Milosz Czesław, The Captive Mind, New York: Vintage Books 1990, 6). This observation written in The Captive Mind is very useful as far as an analysis of the reasons for gaining the strong followers by the communist rule in the post-war Poland is concerned. Milosz underlined that one of the most important sources of this support was a hope that the new condition will bring deliverance from the contemporary state of chaos, demoralisation and despair. In opposition to the catastrophic situation during the Second World War and all the massive problems that had taken place shortly after, the vision of the brave new world was very tempting. An analysis of both Bauman’s utterances with regard to the causes of his fascination of the communist ideology and his papers written in the beginning of the 1950s, seems to validate the Milosz’ observation. What they present is a picture of the man enchanted by the promises proclaimed by the communist rulers, full of hope for their near realisation and very eager for making them come true.
8 Bauman Zygmunt, Zagadnienia centralizmu demokratycznego w pracach Lenina [Leninism and the Problem of Democratic Centralism], Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza 1957.
9 Kołakowski Leszek, Main Currents of Marxism, 460.
'In a situation when independent thinking was treated as a crime and passive assent as an advantage, the revolutionary and militancy of the party had melted. This situation was the opposite of the Leninist principles of a party life. An attempt was made toward replacing the consciousness of the masses with the centralism, initiative with discipline and political thinking with the apparent unity of actions. As the transparency of the party’s activity has vanished, the policy began to be a privilege for some, and not only the nonparty mass but also the essential part of the party members were barred from ruling.'

Such observations were accompanied by instructions for how to change this situation by closely adhering to the principles of Marxism-Leninism. Informed by Lenin’s papers, Bauman made a bold attempt to visualise how to reconcile: democracy and centralism, discipline and criticism, personal activity and the subordination to the Party etc. He argued that the opposite categories are not in fact contradictory but complementary. The paper was written in authentic, passionate faith. Bauman had a utopian hope that within the “little stabilisation” it will be possible to make genuine changes, leading toward the realization of Marxist doctrine.

In the course of time, however, the Polish rulers retreated from the idea of a free and pluralist society. In a conversation with Keith Tester, Bauman said: ‘I knew our hopes had been dashed, and was eager to find out what went wrong and where our mistake lay. Hence the study of the dialectics of the social movement and its elite, to which the year spent at the LSE (...) was entirely dedicated.’

The results of the research both in the UK and then in Poland made him more and more critical towards the Party and the contemporary ideology. In the course of time he started to deny both the existence of the law of history and the conviction of the leading role of the Party members. The voicing of revisionist ideas led him to be persecuted by the communist rule. Eventually, as a consequence of the political crisis of March 1968, he was expelled from the University of Warsaw together with five other academics.

Moreover, Bauman argued that the performative dimension of sociology is no longer to mediate between the Party and the people, Bauman argued, his or her role is to inspire the latter to the activities in the social field. He even replaced his identification with the official interpretation of Marxism doctrine with the revisionist thought of Antonio Gramsci.

Bauman commented on this subject as follows:

‘In a paradoxical way Gramsci saved me from turning into an anti-Marxist, as so many other disenchanted thinkers did, throwing out on their way everything that was, and remained, precious and topical in Marx’s legacy. I read good tidings in Gramsci’s Prison Notebooks: there was a way of saving the ethical core, and the analytical potential I saw no reason to discard from the stiff carapace in which it had been enclosed and stifled.’

Gramsci’s philosophy induced Bauman to reflect on the obstacles to the social change that were rooted in social consciousness and how they could be removed.

10 Bauman Zygmunt, Zagadnienia centralizmu demokratycznego w pracach Lenina, 69.
13 Bauman Zygmunt and Tester Keith, Conversations with Zygmunt Bauman.

1968 March Events

Bauman was developing his criticism toward the Party and became one of the leading revisionist in Poland. His thoughts and evolving ideas were fully reflected if paper entitled Modern Times, Modern Marxism, published in 1967. Bauman strongly criticised the interpretation of Marxism adopted in the countries of the Eastern Bloc. As far as he was concerned, the rulers of the socialist states perverted the ideas made by the author of The Capital and used them to legitimise the subordination of people to the bureaucratic structures and institutions. Bauman claimed: ‘What is of primary concern is how to adjust society to individual needs, not the reverse; how to extend the range of freedom of individual choice; how to provide room enough for individual initiative and non-conformity.’

As is clearly seen in this quote, he changed his political and ideological view to a large extent. His initial apologetic evaluation of the Party was replaced by an appreciation of the importance of individuals in the creation of the mechanisms for historical change.

His thought on the fast “leap to the Kingdom of Freedom” was replaced by an emphasis on strengthening individual freedom. Accordingly, Bauman changed his view on the role of a sociologist as well. A social researcher should no longer mediate between the Party and the people, Bauman argued, his or her role is to inspire the latter to the activities in the social field. Moreover, Bauman argued that the performative dimension of sociology is not to support the conformist attitude, but to overcome it.

The aforementioned paper was one of the latest Bauman published as a professor of the University of Warsaw. The voicing of revisionist ideas led him to be persecuted by the communist rule. Eventually, as a consequence of the political crisis of March 1968, he was expelled from the University of Warsaw together with five other academics. It should be stressed that his name was used by some of the communist rulers as an eponym of the whole “anti-state” group of revisionists. Nina Kraśko wrote on this matter as follows:

‘Because of his origin, position in the scientific life in Poland, activity in the Communist Party and an identification with Marxism, Bauman became a particular object of an offensive campaign conducted by the media and politicians. His name occurred in press as the generic name, it was written with small letters and in plural.’

The first wife of Zygmunt Bauman, Janina, wrote on this in a book A Dream of Belonging: My Year in Post-war Poland: ‘The TV screen was
choking with hatred, and spat out [Zygmunt’s] name time after time. A scholarly article appeared in a respectable magazine. It attacked [Zygmunt] and others for their dangerous influence on Polish youth. It was signed by a close friend.19 In the face of such a situation, the whole Bauman’s family emigrated from Poland to Israel initially (1968-1971) and then to the UK.20 In one of Bauman’s papers written shortly after the events of March 1968 he claimed that the contemporary wave of anti-Semitism was an example of a scapegoat mechanism.21 The Jews were blamed for the disappointment and frustration within Polish society. Paradoxically, this attack was undertaken by ‘the leaders of a party emanating from a movement in which the majority of the Jews remaining in Poland had placed their hopes of a final eradication of all social and ideological reaction, of which anti-Semitism had been a significant factor’.22 It is worth recalling that Bauman was among those Jews who believed that the communist rule in Poland will lead to the elimination of all forms of inequality, including anti-Semitism, which he experienced before the Second World War. His own disappointments with these events are clearly visible in a poignant style of this piece. I would like to stress as well that this paper may be interpreted as a harbinger of Bauman’s future papers in which he analysed the condition of the Other, the mechanisms of social categorisation and a construction of ambivalence.23

In two papers published in Polish, Bauman depicted some other aspects of his interpretation of the causes and consequences of the students’ revolt.24 Firstly, he wrote that the Polish students did not demand greater civil liberties, but that they transgressed against abandonment of socialist values by the Polish rulers. He persuasively argued that they protested against the increasing inequality, obstacles in achieving social advancement and inhibition of personal initiatives. His view was best expressed in the following sentences: ‘They felt that socialism was jeopardised. They were socialists. They wanted to defend socialism.’25 In my opinion, Bauman, attributed his own motivations to the students who protested in 1968. As I demonstrate further, he did the same thirteen years later when he interpreted the establishment of the Polish trade union as the sign of the maturation of socialism.26 What is more, Bauman argued that the March events should be interpreted as a provocation of the rulers aimed at unloading the tensions in the Polish society in a way that enabled them to take adequate remedies. *Ipso facto*, according to the sociologist, the Party spurred the students to revolt in order to show its strength and stymie future protests. Of course, these observations are indefensible in light of the historical materials.27 However, they reflect the nature of Bauman’s socialist thought.

**1980 Solidarity**

In the 1970s Bauman analysed the situation in Poland in the context of the evolution of the socialist states in the Eastern Europe.28 As far as he was concerned there were several planes for conflict in these societies. He listed the education system, the sphere of consumption, some visions of alternative political models and the division between “specialists” and “non-specialists”. Bauman did not, however, believe that the potential conflicts may turn into a revolution. First of all he thought that the strength of the Party was so significant that it could suppress any nascent rebellion. Secondly, he argued that the intellectuals lost their driving force. He wrote:

‘It is far from being likely that the isolated dissidents among intellectuals will in the nearest future summon a wider support even in the ranks of intelligentsia, which as a whole is increasingly well entrenched and built into the socialist system and simultaneously too heterogeneous to experience a community of interest and fate.’29

It is worth emphasising that his statements on the following topic were widely discussed among the intellectuals. Among those who commented on this issue were: Leszek Kolakowski30, David Lane31, Frank Parkin32 and Raymond Aron33. In my estimation, the most interesting comment was made by Leszek Kolakowski, who – together with Bauman – was expelled from the Warsaw University as a consequence of the events of March 1968. Kolakowski argued that Bauman’s analysis on the impossibility of a revolution in Eastern Europe is based on false assumptions. He wrote: ‘In social transformations what people can perform depends in part on what they believe they can achieve. This is why, as Bauman knows, to predict an outcome of social conflicts

---

22 Ibidem, 4.
29 Bauman Zygmunt, *Social Dissent in the East European Political System*, 50.
31 Lane David, ‘Dissent and Consent under State Socialism’, *European Journal of Sociology*, 1 (1972), 36-44.
is – unlike weather forecast – to influence it.34 Subsequently, Kolakowski compared Bauman’s aforementioned statements with the conviction held by Rosa Luxemburg shortly after First World War: that it is impossible to restore the independent Poland as no social class was interested in it.

In the following years Bauman changed his view on social change in Eastern Europe. Inspired by such thinkers as Antonio Gramsci, Albert Camus, Herbert Marcuse and ErntsBloch, he developed a theory of socialism as ‘the active utopia’.35 It should be stressed here that contrary to the dominant currents of Marxism, Bauman evaluated utopian thinking favourably. He wrote:

“The insufficiency of treating utopias as predictions which turned out to be false, or plans which failed to prove their realism, will become evident if we only agree that each moment of human history is, to a greater or lesser degree, an open-ended situation; a situation which is not entirely determined by the structure of its own past, and from which more than one string of event may follow (...).”36

Bauman defined utopia as the vision of the world that is critical towards the actually existing reality and whose realisation is fully dependent on the collective efforts. In his opinion utopias relativise the present, explore the possible extrapolations of the future, split reality into a series of competing projects-assessments, and – in consequence – have a tremendous share in shaping historical events. He developed this view in all his later works, contributing significantly to the development of utopian thought.37 A few years after creating this concept, Bauman claimed utopian thinking would become a driving force of social change in Poland.38 He interpreted the emergence of Solidarity as a rare materialisation of the Blochian category of novum.39 It meant that the workers’ uprising was fully unpredictable and had no comparison with past events. As in all examples of historical novum, he did not predict the future of Solidarity. His analysis was rooted in the idea of “iconoclastic” utopia.40 Bauman wrote:

“More than any other communist country at any moment of its history, Poland of 1980 came closer to the model of historical creativity, when praxis takes over from structure as the main determinant of events. On a more mundane level of political

activity, this means that for some time the course of Polish history will be subject to the method of trial and error: the one method that renders all forecasting ventures superfluous.”41

It should be stressed as well that Bauman interpreted the emergence of Solidarity as a sign of the ‘maturation of socialism’. Very similar to his analysis the events of March 1968, he argued that Solidarity had a chance to reinvigorate some of the ideas that were constitutive for early Marxism. ‘The Polish event’, he wrote ‘opened up a possibility of the revival of the idea of proletarian domination in a form so thoroughly repressed by the long decades of the Leninist practice and hence so completely forgotten, that it was no longer easily recognizable as a fulfilment of the original Marxist vision of socialism.’42 Finding inspiration in the work of Antonio Gramsci43, Bauman hoped for conquering the contemporary nature of socialism and establishing the territory for civil society. From today’s perspective this expectation seems to be at least very curious. However, it reflects not only the nature of Bauman’s utopian thought, but also indicates the diversity of opinions within Polish society in the early eighties.

1989 Revolution

Bauman’s reaction to the introduction of martial law in Poland was not so defeatist as after the suppression of the students’ revolt in 1968. He did not interpret this state of things as the irreversible loss of hope for the transformation of a socialist order. In 1983, in one of the samizdat papers, Bauman published an article in which he presented his suppositions as far as the further development of the political situation in Poland was concerned.44 He argued that it is unfounded to point out the similarities between the situation in Poland during the period of martial law with the social realities that had occurred after the Hungarian Revolution or the Prague Spring. He claimed that: ‘the Polish developments will be determined by the socio-historical peculiarities of Poland, rather than the similarities with the socio-historical issues of Kadarism or Husákism’.45 Proving the validity of this supposition, and opposing those who interpreted the events in Poland through the prism of the idea of “normalisation”, Bauman pointed to the lessons that Polish society pulled from the subsequent rebellions against the communist rule. He saw the emergence of Solidarity as the next step in the ‘collective learning of a very difficult – perhaps unattainable – art of reforming communism’.46 As is clearly seen, Bauman interpreted the events which took place in Poland in the contexts of his idea of “socialism as the active utopia”.47 A few years later
few months before the 1989 Revolution – Bauman wrote on the situation in Poland in a rather pessimistic mood.48 He argued that no social group was willing to support the reforms in Poland. In his opinion even Solidarity was pacified and was unable to mobilise people. He wrote: 'Solidarity was a loose confederation of widely contradictory interests, opinions and political platforms. Left to itself and allowed to run its natural course, it would soon enter the stage of internecine struggle and schism.49 Bauman’s predictions on the future of Polish society were backed by opinion polls. They showed that the most precious values among the Polish people were equality, order and security. Little attention was paid to individual freedom or freedom of speech. It reminded him of the condition of Polish society in 1960s.50 The aforementioned paper was, however, concluded optimistically:

'It will once again be possible to seriously and realistically hope for peaceful, though long and harrowing, march away from the present impasse toward limited economic success and a modicum of mutual understanding, trust and good will between the government and the people – the two things needed more than anything else.'51

The events that took place in the Eastern Bloc in 1989 were, however, decidedly surprising for Bauman. He interpreted them as one of the rare examples of systemic revolutions.52 In opposition to the political revolution when a change of political leadership is not accompanied with the institutional or structural transformations, in the case of systemic revolutions the existing political, social and cultural system is replaced with another one. As far as Bauman was concerned, systemic revolutions occur when the leaders are not able to exercise social control, as there are too many demands by members of society. 'The disaffection with the old system could not but generate, tended to exceed the system’s capacity for accommodation and thus pushed the crisis to breaking point.'53 wrote Bauman.

Emphasising the significance of the systemic revolution in the Eastern Bloc, Bauman wrote:

'The events of 1989 in the East-Central European belt of satellite communist regimes was a most fitting finale for the twentieth century, bound to be recorded in history as the age of revolutions. They changed the political map of the globe, affecting even parts ostensibly distant from the scene of the upheaval in ways which are still far from being fully grasped.'54

---

49 Ibidem, 52.
51 Ibidem, 68.
54 Bauman Zygmunt, ‘Communism: A Postmortem’, 156.

---

Depicting the changes that were taking place after the collapse of communism, he paid special attention to the situation of the workers. Bauman was aware that although they were the force that brought down the communism, they were bound to bear the burden of transformation. Among the threats he listed intensification of labour, loss of job security, unemployment etc.55 In general it should be emphasised that although Bauman welcomed the events of 1989, the whole tenor of his work at this time was not optimistic. He was not sure if the freedom brought by the revolution would be accompanied by the concern for both the Other and the common good.

In subsequent papers he drew a more and more pessimistic picture of the systemic transformations. In this context it is of particular importance to highlight that even soon after the fall of communism Bauman did not cease to emphasise the importance of socialist values. On the contrary, he has been pointing to their value in the face of the ongoing challenges. His contemporary view on socialism was clearly evident when he posited:

‘Socialism means to me a heightened sensitivity, humiliation and the denial of human dignity. To take a ‘socialist stance’ means opposing and resisting all those outrages whenever and wherever they occur, in whatever name they are perpetrated and whoever their victims are.’56

---

Summary
This text analysed Zygmunt Bauman’s papers that refer to the history of Poland under the communist rule. This analysis is of particular importance for understanding both the evolution of Bauman’s social thought as well as the history of Poland. Bauman was one of the leading Marxist scholars, representative of revisionist thought, a forced emigrant after the events of March 1968, a highly regarded commentator of the situation in the Eastern Bloc, and – last but not least – an interpreter of social and political transformations that took place after the fall of communism. His thoughts on the nature of socialist rule in Poland reveal the tensions that took place in his homeland, as well as the hopes for change. What is more, Bauman did not only analyse the social reality, but also made efforts in order to change it. In these contexts, he used the concept of the active utopia for analysis of the situation in Poland in the 1980s. Moreover, his works reveal his continuous efforts to establish socialist values in Polish society, despite huge challenges and disappointments. That is why it is of particular importance to read his papers in the context of the evolution of Marxist and Post-Marxist theory. In conclusion, Bauman’s papers analysed in this piece are an invaluable testimony to the modernities, transformations and evolving identities that took place in Poland before the 1989.
Bibliography

Bauman Zygmunt, ‘O frustracji i kuglarzach’ [‘On frustration and the Conjurers’], Kultura, 12 (1968), 291.
Brzeziński Dariusz, Myślenie utopijne w teorii społecznej Zygmunta Baumana [My thinking utopian in the social theory of Zygmunt Bauman], Scholar: Warszawa 2015.

Evolution of Leszek Kołakowski’s Religious Thought — post-conference working paper

Introduction

We desire the truth, because it is the truth, and we do not think – or, strictly speaking, philosophers do not think – that this desire requires some other justification than the value of self-recognition as the “owner of the truth.”

This working paper presents some draft notes from the project ‘Evolution of Leszek Kołakowski’s Religious Thought.’ Leszek Kołakowski (1927-2009) was one of the leading twentieth century public intellectuals, best known for his seminal and very influential critique of Marxist thought presented in Main Currents of Marxism. I would like to argue, however, that the evolution of his views on religion was at the heart of his entire intellectual career and was the permanent backdrop to his historical studies in other philosophical fields. Starting as a Stalinist anti-clerical writer in the early 1950s, he gradually developed a much more sympathetic approach towards religion, becoming one of the world’s leading experts in the history of religious thought, and one of the greatest apologists of religion in a modern, secularised world. His gradual rapprochement with religion was driven by an attempt to find an ‘intellectual home’ which would provide the best possible conditions to develop and nurture the most valuable aspects of human nature and face the most important philosophical questions about the sense of human life.

In this working paper, I should like to focus on juxtaposing Kołakowski’s texts from 1955 and 1965. A stark contrast between the anti-religious articles collected in Sketches on the Catholic Philosophy (published 1955),

1 L. Kołakowski, Kultura i fetysze (Warszawa, 1967), 207-208. All translations from the Polish are mine, unless stated otherwise.

Communist Party as early as in the autumn of 1945,\(^\text{10}\) Ryszard Herczyński, one of his closest friends, recalled the outlook shared by his colleagues at the time:

For our wartime generation, the fascism that we had experienced was the personification of absurd and cruelty, leaving no doubt, that there is no price too high to pay, in order to create a world, where creation of new fascisms would not be possible. (…) An effective counterbalance, as we thought (and as many Western European intellectuals thought), could only be an ideology similarly simple and popular, but with completely reversed theses.\(^\text{11}\)

The philosopher himself was even more straightforward:

For us, Communism was the conqueror of Nazism, a myth of a Better World, a longing for a life without crime and humiliation, a kingdom of equality and liberty… It was a purpose that could justify anything.\(^\text{12}\)

And ‘anything’ in this case meant also post-war repression of anti-communist political forces and imposing Stalinist dictatorship by force. As Kolakowski admitted: ‘we were not democrats. We believed that the power must be taken against the majority, and that the bright future depends on that.’\(^\text{13}\)

During his studies at the University of Łódź, Kolakowski became an assistant to the famous philosopher Tadeusz Kotarbiński (1886-1981), one of the leading representatives of the pre-war Lwów-Warsaw school, a group of Polish thinkers in the tradition of neo-positivism.\(^\text{14}\) This specific tradition of thinking, with its emphasis on the rationalist doctrine, was crucial in Kolakowski’s early philosophical education.\(^\text{15}\) Importantly, he did not fall under the influence of the leading orthodox Marxist theoretician of the time, Adam Schaff (1931-2006).\(^\text{16}\) Kolakowski’s views on Marxism were instead shaped by the famous Tadeusz Kroński (1907-1958), who was representing the Neo-Hegelian current, focusing on the importance of the theory of alienation in Marx’s thought.\(^\text{17}\)

The philosopher’s early intellectual career is marked by his fervent critique of neo-Thomism and Christian personalism.\(^\text{18}\) These were two of the most important strands of the Catholic philosophy in the mid-twentieth century, which was experiencing a revival at the time with works by authors such as Etienne Gilson, Jacques Maritain, and the Nouvelle Théologie school.

---

4 M. Król, Czego nas uczy Leszek Kolakowski (Warszawa, 2010), 38.
5 L. Kolakowski, Z. Mentzel, Czas ciekawy, czas mniej kłopotowy, tom I (Kraków, 2007).
6 The issue of Kolakowski’s conversion to Christianity in later life remains somehow controversial. Bogdan Pinowarzyk argued that Kolakowski has converted as early as in the mid-1960s (C. Mordeka, Od Boga historii do historycznego Boga. Wprowadzenie do filozofii Leszka Kolakowskiego (Lublin, 1997), 165-166. Philosopher’s tomb in Warsaw has a Catholic cross engraved into it.
8 Król, Czego..., 36.
9 Kolakowski, Mentzel, Czas ciekawy..., 56; 20.
10 Ibidem, 69.
12 Kolakowski, Mentzel, Czas ciekawy..., 80.
13 Ibidem, 95.
14 A. Borowicz, Rozwój filozofii kultury Leszka Kolakowskiego na tle filozofii polskiej w latach 1952-1966 (Gdańsk, 1997), 14.
15 Kolakowski, Mentzel, Czas ciekawy..., 93.
16 Borowicz, Rozwój filozofii..., 15-16.
17 Ibidem, 21-22.
18 Ibidem, 13.
19 Ibidem, 56; 20.
20 Ibidem, 69.
21 Ibidem, 57.
They all emphasised the need for a more socially sensitive Catholicism and rapprochement with the modern world, which eventually led to the Second Vatican Council in 1962. With his intellectual eloquence and wit, Kołakowski might be called a ‘state-sponsored’ anticlerical at the time, because of his particularly spiteful character of publications. During one of the faculty meetings, he tried to convince other young philosophers that studying Catholic thought is in fact crucial for their intellectual development as communists: ‘We should learn about the Thomist doctrine, analyse it, study, and attack it! Our slogan should be: back to Aquinas!’

Sketches on the Catholic Philosophy (1955) is a collection of essays published previously between 1951–1955, and the first of Kołakowski’s published books. The language of Stalinist propaganda is vulgar and can sometimes read as ridiculous to a modern reader. It is important to note that such words as ‘god’ and ‘church’ are always written with a lower-case letter. The author writes that scholastic philosophy holds the prominent place in the global front of backwardness and obscuring religious institutions. The ‘Church is a political organization, which constitutes an important instrument of the owning classes, and today— an instrument of the imperialists’ global politics; the role of the Church is to keep masses in submission and humble obedience to a capitalist exploitation and to a brutal oppression of bourgeois governments.

Following the orthodox Marxist theory of religion as alienation, the young philosopher wrote that:

Sanctifying disgraceful conditions of oppression and humiliation, the papal social doctrine is only an application and a development of the centuries-old religious beliefs, which, in the hands of the ruling classes, are becoming a mean to suppress mutinies and struggles, and the mean to reconcile the oppressed masses with their condition, offering a fantastic vision of happiness in the eternity.

Kolakowski presented similar views as an academic teacher. In his lectures from the academic year 1954/55, we can read that Christianity was ‘an organized form of a universal intellectual barbarisation.’ It is crucial to note the radical, even Manichean either-or approach of the young Kołakowski, who lacked sensitivity for nuances and grey zones at the time. Furthermore, in accordance with the orthodox theory of alienation, the philosopher does not criticise religion as such (because it is an unimportant, false need), but rather the religious institution, whose ideology is only a cover for realizing economic interests. Thus, the critique has a moral character; the Church is only another instrument of conservative reaction, which holds back civilization’s progress represented by the dialectical materialism. Such approach was characteristic for all contemporary Marxist writings.

Nonetheless, Kołakowski presents some kind of sympathy toward a non-orthodox religiosity already in the Sketches. Modernist theologians from the Nouvelle Théologie school, emphasising a personal, ‘immediate experience of God’, were highly criticized during the conservative pontificate of Pius XII (1939–1958). The Polish philosopher disapproved of Vatican’s condemnation of the defiant thinkers. Blaise Pascal, who would later become one of Kołakowski’s favourite philosophical protagonists, is mentioned as someone who exposed the vain, casuistic scholasticism of Jesuit theologians, obedient rather to the authority and the needs of the day than to the true spirit of the faith. However, it has to be emphasised that the philosopher did not sympathise with their views, but rather presented admiration for their criticism of the orthodoxy. One might see here seeds of his future approach toward the official Marxist doctrine. It is also important to note that a strong theological bent of the young philosopher’s intellectual interests had already been noticed and criticised by his other colleagues at the university.

In short, the Stalinist period of Leszek Kołakowski’s work is characterised by a dogmatic, but rather simplistic Marxist theory of religious alienation. He sees the religious faith, and especially obedience to religious authority representing the Revelation, as man’s failure to fully realise his nature and take responsibility for his or her own life.

The Revisionist Period and Kołakowski’s retreat from the orthodox Marxism

The Polish philosopher’s departure from the official Party’s ideological line was a gradual and rather prolonged process, and will not be discussed in this working paper. Intellectual disenchantment with the primitive, orthodox teachings seem to be as important as political disillusionment after the 1956 Thaw and the Soviet intervention in Hungary. Nonetheless, with his essays like Permanent vs. Transitory Aspects of Marxism (1957), Karl Marx and the Classical Definition of Truth (1959), Irrationalities of Rationalism (1959), or a pamphlet What Is Socialism? (1956, held back by censorship), Leszek Kołakowski established his position as one of the leading revisionist Marxist thinkers by the late 1950s. The so-called ‘revisionists’ wanted to get back to the sources of the doctrine, in order to renew the system in a purer form. The ‘core’ doctrine, which they aimed to re-discover, was mainly based on Karl Marx’s earlier works, hence often called the ‘young Marx.’ Economic and...
Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844 were of particular importance, as Karl Marx was more concerned there with strictly philosophical and ethical issues, presenting fundamentally anthropocentric views, rather than economic problems, and, arguably, his works were less influenced by Friedrich Engels’ edition.

Kołakowski attempts to develop a non-orthodox socialist philosophy was met with obvious resistance from the Party’s leadership. Without any effective influence on the political life, the philosopher’s intellectual interests shifted in the 1960s toward the realm of history of ideas, and the history of religious thought in particular, where he could find enough examples of freethinkers, people seeking authenticity and honesty in their faith and in their thinking. A negative example of religion as the source of closed, dogmatic thinking, so characteristic for his writings in the early and mid-1950s, changed into a positive model of sincere intellectual projects.

Models - Kołakowski as a historian of religious thought
Leszek Kołakowski’s academic focus on the history of ideas was not an unusual turn at the time. In fact, Polish intellectual life in the first half of 1960s was dominated by the so-called ‘Warsaw School of the History of Ideas,’ a name given to an exceptional group of academics teaching at the University of Warsaw in the first half of 1960s.36 The climactic moment for the whole group seems to be the time between 1964-1965, when—apart from Kołakowski’s Religious Consciousness and Ecclesiastical Bond – three other major books were published: Bronisław Baczko’s (born 1924) work on Rousseau, Jerzy Szacki’s (born 1929) analysis of the French counter-revolutionary thought and Andrzej Walicki’s (born 1930) monograph on Slavophilism.37 It is important to note that none of these books were concerned with modern intellectual history, or with the Marxist topics in a direct way. Apart from the youngest, Walicki, all of these authors had an episode of active engagement with Communism during the Stalinist period.38 Lectures and seminars, especially those held by Kolakowski and Baczko, were also important part of the ‘school.’39 Leszek Kołakowski was undoubtedly the most outstanding philosopher’s intellectual development from a Stalinist orthodox Marxist to a philosopher of religion. As mentioned before, Kołakowski’s work was read as a manifesto of the humanities in general, and to a great extent remained at the core of the philosopher’s work ever since:

(...) it is about interpreting classical problems of philosophy as problems of moral nature, (...) to present the problem of god as the problem of man, the problem of earth and heaven as the problem of human freedom, the problem of nature as the problem of man’s relation to the world, the problem of soul as the problem of value of life, the problem of human nature as the problem of relations between people. (... This work is an attempt to present philosophy as a study of man.42

The Warsaw school’s approach to history of ideas, which emphasised placing the intellectual history in its wider social and cultural context owed much to Karl Mannheim’s theory of the ‘sociology of knowledge’, developed in Ideology and Utopia (1936).43 The fact that most brilliant thinkers, disillusioned with the official ideology in the mid-1950s, found refuge in the history of ideas, was a rather peculiar Polish phenomenon in the Eastern Bloc.44 This was true especially in comparison with Czechoslovakia, where Marxist thought flourished before the Prague Spring of 1968, especially in the works of the ‘Czech Kolakowski’, Karel Kosík.45 Instead of a continuing discussion with the official orthodoxy, represented in Poland mainly by Adam Schaff,46 they attempted to look into the past for the values which had once attracted them to Marxism. It is difficult to speculate why Polish thinkers abandoned the Marxist ship so quickly. Andrzej Walicki suggests that ‘the crisis of Marxism was much deeper in Poland than in other socialist countries’ and that there was a ‘lack of genuine, naïve idealism in the younger intellectuals of the Polish Party.47 The historical approach to philosophy, which left much space for nuances, relativism and sophisticated considerations, was seen as the best intellectual weapon to fight against dogmatic, rigid structures of Marxist orthodoxy.48

Leszek Kołakowski followed exactly that path and looked into the early modern period for examples that would confirm his own ethical standpoints. He wrote extensively on thinkers pursuing non-dogmatic, radically independent thinking, with loyalty dedicated only to their desire for the truth. Importantly, almost all of these studies were related to religion, focusing mainly on people on the edge of heresy, in a constant struggle with the official orthodoxy of the Church. Among the numerous texts and essays from the period, the most important and most famous one was Religious Consciousness and Ecclesiastical Bond.

Published in 1965, it seems to be the crucial link in the Polish philosopher’s intellectual development from a Stalinist orthodox Marxist to a philosopher of religion. As mentioned before, Kołakowski’s work was published at the same time as other historical texts from the ‘Warsaw

41 L. Kołakowski, Jednostka i nieskończoność. Wolność i antynomie wolności w filozofii Spinozy (Warszawa, 1958).
42 Ibidem, 5-6.
43 Kłoczowski, Więci... , 45, 156-7.
44 Walicki, ‘On writing…’, 12.
46 Tischner, Marxism and Christianity..., 41-44.
48 Ibidem, 12.
School.’ Analogies between the Polish philosopher’s historical assessment and the present situation of the socialist system, were quite clear for contemporaries:

It is not difficult to read between the lines of his [Kolakowski’s] historical study of seventeenth-century non-denominational Christianity a parallel to twentieth-century ‘non-denominational’ i.e. revisionist and ‘intellectual’ rather than ‘institutional’ Marxism.49

Similar opinions were presented even in contemporary Polish press, albeit in a very vague way. Argumenty magazine organised an interesting debate over Kolakowski’s book. Jacek Syski argued very subtly that ‘the past can enrich understanding of our own situation.’50 Nonetheless, just like with Kołakowski’s book, Jacek Syski argued very subtly that ‘the past can enrich understanding of our own situation.’52

In the 2007 interview with Zbigniew Mentzel, he reaffirmed such opinion: ‘I did not try to camouflage any opinions about the Party or the present situation of the socialist system, were quite clear for contemporaries:

The idea of ‘orthodoxy’ is sensible only in organised communities, i.e. those with an echelon of organisers, and a priestly caste especially. Orthodoxy is the ideology of that caste: it gives a justification for their existence, that is, watching over the orthodoxy.58

In the early modern Catholic Church, the priestly caste confirmed its dominant position through the ex opere operato theory, promulgated at the Council of Trent. It meant that the effectiveness of divine sacraments depended not on the moral values of the priest, but only on the legitimacy of his ordination. Thus, religion was reduced to some form of a magic ritual, which is always effective, if it follows the appropriate procedure.59 The Second Reformation was a response to a similar process in the Protestant countries. Established Calvinist churches were degenerating into a closed and dogmatic orthodoxies,60 which, however, fulfilled the needs of a wealthy, bourgeois society of the Netherlands at the time.61

What was interesting to the Polish philosopher in Religious Consciousness were the authors that contested this establishment of orthodoxy. They called for a sincere, true Christianity, based on the ethical premises of the Sermon on the Mount. They were following the ‘Erasmian spirit,’ where theological dogmas are important only as long as they are helpful in living a holy life.62 Kolakowski summarises the religious attitudes of these groups in a simple slogan: ‘Our religion is to do God’s will. To do God’s will is to do good.’63 Such a vision had an all-embracing character, organizing people’s lives on strict moral foundations. And as such, it was not willing to compromise with the worldly needs, and thus had a profoundly anticicleral and anti-confessional

54  Kolakowski, Świadomość religijna..., 289.
55  Ibidem, 16-17.
56  Ibidem, 9; 171-172.
57  Ibidem, 5.
58  Ibidem, 51.
59  Ibidem, 52.
60  Ibidem, 16-17.
61  Ibidem, 99-100.
62  Ibidem, 43.
63  Ibidem, 61.
The question of a Church, was not the question of God, but rather the issue of power. An extreme example of such standpoint was the case of Dirk Camphuysen, a seventeenth-century painter and theologian who called for man’s absolute responsibility for his moral decisions, which cannot be challenged by the authority of any institution. In fact, churches disturb a true Christian life. The Polish thinker concludes: ‘The thought of Camphuysen is the thought of Erasmus after a century of disappointments’. Leopold Labedz argued that this was another self-portrait of Kołakowski - the official Marxist system was not the site where leftist ethical values could be realised. In the 1957 essay Responsibility and History, he wrote, ‘We are communists because we stand on the side of the oppressed against the oppressors’. Bitter reflections on the seventeenth-century religious rebels seem to suggest that in 1965 Kolakowski saw these two issues are irreconcilable, even though it took him definitely less than a century to become finally disappointed.

Analysis of Johannes Brederburg provides a historical example of another harsh conclusion about dogmatic systems. The Dutch writer tried to develop a system of rational religion, which would reject Revelation, and follow instead Cartesian principles. But that was another fruitless effort. Kolakowski concluded that once the Reformation had overthrown the ultimate authority of the Church and opened theological dogmas to rational analysis, it inevitably led to antireligious arguments. If a religious system were to be completely rational, it would necessarily lead to atheism. Reason is a lethal weapon to a faith of any kind. Undermining even the least important of the truths, leads to a collapse of the whole system.

The Catholic Church managed to control individualistic currents in a much better way than Protestant communities. People striving for a more authentic religious life were put in monasteries, and in more extreme cases, tolerated as mystics, ‘holy men’ with supposedly immediate communication with God. The Polish philosopher saw such an approach as a result of the Counter-Reformation of the seventeenth-century. In an earlier essay, Kolakowski described a successful Counter-Reformation as a movement, ‘which would help the Church to assimilate values created outside of it and against it, to make them parts of its own body and to neutralise them in this way.’ However, highly emotional, individualistic mysticism could have easily got out of control in the cases of more rebellious individuals, or used for some temporary political aims, as was the famous case of the ‘devils of Loudun’, described in the contemporary novels of Aldous Huxley (1952), and in Polish by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (Matka Joanna od Aniołów, 1946). Mystical visions were often very ambiguous and dangerous from the Church’s point of view, and in fact there was a very thin line between those that would eventually become canonised like St John of the Cross, or condemned and forgotten, like Angelus Silesius. The latter, an outcast of official ecclesiastical life, who deliberated on God as Nothingness, was later described by the author as the most important figure analysed in the book. Permanent coexistence of grace and law is impossible, the philosopher suggests. The conflict between independent individuals, seeking the truth on their own, and the organised institution watching over the orthodoxy, is inevitable.

**Conclusion**

An outstanding work of historical scholarship, Religious Consciousness and Ecclesiastical Bond, crowned Leszek Kolakowski’s academic interest in seventeenth-century religion. The focus on the irrational aspect of religious experience, and the attention Kolakowski devoted to mysticism in Religious Consciousness show, how far the philosopher was in 1965 from the ideas of religion he held in 1950s. Religion is not another form of social alienation, it is not a tool of political imperialism, but rather a ‘real’ and ‘autonomous’ need of people.

In this working paper, I attempted to briefly present the crucial change in Leszek Kolakowski’s views on religion between 1955-1965. His gradual disillusionment with the Marxist philosophy was paralleled by intensive historical studies in the field of religious thought. I should like to argue that this historical investigation was crucial in the process of developing his original philosophy of religion, presented first in The Presence of a Myth, and in his later works in the following decades. Yet, this is a different chapter of this story.
Nuclear energy in Poland and the Polish-Soviet relations

KEY WORDS: NUCLEAR ENERGY, POLAND, SOVIET UNION, CMEA, ENERGY POLICY

Introduction
In November 2009, the Polish Council of Ministers approved the strategy paper ‘Poland’s Energy Policy until 2030’ (Polityka Energetyczna Polski do 2030 roku). This was the first state document which specified a date for the commissioning of a Polish Nuclear Power Plant (NPP). Accordingly, the first unit was intended to become operational in 2020. Apart from environmental protection and energy efficiency, the main political argument to use nuclear energy is energy security. The main goal is to lessen Polish dependence on energy imports from the Russian Federation. The present situation is considered across the parties as a potential restriction of Poland’s capacity to act in matters of foreign policy.

Energy politics between Poland and Russia are longstanding. Since the first use of nuclear power in Poland in 1955, the Soviet Union was a central point of reference. Developments and incidents like the Chernobyl disaster had a major impact on the abandonment of construction work at first Polish NPP in 1990. The aim of this paper is to discuss the long-term development of the Polish nuclear sector with a focus on Polish-Soviet/Polish-Russian relations.

The beginnings of nuclear energy in Poland
On April 23, 1955, the governments of Soviet Union and Polish People’s Republic concluded an agreement on Soviet assistance in the field of nuclear energy for the needs of the Polish national economy. Similar agreements were signed between the Soviet Union and other socialist countries like China, Romania, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Bulgaria, and Hungary in the...
first half of 1955. These agreements intended the delivery of research reactors, nuclear fuel, the training of staff in the Soviet Union or the delegation of Soviet specialists. The aim was to start national nuclear programs in other socialist countries. This meant a paradigm change of how the Soviet Union treated its partners, and was a direct consequence of US-president Dwight Eisenhower’s ‘Atoms for Peace’ speech at the UN General Assembly in December 1953. In his speech, Eisenhower outlined his ideas about the utilization of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes such as power generation or disease control under the auspices of an international atomic energy institution. Hence, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was established in 1957. This was meant also as a new control mechanism to compensate the loss of the American monopoly on nuclear weapons. Until then, the Soviet cooperation with its socialist partners was limited to the one-sided exploitation of uranium deposits by so-called mixed enterprises.

On the basis of the Polish-Soviet agreement, the Institute for Nuclear Research was established in Świerk near Warsaw. The first reactor became operational in 1958. It had a nominal capacity of 2 megawatt (MW) and was called EWA (Experimental, Water, Atomic). In addition, a cyclotron was constructed at Bronowice near Krakow. In Żerań, near Warsaw, a particle accelerator was constructed. All of these projects were based on deliveries and purchases from the Soviet Union. But the young Polish nuclear sector could also build upon research conducted in Poland before World War II. Poland’s own research tradition in the field of nuclear energy owed much to the influence of double Nobel laureate Maria Skłodowska-Curie. From 1956 onward, Poland participated as a founding member in the Joint Institute for Nuclear Research in Dubna near Moscow. This institute, with more than 1000 employees, was the largest of its kind in the socialist world and worked on the basis and financial independence from the state budget. Since 1978, Interatominstrument generated revenues. Another relevant international economic organization was Interatomenergo. It was established in 1973 by the governments of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Poland, the Soviet Union, and Hungary. Its task was the production and distribution of nuclear appliances. The aim was to completely satisfy the needs of its members for specialized equipment in the field of medicine, radiation protection, and nuclear engineering. The headquarters were based in Warsaw, but from 1975 subsidiaries were established in Pleven, Zielona Góra and Dubna. Enterprises and associations like the Polish federation for the construction of nuclear tools (Zjednoczone Zakłady Urządzeń Jądrowych) were directly involved in the decision-making structures. One new feature of organizations like Interatominstrument was the bookkeeping on a profit-oriented basis and financial independence from the state budget. Since 1978, Interatominstrument generated revenues. Another important impetus to intensify cooperation was the establishment of specialized Standing Commissions within the framework of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (CMEA or Comecon). In 1956, the Standing Commission for Electrical Energy was established. One of its main tasks was the construction of a trans-border electricity grid, where NPP should play a major role. In 1960, the Standing Commission for the Peaceful Utilization of Nuclear Energy was brought into being, with headquarters in Moscow. Long-term chairman was Artyom Grigoryants, a key figure of the Soviet nuclear program. This demonstrates the significance that the Soviet leadership assigned to the Standing Commission.

**Intensification of cooperation**

In 1971, the so-called Comprehensive Program was adopted by the 25th session of heads of governments of CMEA member states. The aim was to deepen the economic integration of socialist countries on a multilateral level. Due to this endeavor, the CMEA and its institutions had to take over additional responsibilities. Therefore, new international economic organizations were established, which closely cooperated with the CMEA.

One of these new organizations was Interatominstrument, established in 1972 by the governments of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Poland, the Soviet Union, and Hungary. Its task was the production and distribution of nuclear appliances. The aim was to completely satisfy the needs of its members for specialized equipment in the field of medicine, radiation protection, and nuclear engineering. The headquarters were based in Warsaw, but from 1975 subsidiaries were established in Pleven, Zielona Góra and Dubna. Enterprises and associations like the Polish federation for the construction of nuclear tools (Zjednoczone Zakłady Urządzeń Jądrowych) were directly involved in the decision-making structures. One new feature of organizations like Interatominstrument was the bookkeeping on a profit-oriented basis and financial independence from the state budget. Since 1978, Interatominstrument generated revenues.

Another relevant international economic organization was Interatomenergo. It was established in 1973 by the governments of Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Yugoslavia, Poland, Romania, the Soviet Union, and Hungary. Headquartered in Moscow, the main goal of Interatomenergo was to coordinate the international specialization of production of NPP components and spare parts. Besides, it was also involved in...
in the planning process for the construction of new NPP in member states. The predecessor of Interatomenergo was a working group inside the above mentioned Standing Commission of Electrical Energy. As a participating member, the Polish Council of Ministers designated the consortium for the construction of heavy machinery Zemak (Zjednoczenie Przemysłu Budowy Maszyn Ciężkich). Specialized organizations as Interatominstrument and Interatomenergo were supposed to cover the quickly rising needs for NPP components in the Eastern Bloc. Since the beginning of the 1970s, the first regular NPP with pressurized water reactors of the type WWER (Водо-водяной энергетический реактор) and a capacity of 440 MW went on stream in Lubmin/GDR, Kozloduj/Bulgaria, and Bohunice/Czecho-Slovakia. Moreover, a massive expansion of nuclear energy was scheduled: until 1990, nuclear energy was expected to make up a share of 40 percent of the overall energy mix in Eastern European countries. A basic argument for such a substantial build-up was the rapidly growing development costs for Soviet oil and gas. Traditional oil regions at Baku and the Volga had reached their peak and new production increments could be reached only east of the Ural Mountains in an inaccessible area far away from demand regions in western Soviet Union and East European countries.

Another interesting aspect of Polish-Soviet nuclear cooperation was the participation of Polish workers in the construction of Soviet NPPs. In 1979, the Polish government committed to send Polish construction units to building sites at Khmelnitskyi, Smolensk, and Kursk. The task was delegated to the Polish enterprise Energopol, which had previously gained experience with other large-scale projects in Soviet Union, like the natural gas pipeline Sojuz.

The broadest involvement was envisaged at Khmelnitskyi in Western Ukraine. The General Agreement, prepared by the Standing Commission for Electrical Energy in 1979, fixed the construction of four 1000 MW blocs of the type WWER, as well as a 377 kilometer high-voltage line to Rzeszów in south-east Poland. This investment, made by Czechoslovakia, the GDR, Poland, the Soviet Union and Hungary, was planned to pay off through electricity supplies over a period of 20 years. Polish construction units built the pumping stations, boiler house, fire station, kindergarten and parts of the newly established small town next to the river Horina. A similar project was implemented at Konstantinovka in Southern Ukraine. This time, Bulgaria, Romania, and the Soviet Union shared costs. Due to the construction of major transmission lines, these nuclear power plants became an integral part of the bloc-wide electricity grid called Mir. They also were an example for the advancing division of labor between socialist states.

**Stagnation: the ‘NPP Żarnowiec under construction’**

In contrast to other East European countries, Poland opted quite late for the usage of nuclear energy. Only in 1971 did the Council of Ministers decide to construct the first Polish NPP. This choice was motivated by predictions that until 1985 there would be a considerable deficit in electricity supply. Studies of the newly established Agency for Nuclear Energy forecasted the commissioning of the first bloc until 1983. In 2000, nuclear energy was expected to have a total share of 36 to 45 percent in the Polish energy mix. In 1974, Poland and the Soviet Union signed an agreement: the Soviet side promised to provide construction plans for two blocs of the WWER-440 type, the delivery of nuclear installations, delegation of experts, and the supply and return of fuel rods. The Polish side was responsible for the realization of construction work and delivery of nuclear installations. In close coordination with Soviet experts, the Polish government decided for a location of the NPP at the Żarnowiec Lake near Gdańsk in 1977. For this reason, approximately 100 inhabitants of the village Kartoszyno had to be relocated. This was a desirable location due to the availability of huge amounts of cooling water from the lake as well as the proximity to the conurbation around Gdynia and Gdańsk. Another advantage of this location the large Polish pumped-storage hydroelectricity plant at the other side of the lake, which was constructed between 1976 and 1983. This facility could easily cover peak demands and was an optimal supplement to the planned nuclear power plant.

However, the deteriorating economic situation in Poland and the declaration of martial law in December 1981 caused significant delays. Nevertheless, the Polish government decided to start construction in January 1982 and extended the project to four reactor blocks, although critical voices...
had pointed to incalculable costs of the project.25 Furthermore, two more locations were selected for the next NPPs at Warta near Kłodnica and somewhere in Kujawy region at the Vistula.26

These rather unrealistic construction plans were challenged by the explosion of block four at Chernobyl in April, 1986. Despite demonstrations in several regions and a flood of protesting letters the Polish government stuck to its plans – as did all the other governments in Eastern Europe.27 At a press conference, the government spokesman Jerzy Urban justified this decision as follows:

Bez energii jądrowej współczesna cywilizacja nie rozwiąże swoich problemów energetycznych. To, że zdarzył i zdarzy się wkrótce w innych regionach świata wypadki lotnicze, nikogo nie skłania do żadnych, aby zrezygnować z lotnictwa, żeby ludzie na powór poruszać się tylko po ziemi. Podobnie jest i będzie z energetyką jądrową. [...] Odejście z tej drogi, jaką jest energetyka atomowa powodowałoby w przyszłości anachroniczność polskiej energetyki, zacoferzenie kraju.28

The reactor disaster in Chernobyl presented the Polish government with the difficult task of reassessing the population and protecting it against potential radiation damages. However, it was also important that the national nuclear program and the cooperation with the Soviet supplier should not be challenged. Nonetheless, growing opposition to nuclear energy evolved into a platform for fundamental claims for political participation. Protests occurred not only in Poland, but also at other construction sites in Eastern Europe, like the Bulgarian Belene.29

In 1990, a legally nonbinding poll was carried out in Gdańsk region. 86 percent of respondents declared themselves against the continuation of construction works at Żarnowiec. Participation amounted to 44 percent.30 In December of this year, the Polish Council of Ministers decided to dismantle the ‘NPP Żarnowiec under construction’, as it was called officially. In December of this year, the Polish Council of Ministers decided to dismantle the ‘NPP Żarnowiec under construction’, as it was called officially.31 Completion of the reactor was not completed until the end of the 1970s. The 1980s were marked by far reaching political and economic crises in Poland and the socialist world altogether. Other projects for NPPs like Belene/Bulgaria, Mochovce/Czechoslovakia, and Stendal/GDR had to be postponed or canceled entirely. One of the main reasons for this was the socialist division of labor, which reached a significant high level in the supply of nuclear appliances for NPPs. This division of labor was one of the basic ideas of the CMEA and was planned to increase rentability due to economies of scale through mass production. The Comprehensive Program of 1971 was intended to bolster this idea. Eastern European countries concluded the ‘Agreement on multilateral specialization and cooperation in the production and mutual delivery of equipment for nuclear power stations’ at the 33rd CMEA session in 1979. It was the most expensive deal – costing several billion rubles – brokered in the CMEA framework. Over 50 industrial consortia and enterprises from eight socialist countries supplied parts for NPPs from reactor vessels, circulation pumps, and turbines to generators, and steam condensers. The most important of them were the factory for nuclear machines Atommash in Soviet Volgodonsk, the Skoda factory in Czechoslovak Pilsen or the above mentioned Zemak in Warsaw.

Interatominstruments and Interatomenergo where included in this endeavor, too. However, the agreement only included the WWER-440 reactors and not the graphite-moderated pressure tube reactor RBMK, which was able to produce material for nuclear weapons. To keep pace, the Skoda factory alone had to deliver 19 440-MW reactor blocks until 1990 to several countries in Eastern Europe.32 Over 50 industrial consortia and enterprises from eight socialist countries supplied parts for NPPs from reactor vessels, circulation pumps, and turbines to generators, and steam condensers. The most important of them were the factory for nuclear machines Atommash in Soviet Volgodonsk, the Skoda factory in Czechoslovak Pilsen or the above mentioned Zemak in Warsaw.

Planning errors were also the reason for the belated delivery of components by Polish subcontractors. According to the above mentioned

26 Archiwum Akt Nowych, 1765/169/16, 134-135 (Ministerstwo Górnictwa i Energetyki; Pełnomocnik rządu ds. rozwoju energetyki jądrowej: Komisja ds. koordynacji współpracy krajów RWPG w dziedzinie urządzeń dla elektrowni jądrowych; Informacja o zakończeniu realizacji programu strukturyzacji ds. w IIIP w stosunku do końca 1986 r.).
27 A short overview over the protests in Poland, see John Kramer, 'Chernobyl’ and Eastern Europe’, Problems of Communism, 22 (3-4, 1980), 96.
29 Hristov, The Communist Nuclear Era, 140-141.
32 Aleksandr Panasenkov, ‘Co-operation among CMEA Member Countries in the Development of Nuclear Energy,’ IAEA-Buletin 22 (5-4, 1980), 96.
36 Josephson, Red Atom, 104.
agreement, the Polish industry was obliged to produce pressurizers for WWER-440 and -1000 reactors. This task was conducted by Rafako, which had acquired the necessary Soviet construction plans. Such pressurizers had a height of 14 meters and a weight of 150 tons and the production required specialized casting molds and forging presses to manufacture the metal sheets. However, the responsible Nowotko steelworks (Huta im. Marcelego Nowotki) at Ostrowiec Świętokrzyski did not possess the appropriate capacities. The necessary upgrade investments of approximately 14 billion złoty (prices of 1986) had been postponed since the middle of the 1970s and the national investment plan (Narodowy Plan Społeczno-Gospodarczy) did not earmark that money until 1990, too.37

This example illustrates that the failure of the Żarnowiec project also was caused by fundamental flaws of a command economy and socialist division of labor. The American political scientist Randall Stone considers the behavior of Eastern European governments to postpone investments, which where necessary to stick to agreements with other socialist partners and especially the Soviet Union as a conscious strategy. The production of nuclear equipment was extremely costly, the Eastern European market, however, did not promise appropriate turnover. The burden sharing intended by the Soviet Union to cover growing energy needs in Eastern Europe by nuclear energy and not by Soviet oil met with avoidance strategies. This was already during the negotiation process of the above mentioned agreement, which took two whole years.38

Nuclear energy in Poland today

As mentioned in the introduction, according to the strategy paper Polityka Energetyczna Polski do 2030 roku, the commissioning of the first Polish NPP was planned for 2020. Earlier government documents only pointed to the importance to initiate a public debate in favor of nuclear energy.39 In 2009, the Polish government initiated a broad information campaign to increase the backing of nuclear energy within the society. The aim was to lift the approval rates from under 50% in 2010 to 60% in 2020 and 66% in 2030. Poll ratings indicated that this aim will be reached. Whereas in 2008 a majority of 46% of the Polish population spoke up for nuclear energy,40 according to a poll conducted by the market research institution Ipsos Mori, which found that that a majority of 57% was in favor of usage of nuclear energy.41 This rating conducted in Mai 2011 also shows that the reactor disaster in Fukushima had no significant negative influence on the public opinion in Poland. Likewise, the Polish government sees no reason to change its plans:

Awaria w Fukushima nie rodzi w odniesieniu do Polski żadnych bezpośrednich skutków. W szczególności nie pociąga ona za sobą konieczności zmian w strategicznych dokumentach rządowych. Reaktory elektrowni Fukushima I są wczesnymi reaktorami drugiej generacji eksploatowanymi od ok. 40 lat. Obowiązujące w Polsce przepisy umożliwiają w Polsce budowę jedynie nowoczesnych reaktorów generacji III i III+, których projekty uwzględniają możliwość wystąpienia awarii analogicznej do tej, która miała miejsce w Fukushimie. [...] Niezależnie od powyższego, Polska nie leży w regionie narażonym na tsunami i trzęsienia ziemi.42

Nonetheless, the envisioned construction plans for the first Polish NPP will not be adhered to. Latest government papers schedule the commissioning for 2024. Until 2030, the capacity of nuclear power plants should reach 3000 MW and 6000 MW in the year 2035.43 If plans are implemented, nuclear energy would have a total share of 6.5% in 2025 or 12% in 2030 in the Polish energy mix. As to the location of future NPPs, the Polish Ministry of Economics referred to older expertise and created a ranking of 28 potential location sites, cited in the document Eksperzyta na temat kryteriów lokalizacji elektrowni jądrowych oraz wstępna ocena uzgodnionych lokalizacji z 2010. Not surprisingly, Żarnowiec and Warta-Klempicz are the first two places.44

Focusing on nuclear energy, the Polish government hopes to strengthen the whole economy from construction sector to high-tech suppliers. Consequently, the share of domestic industry is intended to be as high as possible and should range from 30 to 60%. Furthermore, the information campaign under the title ‘Poznaj atom. Porozmawiajmy o Polsce z energią’ is continued.45

Conclusion

Nuclear energy is characterized by long-term decision making processes in politics and economy. Hence nuclear energy is a good example for path dependence. Żarnowiec as a potential location for the next Polish NPP is a symbol for that. On the other hand, due to fundamental changes in Poland and East Central Europe after the fall of the Iron Curtain nuclear energy has been affected by substantial discontinuities.

Similar to the 1970s and 1980s, nuclear power with its assumed positive feedbacks for domestic industry is often perceived as an indispensable technology for a highly developed country today. And energy demand is once

37 Archiwum Akt Nowych, 1765/169/16, page 75-77 (Ministerstwo Górnictwa i Energetyki; Pomoconik rządu ds. rozwoju energetyki jądrowej; Komisja ds. koordynacji współpracy krajów RWPG w dziedzinie urządzeń dla elektrowni jądrowych; Notatka dla Wicemisewera Rady Ministrów Zbigniewa Szałajdy; Jerzy Bijak, Podsekretarz Stanu, 04.02.1987)
40 Mariusz Ruszel, ‘Elektrownia Jądrowa w Polsce - szansa czy zagrożenie?,’ Buletyn Opinie 6 (Warsaw: Amicus Europea 2009), 4. These numbers are also stated by Mielczarski, Nuclear Power Program in Poland, 5.
44 Ibidem, 103-104.
again expected to grow strongly, and seemingly cheap electricity generated by nuclear power is coveted. But causes like incalculable cost increases or open questions about nuclear waste storage challenge the start of a nuclear energy program in Poland. The examples from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary indicate that a successful start in the 1980s would have made it much easier for Poland to extend its engagement with nuclear energy today. The failure of the Żarnowiec project revealed basic deficiencies of the command economy and the socialist labor division. The production of nuclear appliances for NPPs was extremely costly. However, the outlet was limited to Eastern Europe and promised little profit. Burden sharing intended by the Soviet Union met with avoidance strategies of its socialist partners. The most obvious discontinuities in the Polish nuclear sector were related to its relationship to the Soviet Union and (later) Russia. Despite asymmetric cooperation between Poland and the Soviet Union, the implementation of a domestic nuclear program in contemporary Poland pursues the target to lower the dependence on energy imports from Russia. Consequently, the purchase of nuclear technology from Russia is considered a reasonable option, although the Russian agency for nuclear energy, Rosatom, probably could make attractive offers - for instance, concerning the disposal of nuclear waste. The ‘NPP Żarnowiec under construction’ is emblematic of its relationship to the Soviet Union and (later) Russia. Despite asymmetric cooperation between Poland and the Soviet Union, the implementation of a domestic nuclear program in contemporary Poland pursues the target to lower the dependence on energy imports from Russia. Consequently, the purchase of nuclear technology from Russia is considered a reasonable option, although the Russian agency for nuclear energy, Rosatom, probably could make attractive offers - for instance, concerning the disposal of nuclear waste. The ‘NPP Żarnowiec under construction’ is emblematic of its relationship to the Soviet Union and (later) Russia.

Bibliography


Mentz, Dieter and Pfeffer, Joachim, Die rechtliche Regelung der internationalen Energiebeziehungen der RGW-Länder (Munich: Saur, 1982).


Ptaszek, Jan, Współpraca PRL z krajami RWPG w sferze produkcji materiałowej (Warsaw: Książka i Wiedza, 1987).


On 22 August, 1981 a Polish airlines landed on schedule at the Beirut International Airport. Luggage and catering service crew quickly approached the loading hatch to prepare the plane for return flight to Warsaw. It was not, however, a routine day because a Lebanese custom officer appeared out of nowhere and unexpectedly started to help unload the luggage. After the hatch was opened, it turned out that one of the suitcases was torn and several guns fell out on the airstrip. The accident caused a great confusion among the crew. All of a sudden a Lebanese police unit came to investigate the developing situation. They ordered a meticulous inspection of the luggage, whose weight exceeded the official limit. Shockingly, they found 473 guns, 500 magazines, and two grenade launchers wrapped in towels from Warsaw’s luxury hotel ‘Victoria.’ The pilots were questioned but soon released. It was clear that the Lebanese authorities did not want to publicly expose this worrying incident. Only the local radio, which belonged to the Phalangist Party, reported the discovery of weapons and claimed that they were intended for Palestinians on board of the Polish plane.

The entire smuggling operation was organized by the Central Engineering Board (Centralny Zarząd Inżynierii, CENZIN), a state-owned enterprise, which was part of the Foreign Trade Ministry (Ministerstwo Handlu Zagranicznego, MHZ). Since 1956 the Board had been responsible for the export of Polish arms and closely associated with the Board II of the General Staff (military intelligence). Approximately 50-60% of Cenzin employees, 

1  The structural frame of arms export was based on Soviet experiences. CENZIN had a very similar organization as Soviet model, where state trading enterprises - at different times - Central Engineering Directorate (Glavnoye inzhenernoye upravleniye, GIU), the Central Technical Directorate (Glavnoye tekhnicheskoye upravleniye, GTU) and the Central Directorate of Collaboration and Cooperation (Glavnoye upravleniye po sotrudnichestvu I kooperatsii, GUSK) were responsible for selling weapons on foreign markets.

2   To learn more about Polish military industry after the Second World War see: Zygmunt Kazimierski, Polski przemysł zbrojeniowy w latach 1945-1965, (Warszawa, 2005).
some of whom were undercover, were Polish military officers delegated to work in MHZ. The arms trade has always been a very sensitive area of national security and that is why Cenzin was completely controlled by the military intelligence and counterintelligence services. The Beirut incident was seen as a fatal mistake by Warsaw, caused by cheap suitcases which broke under the weight of the guns.

This accident clearly showed many unknown aspects of the Polish Arms trade during the Cold War: shady business shrouded in secrecy, mystery at the crossroads between intelligence services and politics, murky middlemen, armed militia, international pariahs or even terrorists, and the focus on the Middle East and North Africa. It included all the angles of the shadow world discussed by Andrew Feinstein in his excellent book. Arms trade does not fit completely into a Manichean understanding of superpower rivalry, where ‘our’ good democracies struggled against oppressive regimes ruled by Communist parties. The driving force which propelled international arms trade for both parties was largely the money.

**Polish Arms Export: Dollars Preferred to Rubles**

About 50% of the Polish military production was intended for export. The vast majority of arms used to be transferred to the Soviet Bloc countries. The essential principles of those transactions were simple. Agreements were signed on inter-governmental levels and paid by Transfer Rubles – virtual currency, whose exchange rates heavily favored Moscow, rather than the interests and financial profits of other members within the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). Bureaucratized companies functioned as large state enterprises with specialized staff acquainted with socialist markets. There was no need for brokers or independent arms dealers because agreements were made only by Cenzin and its ‘brotherly’ counterparts, for example Bulgarian ‘Kintex’ or East-German ‘Imes Import-Export GmbH.’

Each Warsaw Pact country used to specialize in various branches of military industry and all important decisions relating to armaments required Moscow’s approval. The Soviets shared with their satellites the know-how but usually did not provide the most recent technology, which remained classified and was stored in secret facilities. Soviet trust and confidence had its limits. The Kremlin’s allies did not earn as much money on arms trade as they would on free markets because the demand among Communist states, while very high, also had its definite limits. However, there was a legal gateway which allowed cash-strapped Poland of the 1980s to earn hard currency. Developing countries from the Middle East, Africa and Asia were able to buy high quantities of arms and paid in US dollars – hugely valuable for the military industry in Communist Poland. Those states gained independence during the decolonization process and preferred to buy weapons from the Soviet Bloc rather than from their former colonial rulers. The weapons were much cheaper, easy to use and reliable – as for example assault rifle AK-47 – the real success of communist military export, which became the symbol of struggle against colonial forces. Non-Aligned countries usually were off the Soviet ‘black list’ and did not comply with the Western embargo or the COCOM (Committee for Multilateral Export Controls) regulations. Ongoing fights in the Middle East in the 1980s sustained the need for regular supplies of weapons. It is no coincidence that Libya, Iraq, Syria, and India became the most important recipients of Polish-made arms in the 70s and 80s.

Those countries were sometimes even more significant than ‘brotherly’ allies from Eastern Europe. Arms trade had its own rules and behind the scenes ‘internationalist’ cooperation was not always a priority to COMECON countries. A secret report written in March 1979 by Colonel Tadeusz Gliński (officer of the Ministry of Internal Affairs) supports the argument that the prospect of economic gain outweighed loyalty to the socialist ideology. Poland signed an agreement with the GDR in 1978 to sell 350 Strała-2 surface-to-air missiles. The manufacturer’s price was set at 13,000 Rubles but, as Poles explained, due to the harsh economic situation and technical problems, the deliveries were delayed. East German authorities put great pressure on the Polish government to complete the contract but were soon informed that they encountered some unforeseen obstacles. The real reason for the delay was, however, quite different than the one presented to the GDR officials – they did not pay in USD, in contrast to Libyans who offered 27,000 USD for one missile. This difference in profits was incomparable and as a result Gaddafi’s army received missiles designed for the GDR. ‘We know that we’re not fair with Germans’ – concluded Colonel Gliński, but he also stated that dollars were more important than communist solidarity.

Every Cold War superpower used arms trade as foreign policy to support its allies, tie together different branches within the state economies and sustain the need for regular supplies of weapons. 

---

7 Paulina Zamelek, Przeczenia polskiego przemysłu obronnego w warunkach otwartego europejskiego rynku, (Toruń, 2013), 102.
influence the internal or external politics. Weapons contracts were perceived as a very useful and effective tool to keep friends very close by making them dependent on deliveries of spare parts, sending military instructors, or training abroad. Political rapprochement between Poland and countries of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) in the 1970s was a result of the Soviet-American military rivalry. The White House supported Israeli policies in the Middle East in many different ways: military, economic, and political. In contrast, the Kremlin’s advisors were present in Libya, Syria, and Iraq. Poland had also its own role to play in this bipolar rivalry.

Before Egyptian President Anwar Sadat’s warming to the United States, Egypt was the recipient of not only Soviet arms, but was also a strategic location for the Soviets to embed their political presence. During the 1960s and 70s, the Soviet advisory presence grew there from a few hundred to nearly two thousand. Moscow was providing instructions on Soviet-made weapons and was training Egyptian armed forces in planning and operations. Soviet advisors were placed in all branches of the Egyptian army, even at military training facilities, air or naval bases. Moreover, between 1955 and 1979 around 20,000 Arab military personnel studied or trained in the USSR. The same policy was conducted by the USA in Latin America, where the Pentagon secretly delivered weapons and training to those who might be helpful in the struggle against communists. The Egyptian shift of alliances resulted in American deliveries of weapons, yet the majority of military hardware used by the army was still Soviet-made. This situation forced authorities in Cairo to buy spare parts on the Eastern-bloc markets. The same problems occurred in Iran after the Iranian Revolution. The revolutionary government had at its disposal brand new US technology without access to spare parts.

Beyond more or less official agreements strictly based on payments, there was also non-refundable aid, which might be perceived as one-off support or long-term cooperation. Guns, rifles and other military hardware was then used as complimentary support for armed revolutionary groups with the Marxist angle or when their political program contained communist ideology. Poland was not the biggest but the most important exporter of arms among the Soviet Bloc countries. Moscow, together with Prague and East Berlin, was more involved in clandestine arms deliveries in developing countries than the authorities in Warsaw. However, even Polish governments showed great interest in political events happening on other continents. We can date the first economic, political and military relations between Poland and developing countries to the mid-fifties. The contacts between Polish United Workers’ Party and Middle-Eastern or African regimes had their own dynamics: though not very active in the 50s and 60s, they turned into deep and multidimensional cooperation in the 70s and 80s. The officials from the PUPW tried to make use of the geopolitical situation by sending doctors, teachers, and many other specialists as contract workers. Arms export was also one of the major platforms of Polish involvement with these states.

**Arms Trade as Economic Opportunity**

Libya, Iraq, Syria, various Palestinian factions and India – those are the countries which were the biggest buyers of Polish made weapons in 70s and 80s. Only during ten years (1973-1983) did Gaddafi’s regime allocate approximately 28 billion USD to arms purchases. Two-thirds of the military hardware used by the Libyan army in the early 80s came from the Soviet Union’s warehouses. Gaddafi did not want to become fully dependent on the Kremlin’s weapons deliveries and tried to diversify his sources, mainly from France and Italy. In practice, throughout the Cold War, the USSR remained his most important supplier. Polish communists also benefitted from the rich Libyan oil fields. Between 1973 and 1983, Cenzin signed 41 military contracts worth around 700 million USD. Poles were selling high amounts of weapons also to Iraq (especially after the war with Iran broke out) and to Syria. It is difficult to estimate precisely, but Cenzin’s profits during from all of their Third World arms deals certainly amounted to hundreds of millions of USD.

Those agreements were usually signed on the governmental level, during mutual visits and reciprocal consultations. Some of the contracts were brokered with the assistance of arms dealers from various countries, who operated behind the scenes. Military conflicts across the globe promoted the proliferation of middlemen who guaranteed confidentiality and secrecy. If American or Soviet authorities (or their satellites) did not want to mark their presence in contentious regions, conflict zones or just wanted to avoid breaking the international law (for example, arms embargo), they often used brokerage of non-state actors, or well-connected traffickers such as Adnan Kashoggi, Mohamer Al-Kassar, or Sarkis Soghanalian.

Upon closer inspection, the regimes of Saddam Hussein, Hafiz Assad and Muammar Gaddafi, were particularly important state sponsors of international terrorism. Moreover, chronologically, the governments in Baghdad, Damascus, and Tripoli supported the Abu Nidal Organization.

---

15 At the end of December of 1955, more than 300 Egyptian sailors arrived for the annual training on Soviet ships to the Naval Base Oksywie near Polish town Gdańsk. Moreover, in the years 1956-1957 Communist Poland provided Syria with arms worth nearly 8 million US dollars.
(ANO) in the 80s, a terrorist organization responsible for attacks in 20
countries. His representative in Warsaw was allowed to negotiate and to sign
some contracts with Cenzin on behalf of (respectively) Iraq, Syria, and Libya.
There was a reason why he acted as arms dealer, a broker – a middleman
between Cenzin and Arabic governments. In this way, Hussein, Assad and
Gaddafi supported ANO because the commissions earned on every contract
by the Warsaw–based broker were transferred to special ANO bank accounts.
As it was technically ‘clean’ money, which had been legally obtained, it was
very hard to track down.²⁰

This clandestine relationship between the Polish state company and
terrorists was very dangerous, yet one from which both sides profited
greatly. Besides those clandestine links, Polish weapons were also shipped
through official contracts to the Palestinian Liberation Organization. During
1970–1976 Cenzin exported special equipment (firearms and ammunition)
worth over 17 million in convertible zlotys²¹ to various PLO groups. In
February 1977, the Palestinians from Fatah sent an order confirmed by
the Ministry of Defense for the sum of 12.4 million dollars. They ordered,
among others, anti-aircraft cannons (37 mm and 23 mm), mortars (160 mm),
‘Maluta’ and ‘Grad’ missiles, plastic explosive and AK assault rifles with
ammunition. The prices offered by Cenzin did not differ significantly from
those offered to other buyers, but in the case of ammunition the prices were
slightly lower. The PLO representative in Warsaw, Fouad Yaseen, stated that
since the Saudi Arabian authorities had not transferred the money, he was
not authorized by his authorities to sign the contract. Consequently, some of
the armaments from the order were sold to other buyers. In turn, in January
and February 1978, Cenzin signed two contracts for delivery of firearms,
ammunition and grenades to the ‘Gabriel’ Syrian PLO group for the total
sum of 2.64 million dollars.²² In 1980, Cenzin signed another contract with
the PLO for the total sum of 1.35 million dollars.²³ Moreover, sometimes the
Libyan government ordered and paid for arms deliveries for PLO, as was the
case in 1978²⁴, for example.

Sometimes Polish weapons intended for the PLO did not reach the
Palestinians and went to other military organizations. In 1987, the weapons
bought (probably) in Poland went through the PLO mission in Poland
to the Shi’ite ‘Amal’ movement and were used to fight the Palestinians
in Lebanon.²⁵ It should be remembered that the agreements concerning the
‘special’ sale were reached during meetings of the interested parties
observing maximum security procedures. The parties therefore tried to
produce as few documents certifying such transactions as possible.

Arms Deliveries as Polish Support for the Third World Countries
Weapons and military equipment sent from Poland to various national
liberation movements were linked more with ideological and active struggle
than with economic opportunities. The Ministry of Defense and the Ministry
of Internal Affairs were responsible for this kind of support. Most of the
weapons like rifles, grenades or pistols came from military warehouses
and were no longer used by the Polish Army. Decisions to send military
hardware were usually made by the government and resulted from close
relationships, special interests or were caused by Moscow’s strategies. The
conditions and reasons differed in various cases, but there was overall policy
which could be seen as support for post-colonial states conducting a friendly
international policy with the Soviet Union. It was non-refundable aid, seen
by the Communist regime in Warsaw as Poland’s modest contribution in the
struggle against colonialism. Warsaw sent weapons both to national move-
ments fighting with the colonial rule and to newly created governments.

There are many interesting and unknown stories related to Polish
military assistance in Africa and Asia. For example, the Communist regime
in Warsaw was engaged in clandestine operations, which included the
delivery of weapons to National Liberation Front in Algeria, and then in
mid 60s to independent Algeria. Interestingly, in 1958 the Vietnamese,
in apparent cooperation with Poland and the Soviet Union, covertly provided
a large quantity of captured French submachine guns to Algerian rebels.
They used a Polish ship to transport arms to Algeria under the guise of
commercial goods.²⁶ Special Polish planes loaded full with weapons were
also sent to People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen²⁷, in 1975 to Angolan
MPLA²⁸, Namibian SWAPO, to Ethiopia, Mozambique and in the late 80s to
Nicaraguan Sandinistas.²⁹ Regarding the military assistance issue, Polish
military instructors also trained pilots from Angola, Algeria, and Togo in
1965³⁰, and in 1986 Warsaw sold 300 trucks to Angolan MPLA. There are of
course many other examples of Polish deliveries of free of charge weapons

²⁰ Przemysław Gasztołd-See, ‘Biznes z terrorystami. Brudne interesy wywiadu
wojskowego PRL z bliskowschodnimi organizacjami terrorystycznymi.’ Pamięć
²¹ Foreign Exchange złoty – a unit of account use for the settlement of transactions
conducted by the state abroad and in the external trade statistics. Between 1973 and 1977 1
USD was worth about 3,322 convertible złoty.
²² Archive of the Ministry of Defence (Archiwum Ministru Obrony Narodowej:
AMON), 247/91/903, Notatka informacyjna Dyrektora Centralnego Zarządu Inżynierii
MHZiGM inż. Wacława Kubieckiego dla Wiceministra Handlu Zagranicznego i Gospodarki
Morskiej Obywatela W. Gwiazdy w sprawie dostaw sprzętu specjalnego dla Organizacji
²³ AMON, 247/91/903, Invoice No 2/23/E The Palestine Liberation Organization PLO,
Warsaw, 29 February 1980, no pagination.
²⁴ AMON, 247/91/903, Pismo Naczelnika Wydziału Centralnego Zarządu Inżynierii
MHZiGM inż. Zdzisława Harza do Zastępcy Szefa Zamówień i Dostaw Techniki Wojskowej
²⁵ AIPN, 01228/2992/CD, Meldunek operacyjny nr 333 Naczelnika Wyd. II WUSW
w Gdańsku ppłk. Henryka Łapuzsaka, Gdański, 15 IX 1987, 1373.
²⁶ Merle Pribbenow, ‘Vietnam Covertly Supplied Weapons to Revolutionaries in Algeria
²⁷ AIPN, 1585/15316, Pismo Dyrektora Departamentu Gospodarki Materiałowo-
Technicznej MSW ppłk Fr. Jóźwiaka do Dyrektora Gabinetu Ministra Spraw Wewnętrznych
²⁸ AIPN, 0827 /268, Notatka służbowa Inspektora Wydziału I BOR ppłk K. Krużyńskiego
²⁹ AIPN, 1585/15310, Wykaz sprzętu przekazanego bezpłatnie Ministerstwom Spraw
³⁰ AIPN, Rz, 055/8, Pismo Naczelnika Wydziału VII Departamentu II MSW ppłk Z.

BETWEEN NON-REFUNDABLE AID AND ECONOMIC PROFITS...   53
to Third World countries, but those were presented only to highlight this phenomenon.

Some decisions of ‘spontaneous’ actions of delivering arms were in fact made by Kremlin. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war meant that the communist regime in Poland was unexpectedly - and rather unwillingly - forced to provide aid to Egypt and Syria. These two countries received help from almost all Eastern Bloc states. In the Syrian case, the Poles delivered weapons (taken from the Polish troops) by sea: one hundred T-54 tanks, twelve MiG-21 fighter jets, eighteen ‘Malutka’ anti-tank guided missile launchers, 150 anti-tank grenades launchers and 200 thousand hand grenades. The Polish authorities accepted also a certain number of wounded Syrian soldiers for medical treatment. All these examples of non-refundable aid were worth about 100 million USD.

Besides arms deliveries, the Polish government accepted many wounded fighters for medical treatment. Usually when the planes with arms were unloaded in order to avoid transporting the air, they took back to Poland wounded guerrillas. In the early 70s, about 60 members of Namibian SWAPO came for medical treatment. Members of the Polisario Front (Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Río de Oro) were also treated in Poland.

Polish policy towards national movements and the then independent postcolonial states was not prepared with long-term goals and was largely irregular. Some actions with humanitarian aid, sending weapons or taking wounded partisans were undertaken because of Soviet pressure. Polish authorities were rather cautious to increase civilian, economic and military presence in Africa. For example, when the People’s Movement for the Liberation of Angola received funds and support from the USSR, the GDR, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, and Bulgaria in the 1970s, Polish leadership did not want to be perceived as ‘less revolutionary’, and decided – according to Ari Ben-Menashe, with the KGB’s approval – to sell hardware to its ‘enemy.’ Cenzin’s officials were aware of Menashe’s origin yet did not refuse to sign an agreement with him. Was it all about the money? Indeed, he paid with hard currency, but his case proves that Polish weapons were shipped to countries perceived as hostile to the Polish People’s Republic.

In 1983, the Polish Military Intelligence decided to set up a joint company with international arms dealer Monzer Al-Kassar. This decision was made with the approval of high-ranking officials from the Polish army and government. It was the origin of the Alkastronic Handelgesellschaft from Vienna, which started to operate in the middle of 1983, together with brothers Monzer and Haissam Kassar, two poles were the shareholders of the company. They acted officially as Cenzin’s employees, but in fact one of them (Captain Tadeusz Koperwas, codename ‘Derwisz’) was an MI officer and the other (Lieutenant Colonel Henryk Majorczyk, codename ‘Razmi’) was an MI secret informant. Their goal was to control the arms trade conducted by the Kassars and generate profits for Cenzin. They were also instructed to gather intelligence information (HUMINT, OSINT) as regular military spies, who were in abundance in Cold War Austria. Their workplace in Alkastronic became a part of MI spy network in Austria (codename ‘Neobank’). Alkastronic was to export weapons and other goods to the Middle East and Africa but it is still difficult to find hard data about the company’s output.

33 New Files Archive (Archiwum Akt Nowych: AAN), KC PZPR, LXXVI-503, Notatka Ryszarda Frelka do Sekretarza KC PZPR Stanisława Kani, 9 November 1971, no pagination.
35 See more: Manfred Morstein, Der Pate des Terrors. Die mörderische Verbindung von Terrorismus, Rauschgift und Waffenhandel (München, 1989).
It sold, for example, Polish sugar to Sudan or galvanized buckets to Sierra Leone. The two officers acted as agents, among others, in Kassar’s business affairs with Iran: they probably sold American TOW armor-piercing missiles to the Ayatollahs. They were also involved in Polish clandestine arms deliveries to Iran.36 It was an example of Poland’s involvement in Iran-Contra affair.37 Probably thanks to Al-Kassar Polish weapons were also delivered to Nicaraguan Contras. Since the government in Warsaw officially supported the Sandinistas, it is seemingly peculiar that AK-47 from Radom factory appeared in the hands of CIA-backed Guerrillas as well. The Polish Embassy spokesman in Washington said in 1987: ‘perhaps the Polish authorities were tricked by arms traffickers’.38 Moreover, according to some statements, Polish-made weapons were also sent in mid 80s to Afghan mujahedlin and used to fight Soviet troops.39

Polish arms trade in the 80s seems to have had different goals than earlier. Apart from mutual cooperation within the COMECON countries, the military industry was ready to sign contracts with many private arms dealers who worked even for the CIA or other Western intelligence services. There is no doubt that intelligence services were aware of their origins and true patrons they were working for. The profits from such agreements were probably not as high as inter-governmental military contracts with Libya, Iraq or Syria, but the very fact that they even occurred indicates unwavering focus on hard currencies, and on financial profits rather than ideological purposes. It also seems that Moscow was aware about Cenzin’s deliveries to Nicaragua, Israel, Iran and Afghanistan, which also raises uncomfortable questions about the true agenda behind the arms trade during the Cold War period.

---

37 Malcolm Byrne, Iran-Contra: Reagan’s Scandal and the Unchecked Abuse of Presidential Power (University Press of Kansas, 2014), 126.
38 AIPN, 0449/6, t. 14, Syzyfrogram nr 1272 z Chicago, 11 February 1987, 426.
What can the post-1989 fertility fall tell us about post-communist Poland?

Introduction

The year 1989 marked not only a key political transition in Polish history, but it also inaugurated an unprecedented fertility fall to far below replacement levels. The following demographic shift has profoundly influenced the country from the labour market down to the level of close and ever shrinking core family size. Since the early 2000s, an average fertility rate of around 1.3 children per woman has placed Poland amongst the countries with the lowest fertility rates globally, turning the country into an only-child society much faster than even China’s one-child policy.

The rapid fall of fertility has reorganised Poland’s society at many levels. At the state-level, it has made the future of the welfare state, especially the pay-as-you-go pension system, vulnerable. At the economic level, it has changed the labour market structure, especially the proportion of working to non-working population. At the family-level, low fertility has reorganised family ties. Touching on ethical issues, such as rights and obligations towards dependent family members, it has begun to challenge existing gender roles and practices of intergenerational care. At the personal level, falling fertility has been linked to the issues of well-being and self-fulfilment as Poles still declare that they want more than two (2.26) children and, for many members of society, becoming a parent lies at the intersection of personal needs, social expectations and socioeconomic constraints. In the long run, these dynamics are likely to generate a growing number of people with few, if any, family ties.

Poland’s demographics offer a unique case study of continuity and change with forces pushing towards a Western model of modernity with rising consumption, an increasingly service-oriented economy, rapid economic growth and improving gender equality. At the same time, by European standards, Poland still shows substantial conservativeness with work, tax systems and welfare state arrangements tailored to the Beckerian family model; high religiosity; low levels of pre-school education enrolment; 80%...
of municipalities with no access to any form of organised childcare for children below the age of three; and Esping-Andersen’s incomplete gender equilibrium, characterised by high incompatibility of public and private sphere institutions. Using representative samples from the Polish Central Statistical Office, European Social Survey and European Value Survey, part I of the paper empirically assesses to what extent prominent demographic theories have explanatory power in accounting for fertility of Poland’s whole adult population. Part II looks at trends over time and focuses on the youngest cohorts to identify ‘silent’ revolutions that are likely to profoundly change Polish society in the forthcoming decades.

The paper concludes that (i) transformations of the social, the economic and the intimate have changed not only the characteristics of young generations of Poles, but also reversed the direction of existing relationships between such social phenomena as education, employment and fertility; (ii) the existing infrastructure of the country, especially the network of support, is not prepared for these transformations; (iii) modern Poland will be increasingly unstable on the systemic level; (iv) enormous disparity between people’s desired and actual fertility has been worryingly high and can be interpreted as an important welfare indicator that goes beyond macroeconomic indices.

Part I: Testing the key theories of the fertility fall on Poland’s adult population

In Poland, the last half century has seen a systematic fall of fertility that occurred in two distinct waves (Figure 1). The first wave happened in the early 1960s with the drop of total fertility rate (TFR)\(^1\) from 3.0 to 2.3 in only six years. The second wave was much longer and deeper: it halved the TFR from 2.4 in 1984 to 1.2 in 2003. The year of the fall of communism was also the first year of sub-replacement fertility in Poland. A few years later, in 1998, Poland’s TFR fell below 1.5, a level classified as lowest-low fertility, where it has remained until today.

These unprecedented changes can be interpreted through a series of theories that try to make sense of falling fertility in the developed world. Classic theories emphasise the role of urbanisation, improved health and education services. In contrast, contemporary theories point out flexibility and change in family-related norms, which could contribute to postponed and reduced childbearing.

Modernization theory: education component

The first generation of theories explaining the fall of fertility referenced modernization, i.e. transition from traditional to modern society due to urbanisation, industrialisation and widespread education. The paper focuses on one element of the modernization theory – access to education.

HYPOTHESIS 1:
WOMEN’S EDUCATION IS NEGATIVELY RELATED WITH FERTILITY.

Independent variables to measure education:
'What is the highest educational level that you have attained?', disaggregated by gender. Source: World Value Survey (WVS)

Microeconomic theories of fertility: Gary Becker’s New Home Economics

The most well-known attempt to integrate economics into demography are those of the Chicago School, especially Gary Becker’s ‘New Home Economics’, inspired by the male breadwinner model of the 1950s United States. Within the framework of Becker’s rational choice theory, falling fertility might be interpreted as resulting from lower male income, higher costs of children, lower benefits derived from children or changing preferences in favour of other goods.\(^2\) Today, the increasing cost of children, due to an imperative to invest more in children’s physical and cognitive development, might be linked to the changing returns to human capital in service-based economies that, on the one hand, offer higher returns to education while, on the other hand, inflate the costs of per child human capital investment.

\(^1\) The presented work employs the concept of Total Fertility Rate (TFR) that refers to the number of life births per woman estimated to happen throughout her lifespan, if a current rate of fertility for a given country were to continue.

\(^2\) In the Beckerian model, prospective parents decide to have children according to the formula: \(U = U(x, y, p)\) where \(U\) stands for utility, \(x\) for quantity of children and \(p\) for their quality, understood as value of all inputs invested in children. \(y\) designates all other goods and services consumed by a household. Decisions about quantity of children \((x)\) and other goods \((y)\) are determined by their respective costs and the household’s overall income \((I)\):
\[I = px + ty,\]
where \(t\) stands for costs of other goods and services. Thus, a decision about the quantity of children \((x)\) is a function of overall income and cost of other goods and services consumed by the household: \(x = f(I, I)\).

Figure 1. Total fertility rate (TFR) in Poland (1960-2012)

Source: Figure prepared using World Bank (2013) Development Indicators.

WHAT CAN THE POST-1989 FERTILITY FALL TELL US ABOUT...
For Gary Becker, household is also a vehicle for gendered specialization of labour in which the male-breadwinner and female-carer model is presented as the most efficient arrangement.

**Table 1. Odds of having children against education in Poland**

Numbers in the columns are differences in chances for having children between subgroups with different educational attainment. For example, ‘3.02’ in the fourth row means that respondents with higher education have 3.02 lower chances of having more than two children with different educational attainment. For example, ‘3.02’ in the fourth row means that respondents with higher education have 3.02 lower chances of being parents than their counterparts with primary education. In turn, dashed ‘2.54’ in the first row means that respondents with higher education have 2.54 lower chances of being parents than their counterparts with primary education, but this relationship is not significant when controlled for age.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which pairwise comparison?</th>
<th>What level of education is compared with university education?</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
<th>Influence:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education – men and women together (WVS)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (Being a parent?)</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>2.54***</td>
<td>strong negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>1.30</td>
<td>lost significance when controlled for age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II (One child or more?)</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>lost significance when controlled for age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>1.45</td>
<td>not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>strong negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (Two children or more?)</td>
<td>primary</td>
<td>3.02***</td>
<td>strong negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.68</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>not significant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>secondary</td>
<td>1.33</td>
<td>lost significance when controlled for age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1.76</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

For ages.

In this manner, the growing education and labour market participation of women could be seen as a factor that decreases benefits of marriage and increases opportunity costs of children under the assumption that women reduce working hours upon childbirth

**HYPOTHESIS 2A:**

**MALE INCOME IS POSITIVELY RELATED TO FERTILITY.**

Independent variables linked to the microeconomic theory of fertility:

‘What is your annual income?’, split by gender. Source: European Values Survey (EVS).

**Table 2a. Odds of having children in the Beckerian equilibrium in Poland (INCOME component)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which pairwise comparison?</th>
<th>Which levels of income are compared?</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men’s Annual Income (EVS)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I (Being a parent?)</td>
<td>High with low</td>
<td>1.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High with medium</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II (One child or more?)</td>
<td>High with low</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High with medium</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (Two children or more?)</td>
<td>High with low</td>
<td>3.75***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High with medium</td>
<td>1.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**HYPOTHESIS 2B:**

**SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF TRADITIONAL GENDER NORMS IS POSITIVELY RELATED TO FERTILITY**

‘Can being a housewife be as fulfilling as paid job?’ (EVS)
‘Do women really want home and children?’ (EVS)
‘Do women need children for fulfilment?’ (EVS)
‘Are men better political leaders than women?’ (WVS)
‘Is university more important for a boy?’ (WVS)

For men: ‘Are you a chief wage earner in your household?’ (WVS)

Similar independent variables from a different database to cross-validate findings:

‘Can being a housewife be fulfilling?’ (WVS)

---

3 The main statistical method employed in the analysis is generalized linear model (GLM). All dependent and independent variables are recoded into categorical variables with two or three possible values. The test employed within GLM will be Wald Chi-square which tests independence of variables in rows and columns by measuring the difference between observed and expected frequencies in all cells of the table. In all models, the dependent variable is the number of children recoded into three sets of dummy variables. The type of generalized linear model, which will be used, is binary logistic which will allow for pairwise comparison of populations: firstly, by identifying characteristics that distinguish childless respondents from those who have children (to be referred to as the first pairwise comparison). Secondly, by identifying characteristics that differentiates respondents with one child from those with more than one child (the second pairwise comparison). Thirdly, by identifying characteristics that distinguish respondents with two children from those with more than two (the third pairwise comparison). Further pairwise comparisons are not performed because respondents with more than three children constitute only 6% of the sample: so small subsamples would likely render their models insignificant. Numbers in the tables are odds calculated from exponential Betas of the Wald Chi Square models. Odds refer to the difference in chances for having children between the values of a given variable (for example, between people with higher education and those with primary education). For variables that can take more than two values, two sets of exponential Betas [exp(β)] are quoted for each pairwise comparison. Each comparison takes the highest value as its reference point: the first exp(β) compares value 1 with value 3 (here: primary education with higher education), while the second exp(β) compares value 2 with value 3 (here: secondary education with higher education). For easier interpretation of the tables, negative relationships, which in the exponential function are limited to values from 0 to 1, are transformed into odds using formula: odds( of negative x)=1/1/exp(β).

---

Table 2b. Odds of having children in the Beckerian equilibrium in Poland (traditional gender roles component)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which pairwise comparison?</th>
<th>Which values of the variable are compared?</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I (Being a parent?)</td>
<td>High with low</td>
<td>1.86***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High with medium</td>
<td>1.63***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II (One child or more?)</td>
<td>High with low</td>
<td>2.43***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High with medium</td>
<td>1.90***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (Two children or more?)</td>
<td>High with low</td>
<td>2.70***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High with medium</td>
<td>1.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are you satisfied</td>
<td>yes with no</td>
<td>2.39***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>with your financial situation? (WVS)</td>
<td>yes with neither</td>
<td>2.03***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you have savings?</td>
<td>savings with debts</td>
<td>3.13***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(WVS)</td>
<td>savings with neither</td>
<td>1.57***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>savings with debts</td>
<td>2.53*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>savings with neither</td>
<td>1.54*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>savings with debts</td>
<td>1.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>savings with neither</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Influence: ![Strong positive](image), ![Moderate positive](image), ![Small positive](image), ![Not significant](image)

Relative income theory
Many explanations of low fertility in highly developed countries assume that having children requires economic security, which goes beyond mere income to embrace job security, industrial relations, conditions of employment and housing.6 However, it was Richard Easterlin who distinguished between aspirational and factual economic situation.6 He linked fertility to relative income, or consumption aspirations, primarily formed in the family of origin, juxtaposed with expected income.

HYPOTHESIS 3:
THE HIGHER MATERIAL WELL-BEING AND THE LOWER CONSUMPTION ASPIRATIONS, THE HIGHER FERTILITY.
Independent variables to measure factual and perceived financial situation
'What is your annual income?' (EVS)
'How satisfied are you with the financial situation of your household?' (WVS)
'During the past year, did your family save money, just got by or spent savings and borrowed money?' (WVS)

Institutional approaches: incoherence of private and public institutions
Gosta Esping-Andersen and Robert McDonald independently interpreted lowest-low fertility as a mark of incomplete transition from the male breadwinner equilibrium to the gender equality equilibrium. In the transition period, they argue, Western countries are characterised by social roles in the process of negotiation; for example, when women already work full-time but are still responsible for a major share of housework.

---

Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you have to be careful in dealing with people? (WVS)

HYPOTHESIS 4: THE HIGHER THE CONFLICT BETWEEN WOMEN’S ASPIRATIONS AND TRADITIONAL VALUES, THE LOWER FERTILITY.
Independent variables that measure conflict between female employment and traditional gender values:
'Does a pre-child suffer when the mother is working?' (EVS)
'Can a working mother have a warm relationship with a child?' (EVS)

For women: 'Is work important in your life?' (EVS)
For women: 'Are you a chief earner in your household?' (WVS)

Table 4. Odds of having children in the gender disequilibrium in Poland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Which pairwise comparison?</th>
<th>Which responses are compared?</th>
<th>Odds Ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I (Being a parent?)</td>
<td>yes with no</td>
<td>1.62***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II (One child or more?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (Two children or more?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Influence: □small negative □moderate negative □small positive □moderate positive □not significant

**p < .001; *p < .01; *p < .05

Francesco Billari’s theory of trust

The trust theory posits that a country’s fertility rate is positively related to the level of trust in a given society. It is underpinned by an assumption that the higher the level of trust towards other people and institutions, the more likely parents are to outsource education and care of their children to others. In turn, distribution of childcare work among more actors catalyses an increase of parenthood and helping people to reach their desired fertility.

HYPOTHESIS 5:
THE HIGHER THE LEVEL OF TRUST, THE HIGHER FERTILITY
Independent variable that measure trust:
'Do you think that most people can be trusted, or that you have to be careful in dealing with people?' (EVS)

Similar independent variable from a different survey to cross-validate findings:
'Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?' (WVS)

Table 5. Odds of having children in the trust theory in Poland

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Which pairwise comparison?</th>
<th>Which values of the variable are compared?</th>
<th>Odds ratio</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that most people can be trusted, or that you have to be careful in dealing with people? (EVS)</td>
<td>I (Being a parent?)</td>
<td>‘Can be trusted’ with ‘have to be careful’</td>
<td>1.55**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II (One child or more?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (Two children or more?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can most people be trusted, or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people? (WVS)</td>
<td>I (Being a parent?)</td>
<td>‘Can be trusted’ with ‘can’t be too careful’</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II (One child or more?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III (Two children or more?)</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05

Which theory works for Poland?

Most theoretical propositions, short of the relative income and trust theory, display some explanatory power. Education emerges as a framework with a strong relationship to childbearing. As predicted, women’s education shows consistently negative relationship with the number of children. The second strong dimension in the analysis is gender disequilibrium. The Beckerian theory’s gender conservatism component is accepted, while the male income component is rejected because it has shown the opposite relationship to that predicted by Becker. The two theories that have to be rejected entirely are: the theory of trust that produced almost exclusively insignificant models and the relative-income theory because childless respondents are both ‘objectively’ and subjectively better-off financially than respondents who have children.

Part II: Identifying ‘silent’ revolutions

Identifying upcoming changes necessitates distinguishing between preponderant attitudes in a society from trends that prevail among younger generations, especially as far as education, gender roles, labour market position and aspirations are concerned. Part I used the representative samples of the adult population of Poland to analyse society as a whole. This part focuses on change in time with a special emphasis on young cohorts, exploring recent changes in indicators of conservatism, education and employment status.

Firstly, against the backdrop of other developed countries, Poland tends to be classified as conservative. This categorization makes sense in some areas of life and in research designs that embrace the whole adult population but seems to be completely misplaced when identifying the trend set by the new generations.

Across religions and ideologies, reproductive behaviours are some of the most value-laden human practices. And if a backbone of conservative society is a married couple with children, such a family model seems to be in decisive...
decline. Poland’s marriage to divorce ratio has evolved from 35:1 immediately after the end of the Second World War to 6:1 at the time of the fall of communism in 1989. The newest data shows Poland’s marriage to divorce ratio to be already less than 3:1, a phenomenon which is strongly driven by Poland’s urban areas where it already fell to 2:1 (Figure 2).

![Figure 2. Number of marriages and divorces per 1000 population of Poland (1946-2013)](source: figure prepared using data of the Central Statistical Office (2014))

The decline of marriage does not imply childlessness however, as it occurs concurrently with skyrocketing proportion of out-of-wedlock births: from mere 5% in 1980 to 23% in 2013. Such a rapid increase in a hitherto stigmatised phenomenon, as suggested by the undertone of the Polish word \textit{bękart}, puts the scale of Poland’s behavioural (as opposed to declarative) conservatism under question.

![Figure 3. Out-of-wedlock births as a percentage of all live births (1980-2013)](source: figure prepared using data of the Central Statistical Office (2014))

Also, Poland, with little religious, racial or linguistic diversity, is often presented as a homogenous country. However, as far as out-of-wedlock births are concerned, Poland’s interregional differences are enormous: ranging from 13% in Lesser Poland to 40% in West Pomerania (Figure 4). In fact, Poland’s interregional differences can be much greater than international ones. The disparity between the two voivodeships is greater than that between Azerbaijan (15%) and Spain (41%).

![Figure 4. Out-of wedlock births as a percentage of all births in 2013, by voivodship](source: figure prepared using data of the Central Statistical Office (2014))

Secondly, Poland emerges as a country where the gender education gap to the detriment of men is one of the widest in the world. In all European countries, short of Austria and the United Kingdom, the number of men at universities continues to increase so that young men are better educated than their fathers and grandfathers. However, female enrolment grows even faster, rapidly changing the gender balance in the academic world. In Poland, the gender shift commenced much earlier and penetrated much deeper. Starting from the modest one percentage point (p.p.) gender difference in the late 1970s, the gap to the detriment of men has widened to as much as 17 p.p. Among today’s 24-29 year olds, 45% of women and only 28% of men have completed higher education.

Quantitative increase in education might not be sufficient to argue for the qualitative change, especially if some institutions in Poland have been criticised for offering education which is both deficient and maladapted to the labour market. Still, even if the quality of some academic institutions remains debatable, the educational change extends beyond human capital productivities to involve such areas as self-fulfilment, self-image, life aspirations and outlook on key socioeconomic institutions, such as marriage, family and labour market.

In fact, education emerges as the key differentiating factor in family model preference. Two thirds of women with higher education declare that they would not resign from work for the sake of the family even if their partner earned enough. The same is true only for 28% of women with primary or basic vocational education (Figure 6). Interestingly, among people with tertiary degrees and across middle class occupations, gender differences in the value attached to work become negligible or even invisible in opinion polls. The gender difference becomes considerable for the working class and crucial for farmers. In a different poll,9 only 7% of women with higher education said that they preferred a traditional family model, understood as that of male breadwinner and female-carer.

Even if there are not appropriate datasets of young cohorts to perform comparative modelling, descriptive statistics suggest upcoming changes in the influence of education and employment on fertility. The profile of new mothers is rapidly changing: 75% of women who became mothers in 2013 were either employees or self-employed – which is much higher than the employment rate for women in any age group in Poland. Only one in five was economically dependent on other family members and negligent proportion of new mothers was dependent on social transfers (Figure 7). In Poland, 54% of women of productive age are active on the labour market: this figure goes up to 59% for women aged 25-29 and to 64% for women aged 30-34, which are two main age groups in which women become mothers in contemporary Poland. These dynamics might mean that among young women labour market involvement increases, not decreases, chances for motherhood.

Contrary to the Beckerian model, the liberal shift and high value attached to work does not mean curbing reproduction plans. In fact, it is well-educated women who say that they plan more children.10 Another key process is that women with higher education are overrepresented among the new mothers, which might mean that the relationship between higher education and fertility is slowly becoming positive. Women with higher education comprised 47% of all women who gave birth in 2013. As shown earlier with Figure 5, in no age group in Polish society is the proportion of educated women that high, which might mean that the relationship between education and fertility is slowly becoming positive.

10. Poll of CBOS (2013) that asked a question ‘Do you plan to have children in the future?’ Among those who already have children, 28% of women with higher education, 16% with secondary education and 12% with primary education said ‘yes’. Among childless women, 77% with higher education, 80% with secondary education and 73% with primary education said ‘yes’.
and fertility has already reversed. As Esping-Andersen suggests, the relationship between female education and fertility, which historically has been negative, changes direction and becomes positive in countries that are relatively advanced in transition towards the gender equality equilibrium. His argument is supported by data from highly developed countries. Across the OECD, the relationship between fertility and women’s education (that until 1980s had been negative), in the 1990s changed direction and started to be positive.\(^\text{12}\)

**Figure 8.** Percentage of live births by women with higher education

![Percentage of live births by women with higher education](source)

However, the profile of new mothers and their preference for work are systemically incompatible with existing support networks, an incoherence that results from migration patterns and weak childcare infrastructure. Until the mid-1960s, most Poles lived in rural areas, which was followed by migrations to towns and, with the education boom, to big cities, succeeded by migration abroad after the EU accession. These dynamics mean that few Polish families have more than two generations living in one place – which dramatically reduces the availability of a support network, traditionally provided by extended family.

At the same time, Poland’s early childcare infrastructure is one of the weakest in the developed world. In 2013, nursery schools offered places for fewer than 5% of children below the age of three, while 80% of Poland’s municipalities lacked any form of organised childcare for this age group. A lack of infrastructure usually entails forced adaptive behaviour of women: 33% of mothers aged 18-45 say that they resigned from work because of difficulties in organising childcare. Additional 10% say that they were dismissed upon returning to work after maternity leave.\(^\text{13}\)

Discussion

The fall of fertility can tell us at least four crucial things about post-communist Poland. Firstly, transformations of the social, economic and in terms of family planning have been extraordinarily rapid and deep enough to change not only the characteristics of the young generation but also to reverse the direction of existing relationships between such social phenomena as education, employment and fertility. Statistical modelling performed on a representative sample of the whole adult population has shown that women with lower educational attainment have more children, analysis of the youngest mothers is suggesting the reverse.

Secondly, the current demographic crisis shows that the existing infrastructure of the country, especially industrial relations, public policies and networks of support, are completely maladapted to the youngest generations. With the onset of democratic changes in 1989, treating reproduction as an entirely private issue expressed respect for reproductive freedom of individuals, but also excused weak or nonexistent public policies with regards to family care, women’s employment and fertility. Today, Poland’s institutions, including work regulations, tax systems and welfare state arrangements tailored to the Beckerian family model leave little opportunities for life-work balance. In this way, Poland matches quite well the model of Esping-Andersen’s incomplete gender equilibrium, characterised by incompatibility of institutions that exacerbate, not mitigate, the conflict between professional aspirations and family life.

Thirdly, the demographic crisis means that modern Poland will be increasingly unstable on the systemic level. At the state-level, massive fertility fall has made the future of the welfare state, especially the pension system uncertain. At the economic level, it has changed the labour market structure, especially the dependency ratio, i.e. proportion of working to non-working population. Without the 2012 pension reform, by 2050 only 10 million workers would have to support 24 million of non-workers. With the 2012 reform the proportion changes to 11.4 million supporting 22.6 million, which is still a hardly sustainable scenario. At the family-level, low fertility has reorganized family ties. In the long run, the dynamics is likely to gerate a growing number of people with few, if any, family ties, with profound consequences for Poland’s public and private life.

Fourthly, an enormous disparity between desired and actual fertility can be interpreted as a serious blow to the well-being of Polish prospective parents – a welfare indicator that goes beyond macroeconomic indices, such as GDP growth, employment or wage levels. In 2011, Poland’s difference between actual (1.3) and desired (2.26) fertility amounted to 0.96 child per person – which together with Greece, Latvia and Estonia was the greatest disparity in the European Union.\(^\text{15}\) This disparity between desired and


\(^{14}\) All calculations are performed under an assumption that the employment rate will stay at the level of 60%. See: Appendix: Figures 1 and 2.

actual fertility points out unmet demand of people who resign or postpone parenthood for personal, social or economic reasons.

This highlights one of Poland’s paradoxes. On the one hand, Poland’s economy has performed impressively in the last twenty-five years: with its GDP rising from $6,8 thousand to $25 thousand in PPP per capita terms.\(^{16}\) Even though wages in Poland rise much slower than workforce productivity, both mean and median wages show increase – with the former being at 3,650 zł gross.\(^{17}\)

In the case of family planning, however, it is not an unobjectified perception of economic security that should be in the spotlight. In the case of Poland, relative income paradox is most visible among parents of the only child. Generally, parents of an only child have higher income than parents with more children but, at the same time, constitute the single most dissatisfied group with their financial situation.\(^{18}\) Likewise, despite higher income, they are two times less likely to have savings and much more likely to have debts than other groups of parents.\(^{19}\) This information should be juxtaposed with the fact that parents of an only child are substantially overrepresented in cities above 100 thousand inhabitants where 40% of them live, a third more than the proportion for the whole population. All these characteristics might suggest that parents of an only child are much more likely to be urban middle class with a high income, but also higher consumption aspirations than parents of larger families – which means that the relative income theory might have some weight in Poland which was not captured in the proposed research. Literature on post-communist fertility trends\(^{20}\) argues that transformation to capitalism made Central European countries much richer but, simultaneously, introduced high employment instability and reduced many state services, especially social benefits and state-provided accommodation, all of which could negatively affect fertility rates. This paradox necessitates differentiating between ‘objective’ and subjective perception of the material situation. The rich literature on psychological perceptions of well-being\(^{21}\)

points out numerous heuristics of the human mind: psychological cost of income instability, loss aversion surpassing gain satisfaction or ‘keeping up with the Joneses’ phenomenon which could matter more as the Gini index for Poland is rising.\(^{22}\) Some of these dynamics might be interpreted as ‘consumer’ the perception of economic growth by employment insecurity, rising aspirations as well as local and international comparisons.

References

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Journal</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Volume</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matysiak, A. (2008).</td>
<td>Polish childless are more likely to have savings than parents (23% versus 11%) and much less likely to have debts (27% versus 41%). All data are taken from the 2008 round of the World Value Survey.</td>
<td>The impact of family policy expenditure on fertility in western Europe.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>2008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frejka, T. (2008).</td>
<td>Determinants of family formation and childbearing during the societal transition in Central and Eastern Europe.</td>
<td>Demographic Research, 19, 139-17.</td>
<td>2008</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>139-17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{16}\) International Monetary Fund Data (2015) http://www.imf.org/external/data.htm

\(^{17}\) 3,650 złoty is the 2015 equivalent of 860 euros or 600 GBP.

\(^{18}\) In Poland, 45% of respondents with one child say they are dissatisfied with their financial situation. This is compared to 35% of parents of two children, 39% of parents of three children, 38% of parents of four children and 29% of the childless. All data are taken from the 2008 round of the World Value Survey.

\(^{19}\) Respondents with one child are less likely to have savings (6% versus 12%) and more likely to have debts (51% versus 39%) when compared to parents of more than one child. In turn, the Polish childless are more likely to have savings than parents (23% versus 11%) and much less likely to have debts (27% versus 41%). All data are taken from the 2008 round of the World Value Survey.


Appendix

Figure 1 Poland’s population at working and pre-working and post-working age (in millions). Scenario with the 2012 pension reform.

![Population Distribution](image1)

Figure 2 Poland’s population at working and pre-working and post-working age (in millions). Scenario without the 2012 pension reform.

![Population Distribution](image2)

---

23 All estimates take into account changes in retirement age implemented by the act changing the national law on pensions and retirement pay from National Insurance Fund (Dz.U. 2012, poz. 637).
The distinction between biological sex and socially produced gender does not arouse controversy in contemporary humanities and social studies. What is still being discussed is the boundary between them: what characteristics and behaviors depend on physiological features and what are learned through socialization processes? However, the gender category as such has been acknowledged academically and is scarcely questioned in today’s publications.

Arising from debates on women as historical subjects, the gender perspective questions the universality ascribed to men and problematizes the impact of gender on individual’s opportunities, social roles and interactions. It is a useful, critical category for analyzing and describing gender-power structures tied to a specific time and socio-cultural context. The discovery that many differences between women and men are socially constructed and, therefore, changeable enabled the establishment of gender mainstreaming, a strategy of the European Union for promoting gender equality.

As the theory of gender declines, the causal connection between sex and gender creates tensions in those spheres where sex is perceived as a pre-discursive element - where sex is being naturalized. The teaching of the Catholic Church is an example of a strictly essentialist and ontological approach to gender relations, referring to natural law theory. According to the social doctrine of the Church, the gender order has been revealed in the Bible which means that it is given by God and, therefore, indisputable. Sex/gender

1 Some feminist philosophers, like Judith Butler, claim that distinguishing sex from gender is unintelligible and politically counterproductive because it reflects and reproduce binary androcentric thinking (mind/body, culture/nature, etc.). They hold that both sex and gender are socially constructed.
is viewed as ‘a reality deeply inscribed in man and woman’ which cannot be neither chosen nor changed:

By creating the human being man and woman, God gives personal dignity equally to the one and the other. Each of them, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his [and her] sexual identity.

It is normatively accepted by those who identify as religious that there are two polarized sexes, which are thought by divine design to be different with complementary roles and responsibilities in family life, religious leadership and society. The opposition women – men corresponds with other binary pairs like emotionality – rationally thinking, nature – culture or private – public.

To propagate the only (Catholic) truth in terms of gender relations, opponents of gender mainstreaming and gender studies in Europe are forming networks and organizing internationally. They describe the concept of gender as a totalitarian ideology which aims to ruin families and promote misleading sexual practices. It is noteworthy that the conflict in post-communist Central and Eastern Europe is particularly pertinacious. The discourse around gender in Poland illustrates how moral panic is instigated by the Church in the process of secularization and modernization in order to reassert conservative values in society.

**Gender conflict in Poland**

Until 2012 the word ‘gender’ was discussed in Poland exclusively in academic contexts. One year later, it was chosen by scholars from the University of Warsaw and the Polish Language Foundation as ‘the word of the year’.

The rapid career of this word is due to the involvement of the University of Warsaw and the Polish Language Foundation as ‘the word of the year’.

The expression ‘gender ideology’ and ‘genderism’ suggest that it is represented by people with a morally blinkered or distorted conception of reality who disguise their own political and economic interests. The bishops claim that they know whose interests are being pursued through gender mainstreaming: ‘As a consequence of the education implemented by youth sexual educators, young people become regular customers of pharmaceutical, erotic, pornographic, pedophile and abortion enterprises.’ In contrast, they describe their own position as the (ideology-free) ultimate truth, which constitutes the guarantee of happiness and safety. By simplifying the values and creating these two opposite worlds, the Polish Catholics get forced into an ‘either–or’ decision: either they accept the Catholic vision of gender roles, or they give their consent to ‘the break-up of families and the defeat of the human being’ – there is no third option. The dichotomization of reality, based on

2 *Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Letter to the Bishops of the Catholic Church on the Collaboration of Men and Women in the Church and in the World (2004), no. 8.*

3 *Catechism of the Catholic Church no. 2393.*

4 It is important to note that the Polish language does not differentiate between sex and gender. Both words are expressed with the same term ‘płeć’ (Pol.). To refer to the concept of gender in Polish it is necessary to use the English word or add the term ‘cultural’ (Pol.: kulturowa). Similarly, both ‘female’ and ‘feminine’ (Pol. ‘kobiecte’) as well as ‘male’ and ‘masculine’ (Pol. ‘męskie’) have only one equivalent in Polish.


13 The letter was released online by the Catholic Information Agency (KAI) on December 20, 2013. Three hours after its publication it was removed and replaced by another, shorter and toned-down text. The English version is available on the official website of the Polish Bishops’ Conference: [http://episkopat.pl/dokumenty/listy_pasterskie/55841.4/Pastoral_letter_of_the_Bishops_Conference_of_Poland_to_be_used_on_the_Sunday_of_the_Holy_Family_2013.html](http://episkopat.pl/dokumenty/listy_pasterskie/55841.4/Pastoral_letter_of_the_Bishops_Conference_of_Poland_to_be_used_on_the_Sunday_of_the_Holy_Family_2013.html). (accessed September 14, 2015). In my analysis I refer to the original letter which is available online only in Polish: [http://www.diecezja.sosnowiec.pl/dokumenty/listy-episkopat-komunikaty/2264-biskupi-o-gender-list-pasterski-na-niedziela-sw-rodziny](http://www.diecezja.sosnowiec.pl/dokumenty/listy-episkopat-komunikaty/2264-biskupi-o-gender-list-pasterski-na-niedziela-sw-rodziny) (accessed September 14, 2015).

14 It can be used in both neutral and negative senses.

15 ‘Gender ideology’ is used in the letter as a collective term for: gender (social construct), gender theory (theoretical framework), gender studies (field of study) and gender mainstreaming (political strategy).
construction of ‘us’ and ‘them’ (‘good’ and ‘bad’), is reinforced in the text through emotionalization. This mechanism should ‘switch off’ the reflexive perception of the audience and convince them to the lack of alternatives.

Since Polish society was a victim of fascist and communist ideologies, the bishops refer to these experiences in several places in the letter. They write directly that the gender ideology is ‘deeply rooted in Marxism and neo-Marxism’. They construct an image of Poland as a nation, which is permanently threatened by foreign ideologies by warning against such institutions like the Council of Europe or the World Health Organization. As ideologies represent hidden interests, the authors of the letter insinuate that gender mainstreaming is being introduced into different structures of social life ‘without public knowledge of Poles’ and ‘presented in a positive way’.

The bishops mention ‘gender workshops’ which are organized in pro-equality nurseries and schools. They imply that the equality policy is harmful to children and refer to childhood innocence and purity; writing that WHO ‘promotes […] masturbation by preschool-aged children, encouraging them to seek joy and pleasure in touching their own bodies and those of their peers.’

There is no doubt the clergy tries to mobilize the faithful and expand their influence over Polish political life as the pastoral letter concludes with an appeal to Christian families, representatives of religious movements and Church associations and to all people of good-will calling for ‘courageous engagement in actions that will disseminate the truth about marriage and the family […]’ and to institutions responsible for Polish education ‘not to yield under pressure from the few but very loud groups with not inconsiderable financial resources, which in the name of modern education carry out experiments on children and young people’.

The pastoral letter divided Polish society between those who are tolerant of ‘gender’ and people heavily influenced by the clergy who tend to reject the notion. However, since the Church holds a strong influence on shaping public opinion, it touched off a series of social and political actions mostly against gender mainstreaming. The right-wing political party United Poland (Pol. Solidarna Polska) has convened a parliamentary group, ‘Stop gender ideology’, which aimed, among other things, to organize ‘awareness meetings against the introduction of equality policy in kindergartens and schools. As a reaction to aggression against teachers, the Polish Teachers’ Union (Pol. Związek Nauczycielski Polskiego) published an official statement on their website where they protested against the ‘irresponsible statements of the pseudo-experts who do not possess any pedagogical knowledge and who are not familiar with the Polish education system.’ A similar declaration was made by Polish academics who wrote that ‘the dialogue between the order of faith and order of the mind requires mutual respect and recognition of the autonomy of both.’

However, the voices from academia did not manage to influence the general public’s view and gender, the manufactured ‘folk evil’, became the focus of national scaremongering. A controversial step has been taken by the Congress of Women (Pol. Kongres Kobiet), the largest civic movement in Poland, who addressed a letter to Pope Francis. ‘(...) we are appalled by the unprecedented attack against women’s rights and the ideals of equality, which is being orchestrated by certain high-ranking officials of the Catholic Church in Poland. We are dismayed and helpless in the face of a deluge of furious hatred that has been unleashed upon us,’ they wrote. The letter caused a sensation and provoked different reactions. The critical opinions came from two sides – for the liberal the letter was too humble, for the conservative too radical. The church-associated university society Fides et Ratio formulated their own letter to the Pope to ensure him that the Women’s Congress is not representative of millions of Polish women. In fact, Polish women are ‘religious wives and mothers’.

The anti-gender debate initiated by the Catholic Church was so heated that Polish legislators hesitated to ratify the Council of Europe’s Convention on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Domestic Violence. According to Poland’s Catholic Church, the document is ideologically-loaded because of the use of the term ‘gender.’ ‘This convention attempts to create a new social order in which family and tradition are marginalized and the state gains instruments of deep control over them,’ the bishops’ Family Affairs Council wrote in his official statement.

‘Gender’ is more than a political slogan. It is a symbol of social anxiety and  

---

17 Sex education, perceived by the church as sexual degradation or sex promotion, is still hardly available in Poland. Instead of this, ‘Preparation for Family Life’, which is reflexive of a traditional Catholic family lifestyle, is officially required of all public schools.  
19 It consisted of one woman and 15 men.  
moral panic in Poland which needs to be historically considered.

Religion and politics in Poland

Poland is fairly homogeneous with respect to religion – since the end of 1980s, over 90% of Polish society identify as Catholic and as believers or strong believers. The deep connection with Catholicism and its national-conservative specification are attributable to the formative experience of the communist post-war period and to imposed atheization. The Roman Catholic Church – with the Polish Pope John Paul II at the head of it – was a key player in the time of transformation symbolically associated with the year 1989. The Church supported the resistance against the communist regime and helped to retain security and national identity of Poland. It definitely acted as a political force which understood and represented the oppressed population. The social need for democracy and co-determination under totalitarian rule was compensated by political action of the Catholic Church. According to the statistics, at the end of the 1980s Poles perceived the Church as the most trustworthy institution. Its contribution to fighting against communism had not only a historical, but also a symbolic dimension which even today has an impact on shaping the political order in Poland. The Polish clergy have not adapted to the Second Vatican Council, which strongly influenced the Western opener Catholic formations. In order to maintain the position of authority, the Polish priests and bishops orient themselves at the pre-Council teaching which gave the clergymen more power and recognition. The Polish Catholic Church with its specific traditional and confrontational character still tries – in the name of the absolute truth – to sustain the conservative attitude in Polish society and to pursue its policy objectives. The influence of the Catholic Church on legislation becomes clear with the example of gender equality policy.

The liberation from communist rule and a system change in Poland meant not only a triumph of the Catholic Church, but a defeat of the dawning women’s emancipation. Fuszara (1991) describes this period as a backlash in terms of gender equality: a return to traditional gender roles and the restrictions of the women’s rights. Under communism, Polish women did not have any possibilities for involvement in decision-making, however, from a legal point of view, and in comparison with Western countries, they were relatively emancipated. This is apparent from the high employment rate among women, secured workplaces after maternity leave, free access to abortion, and well-established childcare system, which were too early for feminism.

In 1993, under the Family Planning Act, abortion in Poland was radically restricted and since then all attempts at liberalization have remained unsuccessful. Polish pro-life groups are very active, but the heretofore unchangeable abortion law will not be liberalized. Today, a growing underground movement has formed to push the issues of gender equality – especially reproductive rights – though they risk accusations that they are communists. Slavova (2001) states that Eastern Europe was both ‘too late and too early for feminism’.

Conclusion

The Roman Catholic Church is still an important actor on the political stage in Poland. The debates on contraception, in vitro fertilization, and sex education, which recently became the subjects of intense public controversy, show that the Church is able to shift the political debate onto its own terrain. Nevertheless, the process of secularization seems to be the irreversible wave of the Poland’s future. The proportion of people who describe themselves as believers and who practice regularly has been declining since 2005, that is, since the death of the Polish Pope. The clergy have largely lost their authority over the laity: according to statistics (2013), the political involvement of the Polish Church is perceived by 50% of Polish society as too strong and by 70% as unwelcome. The church, which has accused gender theorists of being responsible for a deepening crisis of family and society, overestimates the concept of gender. The socio-cultural changes in Poland regarding the patriarchal heteronormative social order are inevitable and the clergy will have to respect the individual choice regarding sexual and reproductive matters.

In this period of change, of individualization and pluralization of society, it is increasingly harder to sustain the edict of religion as immutable truth. Polish Catholicism with its huge influence on politics and a near monopoly on religious belief is experiencing a crisis of credibility. In attempting to answer the question of why the Catholic Church in Poland perceives the new pluralistic world (including gender equality) as a threat and tends toward catastrophic rhetoric, the theory of Peter L. Berger can provide an explanation.

Peter L. Berger distinguishes two basic strategies for maintaining plausibility which can be used by traditional Christian churches during the process of pluralization and secularization. The perception of a religion in the situation of pluralism, where different structures of credibility are accepted, depends on how convincing the explanation of a religious system in terms of its functionality in the new social order is. The first method of maintaining of credibility is modernization, which means the adaption to pluralized society and integration of contrary tendencies. The second strategy in dealing with secularization is dichotomization of reality. This means spreading fear while presenting the own position as the only one possible rescue. The current attitude of the Polish Church hierarchy does definitely correspond to the second solution. Nowadays, the Catholic Church – which had been in a position of political authority for centuries and which has been allowed to act in the name of all Polish people – has to create a strategy of dealing with the differentiated reality and redefine its role in today’s increasingly democratic-pluralistic Poland.
Introduction

Analysing the post-war situation in Polish art in the late 1980s Andrzej Turowski coined the term ideoza. This linguistic blend of words ideology and gnosis was used to describe an obsessive situation in which every decision both personal and institutional is conditioned and impelled by a currently dominated ideology. ‘Ideoza is an ideologically suffused space of beliefs and systems, which restricts the free manifestation of thoughts by preordained and omnipresent perspective,’ Turowski explained in his text.1 This title condition originally referred to culture, but but in the light of research into socialist Poland that emerged over the last three decades, the term could be easily applied to other spheres of peoples’ activity in a country oppressed by the Party-state.2 Not undermining the impact of the ideology on life in People’s Poland, could one think of a sphere excluded from that hegemony or of an alternative force that could influence to a comparable extent official actions of the Party-state? In this paper I would like to present a struggle against this ideology centred on the example of the 1st Exhibition of Polish Light Industry in Moscow in 1949. Similar to other international exhibitions and trade fairs organised during the Cold War, the Moscow exhibition became not only a site of convergence, allowing ideas originating from different countries to meet, but also an event where diverse national agendas clashed.3 Using unpublished

---

2 Michał Murawski gives an interesting overview of the literature that discuss the dominance of socialist ideology over various spheres of life in the USSR and the socialist countries, economy in particular. Michał Murawski, Kompleks Pałacu. Życie Społeczne Stalinowskiego Wzgórza w Kapitalistycznej Warszawie (Warszawa: Muzeum Warszawy, 2015).
archival materials related to the exhibition in Moscow, this paper identifies the issues that ideology was valued against and circumstances in which that took place. In order to address that, it examines the process of creating the exhibition – forming its rationale, narrative and visual side – as well as the final outcome of these efforts presented to the public.

People, industry and achievements of socialist Poland
The exhibition of the Polish light industry was opened in Moscow’s Gorky Park on Saturday 20 August 1949.\(^5\) Three separated displays – thematic and industrial – with the cultural site and an attached open-air space occupied an area of about 1.3 acres.\(^5\) The Polish Film Chronicle newsreel provided an overview of the opening ceremony of this largest up-to-date presentation of Polish manufacturing.\(^6\) The video began with the scene of the crowd observing the Polish Ministry of Foreign Trade and Deputy Prime Minister Tadeusz Gede cutting the ribbon.\(^7\) The camera followed him walking down the stairs towards the textile pavilion to show around the accompanying officials. ‘Thousands of Muscovites every day visit the exhibition’s pavilions,’ announced the narrator enthusiastically. Camera captured the elegant crowd strolling through the exhibition’s sections looking with the same interest at Polish textiles, clothes and shoes, motorbikes and heavy machines. But what they were really interested in were not only – as the lector asserted – the achievements of the Polish industry, but also the people involved in the reconstruction of the country. Both the industry and the people of the socialist state were equally important subjects of the exhibition that it aimed to present.

The Gorky Park of Culture and Leisure was not a coincidental place to host this show. It had a longstanding association with the working class for which it was purposefully built in the late 1920s. It was conceived as a special place where the workers could spend their free time in a modern way – practicing sport, attending the amusement park, observing animals in the indoor zoo or watching a play in the theatre or the cinema. Meanwhile, unbeknownst to them, while enjoying this popular culture, they were also the subjects of the acculturation process orchestrated by Stalin. The spatial arrangement of the Park imposed different kinds of behaviours on the visitors and in so doing it played a role of the ‘fairground for «building the new man»’.\(^8\) The acculturation process was expanded by a new function that the Park gained in 1939 when, after several months of preparations and with few weeks of delay, it became the city’s main exhibition venue hosting newly founded All-Union Agricultural Exhibition (Vsesoyuznaya Selsko-Khozyaystvennaya Vystavka: VSKhV). VSKhV presented the agricultural achievements of the Soviet states as the success of recent collectivisation. The 1949 exhibition, preceded by similar shows organised by Hungary and Czechoslovakia earlier that year, seemed to be a symbolical continuation of this tradition. In the new post-Yalta reality, the All-Union was replaced by the Eastern Bloc and expanded by the new satellite countries that were united in the struggle for peace and socialism, as the inscription on the entrance to one of the Polish pavilion announced.

Tradesmen, bureaucrats and designers
In December 1948 Warsaw received positive information from Moscow about organising the Polish Light Industry Exhibition. According to the confidential note written by the Ministry of Industry and Trade representative, the exhibition was proposed by the Soviets with a particular involvement of the chief of the All-Union Trade Chamber. The extensive cultural and sport programming accompanying the event was suggested by Hilary Minc, the Minister of Trade, as an element highlighting the friendship between Poland and the USSR.\(^9\) With that decision, the scope of the exhibition changed and consequently had to merge commercial, political and artistic aspects. Keeping the balance presented a challenge for the cross-ministerial team administered by the Bureau of Fairs and Exhibitions with the Vice Commissar Tadeusz Tęßbricki as the main executive. The cultural programme of the exhibition was assigned to the Ministry of Arts and Culture with Juliusz Starzyński, art historian and initiator of the State Institute of Art who was supervised by the Vice Minister Włodzimierz Sokorski.\(^10\) It featured a large artistic exhibition covering Polish political caricature, paintings and sculptures from the 19th and early 20th century and the monographic exhibitions of paintings by Felicjan Szczeńzy Kowalski and sculptures by Xawery Dunikowski.\(^11\) The artistic team that designed the visual side of the event included artists of various professions, many of whom were previously employed at the Exhibition of the Regained Territories held in Wrocław in 1948. This was one the most important events in post-war Polish culture, where the canon of innovative solutions and a circle of exhibition designers for the next few decades were established. Among three thousand architects and painters, graphic designers and sculptors involved in design of the spaces, were acclaimed artists and undergraduate students, some of whom

---

4 The exhibition was open between 20 August and 18 September 1949.
7 Leopold Tyrmand depicted Gede as ‘a technocrat in the service of the communists who with stunning generosity pay him for their docile cooperation.’ Leopold Tyrmand, Dziennik 1954, ed. Henryk Dasko (Warszawa: Tento, 1995), 146.
9 The note was prepared by Marian Kalita, an economist, social and economical activist, Ministry of Industry and Trade’s plenipotentiary for the Exhibition of the Regained Territories and International Trade Fairs. AAN, Komisarz Rządu do Spraw Wystaw i Targów [I Polska Wystawa Przemysłu Lekkiego w Moskwie. Artykuły prasowe] Notatka z konferencji u Ministra Minca w dniu 26.02.1949.
were active during the pre-war triumphant years of Polish presence at the international exhibitions, including famous Polish pavilions at Paris International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts in 1925 and 1939 New York World’s Fair. For others, like Wojciech Zamecznik, the exhibition in Wroclaw became a turning point in his career and the beginning of a prolific and longstanding involvement with the discipline of the exhibition design.

Jerzy Hryniewiecki, architect and one of the most influential figures in the country’s cultural life, served as an Art Director of Wroclaw exhibition. One year later he played a similar role at the exhibition in Moscow, where his main task was to liaise between designers and the officials. He shared part of these duties with Bohdan Urbanowicz, a painter and architect working at the Ministry of Art and Culture on reforming post-war education system, who was responsible for the appropriate expression of the architectural and visual arrangements and Eryk Lipiński, well-known caricaturist, who became the exhibition advisor. Mikołaj Kokozow and Kazimierz Husarski were the exhibition’s main architects, meanwhile Marian Jeszke, Henryk Tomaszewski, Tadeusz Trepkowski and Jerzy Jarnuszkiewicz took care of graphics and paintings.

The artistic team was supervised by a few selected Party members. At the top of this hierarchy was Stefan Jędrychowski, Minister, Deputy Chairman of the Central Planning Office, earlier in the Ministry of the Navigation and the Foreign Trade. He worked closely with Jerzy Bogusz, senior official in the Mass Propaganda Department of the Party, a zealous bureaucrat supporting the Socialist Realism movement, who heavily criticised any signs of modernity in visual arts. Bogusz was the author of the exhibition script circulated among architects and designers that contained the exegesis of the main strands that the exhibitions aimed to fulfil; particularly, he was in charge of formulating the ideological theme of the event. The exhibition in Moscow was not the first presentation, which he was involved in, and over the years he developed a clear understanding of his political role in the exhibition making process. He expressed his ideas about the objective and scope of his work in an article published in 1950 in Nowa Kultura.

‘The editor,” he wrote, “formulates the exhibition script, establishes the main aspects of it, defines the hierarchy of issues to address. He does not specify the forms that will progressively illustrate the exhibition strand; it is an architect who gives the shape to the content. Nevertheless that does not mean that in the minute the editor passes the programme to architects and artists he is done with his task. On the contrary, he has the duty to support architects and artists in search for the solutions which would work best for the script.’

Polish style or the Soviet model?

These ‘right’ forms that Bogusz mentioned constituted the whole visual language employed by the exhibition artists. In the process of establishing this system, the organisers often referred to the earlier events organised by Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Especially the latter was an important reference for Polish exhibition committee to the extent that they visited Prague to meet with the national delegates responsible for commercial and artistic sections of the Czechoslovak exhibition. In that May Jerzy Hryniewiecki met with Czechoslovak architects who were keen to share their thoughts regarding practicalities of organising the event in Gorky Park. After his return to Warsaw, Hryniewiecki reported on the meeting. One of the most important aspects that he recalled which required particular consideration were the similarities and differences between two nations: their industries, art scene and the relationship with the USSR. In fact, there were many similarities between already opened presentation of Czechoslovak industry and Polish concept to be presented within the upcoming month: they shared similar proportion between exhibits of heavy and light industry, also the selection of trades and the amount of objects were also comparable. This information in the eyes of Polish organisers turned the exhibition into competition between two nations, especially given less than a month gap between both events. This situation, Hryniewiecki stressed, required special attention of the Polish committee in order to represent the country in a commendable way.

There was one important difference between the two presentations that the delegate noticed. While the Polish script considered contextual and commercial parts as equally important and organically connected, the Czechoslovak exhibition privileged the latter. Although introductory texts about contemporary Czechoslovakia spread across various parts of the display, they engaged with current political matters only in small measure. Captions and slogans were reduced in number in favour of images. In fact, pictorial elements appeared to be the bone of contention between the hosts. Two large panneaux placed above the entrance to the Czechoslovak pavilion had to be, due to what Hryniewiecki described as ‘particular aesthetics,’ covered up at the last minute before the opening of the show. Following this pitfall, Czechoslovaks advised the Polish delegation to replace in anticipation any painted decorations with the photographic images in order to avoid similar unpleasant situation. The suggestion was ignored: Hryniewiecki considered it irrelevant. He expressed belief that realism with a tendency to schematic simplification and expressionist deformation that characterised Czechoslovak contemporary art was not symptomatic of the Polish situation. Polish visual art, he believed, represented a dramatically different direction, and as such could be presented in Moscow without any concerns. The upcoming facts demonstrated that was not exactly so.

The discussions about national aesthetics continued at the following meetings. Then the character of Polish visual language was defined by comparison with other satellite countries and what was more important to the host. Moscow and Prague became the points of reference and according to them Polish organisers decided how the exhibition should (or more often) should not look like. On the exhibition committee meeting held on 20 April, Marian Kula, the director of Polish Economical Publishing House Polgos (Polskie Wydawnictwo Ekonomiczne) raised the question about the provenance of the forms that will be used throughout the presentation – should they follow Soviet model or be truly Polish?16

The preparation for the exhibition coincided with the epoch of Soviet influences in Poland and Socialist Realism was slowly infiltrating the national architectural and art scenes. In February, at the official symposium in Nieborów, Socialist Realism was proclaimed the official language of expression in the visual arts. A series of similar announcements were made a few weeks earlier at the Congress of Writers held in January in Szczecin and was followed by the architects’ convention in Warsaw in June and Congress of Composers and Music Critics in Łagów Lubuski in August. The meeting report do not reveal any explicit definition of what either model entailed, but given the circumstances most likely the ‘Soviet model’ referred to the newly acclaimed style of the Socialist Realism – and that was what Polish committee wanted to avoid.

From the time perspective disregarding the official directives that took place at the meeting can be viewed as much more than an occasional lack of compliance. Exhibition design had a privileged position, especially when presented in the international context. While other artistic disciplines were required to follow the official style, design for exhibitions was allowed to function without strong ideological pressures. It was considered to be a utilitarian discipline, which had a specific function to perform. Similarly free from the Socialist Realism strictures were other principally utilitarian and non-narrative disciplines, such as industrial architecture, graphic design and – especially in later years – product design, and some academic activities. This approach made them a sort of a professional asylum for many architects, designers and artists who did not want to adjust their work to the official regulations.

Apart from the less obstructive intervention of Socialist Realism into exhibition design one needs to consider that the Polish version of this style was in general milder than in other countries. Since Socialist Realism could be treated not only as an aesthetic, but also an ethical choice, the reason for this derivation from the norms set in the USSR should be looked for in the human behaviours and attitudes.17 Bohdan Urbanowicz, one of exhibition commissars, years later wrote his memoirs giving a personal account of this matter. Similarly, many members of the pre-war intelligentsia in the military ranks, including politicians, doctors, architects, artists and writers, spent the war in a Prisoners of War camp founded by German army and intended for officers.18 The provisions of international conventions guaranteed them relatively good living conditions in captivity. With basic needs secured, they organised various forms of cultural and educational activities out of which strong interpersonal bonds were formed and carried beyond the barbed wire of the camp. In many cases they resonated in the post-war reality.19 In the 1940s we, the former Murnau prisoners, in the same way as many other so called «intellectuals,» believed that it was our duty to start working in the Ministry of Art and Culture,1 he wrote.20 In the decisions of many former prisoners to join the official structures, Urbanowicz saw the reason why: even in the most excruciating phase, socialism in Poland had less severe repercussions than in other satellite countries.

There is no space in this paper to elaborate on these facts, yet even this very brief sketch of the discipline and the intellectual milieu in which it was developed, provides the framework for a discussion about visual language for the Moscow exhibition. It also allowed that throughout the debate the character of Polish national visual style was defined by denial rather than approval of certain artistic features: it was shaped in opposition to what was recognised as the Soviet model.

Translation of this vague idea of Polish style into concrete visual solutions to be used at the exhibition was another issue. The Soviet delegation that visited Poland in the midst of the exhibition preparation once again tackled it by indicating what this visual style should be. The delegation gave a nudge to Polish organisers rather than formulating clear directives that they had to follow. The trip organised in April 1949, a crucial moment of preparation to the Moscow exhibition, served as a reconnaissance of Polish industry and the exhibition methods looking at the example of XXII International Trade Fair in Poznań, which was held at that time. The Polish pavilion of the textile industry became the scene of confrontation. The textiles were spread and draped on an abstract construction of the form resembling classical sculptures, which allowed demonstrations of the patterns and the weight of materials. The Soviet delegation criticised the display reportedly saying that


18 There were two oflags, which resonated particularly strongly in the post-war history of Poland. Oflag II C Woldenberg was a place of captivity of Jerzy Hryniewiecki and also Wacław Klączyński and Tadeusz Barucki, architects from ‘Tygrysy’ group. Tadeusz Barucki, Wacław Klączyński, Jerzy Mokrzyński, Eugeniusz Worzyński (Warszawa: Arkady, 1987). The second one was oflag in Murnau where Urbanowicz, Solican and Starzyński were kept. See: Bohdan Tadeusz Urbanowicz, ‘Murnau (1939-1945)’, Biuletyn Historii Szuki 47, no. 3-4 (1985).

19 In the memoirs of former prisoners, the camp was depicted as the place where different social ranks, including politicians, doctors, architects, artists and writers, spent the war in a Prisoners of War camp founded by German army and intended for officers. See also: Marian Stępień, ‘Plastyka obozowa’, in Oflag IIC Woldenberg: wspomnienia jeńców, ed. Jadwiga Fąfara (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1984). See also: Marian Stępień, ‘Plastyka obozowa’, in Oflag IIC Woldenberg: wspomnienia jeńców, ed. Jadwiga Fąfara (Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza, 1984), 309-352.

it is not understandable to an average visitor. This comment was also an indication of which sort of patterns and forms would not be welcomed at the upcoming presentation in Moscow.

The New Man and socialist commodities
After establishing how the display would work the committee then had to make the decision about content of the display. As the editorial notes to the script state, the exhibition in Moscow should be about contemporary Poland, or more accurately, about the fifth anniversary of the people’s power in Poland. Its industrial section should be reflective of the information provided in the contextual part and function as an advertisement of the country’s industrial achievements, credited to Soviet assistance.

The industrial display presented physical objects, which included consumption goods, production tools and the outcomes of the heavy industry, which constituted the major part of the country’s economy and export in particular. Wood, art and paper industries were presented in the smaller pavilion, meanwhile textile, clothing and mineral industries, particularly important for the Polish export to the Soviet Union, occupied the large one.

The broad context the exhibits were set in explained the production and use of certain objects in the socialist country. In the last week of June, objects nominated by the respective industries were gathered and verified one by one by a special committee including members of trade organisations, executive exhibition committee and the designers. The delegates assessed whether the preselected objects met the requirements and if so where would they be located and in what quantities. These preliminary lists of accepted objects were sent to Moscow for the final approval, which was explained by the Soviet committee knowledge of the local market.

Separately from these commercial decisions, the exhibition script was being developed. The information about contemporary Poland appeared across pavilions and underlined the favourable comparison between the current conditions and the pre-war period. Positive change was presented as the outcome of Soviet ‘liberation’ and the following assistance that spread across social, economic and political spheres of life. The boost in the production of everyday objects, the increase of the employment rate and the state’s welfare achievements were presented as its direct consequences. Numerous photographs depicting Warsaw slowly emerging from the ruins illustrated a dynamic increase of living standard. An instant process of modernisation characterised by the mechanisation of industry, development of transport infrastructure and widespread access to education was overseen with paternal care by Bolesław Bierut, the country’s president, portrayed in the prominent place of the exhibition in the surrounding of the Politburo members.

However, in the centre of this narration was a New Man, or more precisely his post-war incarnation: the worker. Wincenty Pstrowski, the legendary miner that initiated the semi-mythic labour competition in 1947, was presented as the role model. His torso sculpted in coal was placed by the exhibition entrance, meanwhile the presence of many anonymous workers was featured across the venue. They symbolically represent humanised heavy machinery: industry emissaries tamed the machines demonstrating how they function; the photographic portraits of work leaders highlighted the link between personal biographies and the country’s recent history; graphics and paintings illustrated the scenes of the 1905 Revolution commemorating the historical connection between working classes of both nations.

The workers’ tasks were simple, repetitive and did not require advanced competencies. Their work was valued because of the fast pace rather than precision. The priority was to rapidly produce the volume of products that would meet the basic needs of society, as the first economic law of socialism envisaged. The workers were supposed to be the primary beneficiaries of the results of their own work and what’s more important, the owners of the production means. Here the work was looping like in Marx’s best dream: the labour and consumption of its result were not separated. New buildings elevated from rubble, wide motorways and everyday goods were to serve to the same people who worked on their creation.

In spite of the prosperity, thanks to the special psychological construction being developed under socialism, the workers were not vulnerable to excessive consumption and they were modest in their needs. The desire of luxury that was characteristic for the capitalist economic system led Western people to the dependence on commodities and turned them into voracious consumers with insatiable appetites. It was an extravagance for which there was no place in the socialist society. The organisers had not an easy task to translate this statement into the exhibition, one that could demonstrate exemplary consumers’ behaviours. They planned to do that through highlighting certain consumption preferences and the selection of ideologically ‘correct’ items. The commodities had to avoid any allusions to luxury, as it might have had damaging effects on the morale of the general audience. One of the ways to achieve that was to present objects in a meticulously crafted scenography outside of the consumerist context. In the minutes from one of the exhibition meetings, we read about decorative crystal vessels that were to be placed within the fairy tale space motif constructed in one of the pavilions. The grotto with Snow White and the seven dwarfs in a diamond mine was, according to organisers, abstract

23 AAN, Komisarz Rządu do Spraw Wystaw i Targów, sygn. 45, Protokół z konferencji międzynarodowej odbytej w dniu 18 stycznia 1946, 1.
enough to replace bourgeoisie interior scenography where it would be conventionally displayed. Wooden furniture associated with the pre-war upper class should not have been presented at all as the directives instructed. Instead, the exhibition should turn their attention to simple functionalist furniture for workers’ houses.

However, following these ideas would jeopardise the exhibition’s main propagandist objective – to astound foreign visitors and present wealthy Poland at the peak of its economic possibilities. The issue provoked heated discussion as the question whether the exhibition should present the best, the standard, or the potentially possible to prototype objects, was not easy to answer univocally. The final decision was made by Henryk Golasiński from the Ministry of the Light Industry who opted for presenting the best rather than the average and popular objects that Poland had recently produced.

Consequently, the exhibition featured objects that had not much in common with the socialist ideas and workers’ lives. The photographs of the recently accomplished social housing for Warsaw Housing Cooperative in Żoliborz was presented next to room-like models of living apartments and communal spaces filled with furniture and everyday objects. Only two spaces in this section explicitly referred to the living habits of the working class: a room mentioned in documents as ‘combined’, and the community hall presented as part of a larger social movement called ruch świetlicowy developed in Poland at that time. Other equipment, including a piano and representative furniture resembled the pre-war living conditions of the middle class or even intelligentsia rather than the working class. Despite those efforts to showcase the favourable collection of products, the exhibits were harshly criticised. An internally circulated note highlighted the striking contrast between the mediocre objects with the aesthetically pleasing and well-planned exhibition space.

**Conclusion**

Looking into official documents from the process of making the Moscow exhibition reveals complex processes that took place around organising and planning the event. These archival materials proved that rather than automatic execution of the ideological directives, the exhibition was a place of much more complex, nuanced interplays and multidirectional negotiations between institutions and individuals involved in the process. The main reason for that complexity was a dual objective that every exhibition had to address, which was proclaimed at the cross-ministerial meeting held in January 1946: ‘There cannot be any purely economic exhibition without a cultural and artistic note. There cannot be an artistic exhibition without an economic interest. (…) Behind every cultural exhibition goes a propagandist one and its ultimate goal is to support country’s economic interest.’ That was realised in collaboration, but not without heated debates, by bureaucrats, tradesmen and exhibition designers. Although many decisions had to be accepted by Moscow, there was often considerable space left for the manifestation of nationalism and autonomy.

The 1st Polish Exhibition of Light Industry Moscow can be treated as a representative for Polish industrial displays presented abroad in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Their narration had not changed significantly – following exhibitions included photos from few recent political rallies, introduced adjusted production norms announced in the six-year economic plan and intensified the calls for global peace following the engagement in the exacerbated situation in the Far East. In the midst of this narrative was the figure of the worker, whose central position was slowly taken over by a socialist consumer only around 1953. Their objective over upcoming years was to enforce the positive image of the country in at least the same degree as to initiate commercial contracts, which often required denying officially acclaimed and propagated ideology.


28 Warszawska Spółdzielnia Mieszkanioa: WSM complex in Żoliborz was designed by modernist architects Barbara and Stanisław Brukalscy. The post-war complex presented at the exhibition was continuation of the larger social housing scheme commenced before the war. The 13th Colony called also the Home for the Lonely, consisted of 130 single and double rooms, communal restaurant downstairs and the reading room on the lower floors of the building. AAN, Komisarz Rządu do Spraw Wystaw i Targów [I Polska Wystawa Przemysłu Lekkiego w Moskwie. Artykuły prasowe] Sprawozdanie z posiedzenia Komisji Weryfikacyjnej, odbytego w dniu 22 czerwca 1949 roku, 2. See also: Marta Leśniakowska, ‘The Brukalskiis’ Poetics of the Avant-Garde,’ in Out of the Ordinary: Polish Designers of the 20th Century, ed. Cezława Frejlich (Warszaw: Adam Mickiewicz Institute, 2011), 172-183.


31 AAN, Komisarz Rządu do Spraw Wystaw i Targów, sygn. 45, Protokół z konferencji międzyministerialnej odbytej w dniu 18 stycznia 1946.
Selected bibliography


Fritzsche, Peter, and Jochen Hellbeck. ‘The New Man in Stalinist Russia and Nazi Germany’. Selected bibliography


Shaw, Claire. ‘A Fairground for «building the New Man»: Gorky Park as a Site of Soviet Acculturation’. Urban History 38, no. 2 (2011), 124-44.


Archival sources


Kinga Koźmińska

Somerville College, University of Oxford
kinga.kozminska@ling-phil.ox.ac.uk

Language ideologies and gender in the modern Polish community in the UK

KEYWORDS: LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES, POLISH DIASPORA, GENDER, TRANSNATIONALISM, UK, POST-EU ENLARGEMENT MIGRATION

Introduction

In the modern world, people migrate at a faster pace than ever before. The ease of mobility and ongoing globalization question the integrity of homogeneous nation-states with homogeneous languages and cultures. Thanks to cheap transportation and new channels of communication, people engage in transidiomatic practices1 that allow for creation of new social forms. Drawing on resources from variegated sites unlimited by territorial boundaries, modern migrants are able to construct new identities and lifestyles and thus, through their linguistic choices, they manifest their new sociocultural positioning in the world.

An exemplary group of such modern migrants can be found in the British Isles, where after the EU enlargement in 2004, Eastern Europeans, and Poles in particular, have been migrating at an unprecedented pace. Within ten years, the Polish community has grown to be one of the largest in the United Kingdom. Even during the recession, although the number of migrants declined, ‘the volume of new arrivals remains sizeable.’ 2 The migrants coming to Britain are a mixture of young and old, educated and uneducated, people with considerable knowledge of English and without any ability to speak the language. Many of them enter the British education system, and thus become bilingual in English and Polish. Similar to other modern migrants, thanks to cheap transportation and new technologies, Poles are able to maintain their home language and culture, while speaking English when living in the UK. How do they position themselves in the modern world? Where do they belong and what is the role of language in their identity construction process?


Language ideologies and context

I intend to answer these questions by discussing language ideologies observed among a group of select members of the Polish community. Simultaneously, I show how the role of language for constructing new Polish transnational identities may differ among members of the same community. My understanding of language ideology is based on Judith Irvine’s definition of language ideology as ‘the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relations, together with their loading of moral and political interests.’ Following Woolard, I posit that language ideologies allow us ‘to relate the microculture of communicative considerations of power and social inequality, to confront macrosocial constraints on language behavior and to connect discourse with lived experiences.’ They are ‘social constructs: they are ways of understanding the world that emerge from interaction with particular (public) representations of it.’ Guided by this definition of language ideology, I examine how language ideologies within the Polish community in Britain are multiple and constructed by particular political attitudes, which influence the cultural ideas about language. Such language ideologies are shaped ‘in the interest of a specific social or cultural group’, they are based on speakers’ social experience and they are often related to their political-economic interests. I argue that language ideologies are multiple due to the diversity of meaningful social divisions within bigger sociocultural groups which create various perspectives that can serve as indices of group membership. The fact that I see language ideologies as multiple among members of the same speech community allows for a close examination of potential conflict and contestation within this particular social group. Moreover, as argued by Blommaert, the recognition of multiplicity of language ideologies may also point to historical processes that members of social groups employ to make their ideologies hegemonic in wider society.

As ‘ideologies compete within any given society and historical period’, language ideologies within the Polish community in Britain are also multiple and contested. As is shown in this paper, in the context of the group under study they are inflected by gender. Thus, I aim to briefly depict various sociocultural identities observed among the members of the group with a special focus put on the discussion of gender differences and reasons behind them.

The paper explores the concept of the modern Polish transnational identity as constructed by different language ideologies among a group of 30 Polish young adults who came to the UK to study and are now living and working in the Britain. The choice of the group was not random, as during my preliminary fieldwork in 2012, it was among members of this group that I noticed new speaking styles in Polish, which was of importance for the larger project as it had to do with the study of language change in this particular language contact situation. This is also the first generation of Poles brought up in a non-communist Poland, who, when migrating, did not have to choose between Poland and the West as their parents and grandparents did, but who like other Europeans could easily move within the European Union.

As suggested before, I describe the emergence of new Polish transnational identities drawing on results of a larger sociophonetic study that I have been conducting for the purpose of my PhD project, which examines language ideologies and speaking styles among Polish young adults. The study is based on a series of 30 one-to-one interviews (15 with women, 15 with men) conducted in South-Eastern England from July 2013 to August 2014. At the time of the interview, participants were aged between 22 and 32. All had moved from a range of medium-sized and large cities in Poland to the UK after the EU enlargement in 2004 and had spent between three and a half and ten years in Britain. They are speakers of Standard Polish, educated first in Poland and then at one or more UK universities. The interviews were conducted in Polish and centered around a number of key questions relating to the speakers’ experiences of living in the UK, their language ideologies, views on nationhood and Polish and British cultures, their stances towards the UK, Poland and the world, and their social networks.

Sociocultural identities

A thorough analysis of the contents of the interviews allowed me to distinguish two major categories of contrasting sociocultural identity: seventeen informants (5 female, 12 male) who present themselves as nationally Polish and seven informants (5 female, 2 male) who reject nationality and present themselves as cosmopolitan. Throughout the paper, I will call these groups Polish Poles and Polish Cosmopolitans, though these labels are not my own invention, but are used by some speakers themselves in the interviews.

Between the two extremes, there is also an intermediate group of six speakers (5 female, 1 male) who retain selected aspects of Polish culture, but who do not participate in the life of the UK Polish community to the same extent as Polish Poles. The numbers of individuals belonging to each group are not equal because sociocultural identity was not used as a criterion for sampling. In this project, sociocultural identity turned out to be a variable whose potential significance only emerged during the fieldwork and qualitative analysis. Thus, no accurate statement about the distribution of sociocultural identities can be made and the aim was not to secure statistical representativeness, but to achieve saturation of the studied sociocultural categories.

The saturation was determined in the course of the data collection process by means of thick-description and analysis of the fieldwork. The sampling logic was followed only in that I aimed to analyze an equal number of interviews with female and male speakers in order to compare the two genders. The three groups, Polish Poles, In-betweens and Polish Cosmopolitans, position themselves differently in relation to Poland, the UK and the world, which is now discussed in more detail. The first group, Polish Poles, constitute a group that identifies very strongly with being Polish. For them, Polishness is equal to national identity. Being nationally Polish allows them to find their place in the social structure in Britain while simultaneously giving them a sense of belonging. In the UK, they position themselves as Poles who do not have a desire to become British, which is exemplified in the excerpt from an interview with a 27-year-old male speaker from London when he describes that he wants to be perceived as Polish since he will never become English:

The need for identity is quite big we live in a country where we will never be English and we don’t at least, I don’t have such a desire and, and I would like others to perceive us in a clear way that we aren’t Russians, we aren’t Czechs, but we are Poles […]

When asked about his understanding of Polishness.

It’s some national identity it’s attachment to a certain social group it is uhm some economic identity also yes? Or, rather economic patriotism it’s also some sort of pride of cultural achievements, yes? And the will to make it better and, and participation in it and, and what else? So probably also, it’s also self-esteem, yes? It’s a feeling, it’s a feeling of some autonomy, a feeling which allows us to live in society and go through life with this confidence.

(Adam, male, aged 27 years old)11

In consequence, Polish Poles orient themselves more towards the Polish diaspora community and Poland than towards Britain and the world. As a result, they embrace Polish culture, participate in Polish organizations and surround themselves with other Poles, which enables them to express their cultural and national affiliation in their daily lives in Britain. The Polish language becomes a means to express oneself as ‘really’ Polish. This is a language that constitutes their Polish national identities, which is corroborated by an excerpt from an interview with a 27-year-old male speaker, who argues for Polish being an important component of himself:

[...] probably because I think Polish is some part of Polish identity and the moment I admitted to myself that I was losing it that is that I didn’t control it especially when I’m in Poland, then it would mean that I was less of a Pole, that as if I went away and actually lost something [...] I think this is exactly it speaking English Polish or I don’t know using English words as if the Polish language was not important to me and it is, I think it’s part of my national identity and I treat it as such.

(Kamil, male, aged 27 years old)

In the excerpt, Kamil like many other Polish Poles claims that he tries not to use too much English in his Polish. Like many other Polish Poles, he becomes a linguistic purist. For him, the ideal of pure language can even go together with a more nationalistic stance towards Polishness, that is to say, together with the idea of pure Poles without any foreign traits, which can be observed in a quote below:

(…) and it is not that Poland is only composed of pure Poles, on the other hand, this idea, which is somewhere in my head, to be a Pole without any foreign traits maybe it’s fake, I don’t know, but this is an ideal that I believed in for a long time.

(Kamil, male, aged 27 years old)

In contrast, Polish Poles treat English as a tool for communication necessary to live in the UK rather than a language with which they have an emotional connection.

Divergently, Polish Cosmopolitans reject nationality and orient themselves towards the world and the UK rather than Poland. They understand Polishness as a link with their families and childhood memories rather than national identity, which is best explained by a 30-year-old female speaker in the following excerpt:

I mean I don’t have a need probably, exactly, I don’t have a need to as if, as if to include myself in any nationality because I know, because I know that no one will take it away from me that I’m Polish and I don’t have to prove it to anyone and in the same way I don’t have to now prove to anyone that I’m English […] or thinking about what it would give me if I call myself that I’m Polish or that I give myself a label that I’m from England.

(Kaja, female, aged 30 years old)

Unlike Polish Poles, they do not seek a sense of belonging either in the Polish diaspora community, nor in Polish society. For Polish Cosmopolitans, Britain and the world become central points of reference in their daily lives as they wish to be part of the English-speaking world and global economy. They do not intend to go back to Poland. As a result, their social networks are more international than those of Polish Poles and the English language becomes a language of utmost importance in their lives. In contrast, they do not consciously maintain Polish culture and do not care about the Polish language. Instead, they want to use English as much as they can, a view that can be observed in the excerpt from an interview with a 23-year-old female speaker when she claims that her English has improved at the expense of her Polish:

(…) and for sure now that like I had people who’d come and tell me: God how you speak an amazing Polish, now it’ll never happen, yes? Because I don’t use such
a super language it’s a bit something like something for something, yes? Well, I live here and I work to have this better British but a cost of this is that my Polish is getting worse, as if I don’t have time to work on it now.
(Paulina, female, aged 23 years old)

As can be observed from the discussion so far, the two ‘extreme’ groups differ significantly in terms of their positioning in the world. However, there is also an intermediate group which retains some aspects of Polish culture, but which orients itself more towards Britain and the world than towards Poland. A typical understanding of Polishness of an In-between is expressed by a 30-year-old female speaker in the excerpt below when she says she feels like a citizen of the world, but being Polish is part of it:

I feel more like a citizen of the world than a Pole, which some of my friends make fun of because: how come? Because you speak Polish, your parents are from Poland, on the other hand, you live in England, so why don’t you accept British citizenship? […]

When asked whether she feels Polish in any way.

Yes, yes, of course.

When asked how it goes together.

Like a square is a rectangle.
(Agata, female, aged 30 years old)

In-betweens still identify themselves as Polish, but do not surround themselves with Polish contacts to the same extent as Polish Poles. Nor do they participate in the life of the UK Polish community. The aspect of the culture that all of them express a wish to keep abroad is the Polish language. However, for them the Polish language is not a constituent part of their Polish national identities, but rather a component of their cultural heritage and, similar to Polish Cosmopolitans, a link with home, which is best articulated by a 27-year-old female speaker when she argues for a historical-cultural understanding of Polishness:

For me, it has a sentimental value, maybe not a superior value, but probably Polishness has a historical-cultural-traditional dimension for me.
(Sylwia, female, aged 27 years old)

As all speakers are well-educated and still look back at Polish society, they draw on norms of Polish society, where the ability to speak Standard Polish is iconic of being well-educated and professional, which is exemplified in the quotation from an interview with 27-year-old female speaker:

I think it’s in general because of a level of education I think that these people try to speak any language properly.
(Sylwia, female, aged 27 years old)

Moreover, since they do not exclude the possibility of going back to Poland and having high positions in their chosen professions there, they maintain the language in its standard form.

Gender differences
The identities that emerge from the interview data can be represented on a continuum from the ‘most Polish’, where Polish national identity, culture and language are maintained, to the ‘least Polish’, where the concept of national identity is rejected and so is the maintenance of culture and language. In between there is a range of attitudes, with speakers emphasizing the importance to them of certain aspects of Polishness. The three groups are unequally distributed in my sample across the two genders. For women, there is an equal distribution, while for men it is not the case. There are twelve men who have been classified as Polish Poles, two as Polish Cosmopolitans and one as a representative of the intermediate group.

I acknowledge here that the chosen methodology might have influenced the distribution of the three groups. However, it has to be borne in mind that female participants expressing the three identities have been recruited with the same degree of likelihood. Moreover, women and men differ in terms of their willingness to return to Poland: most men (11 - Polish Poles) expressed a wish to return to Poland in the near future (defined as ‘a few years’). In contrast, some women did not exclude a possibility of going back in indefinite future, but they claimed it was highly unlikely. Additionally, problems with recruiting male participants have been encountered suggesting that Polish men who had been educated in the UK went back to Poland, an observation that might indicate a trend, but requires further investigation.

In the interviews, male speakers justify their wish of going back by providing three main reasons: socioeconomic reasons, family and psychological comfort, and national obligation. Most male Polish Poles want to stay in the UK to gain professional experience and then return to Poland to hold higher positions in international companies. According to the participants, having an international education and professional experience should enable them to climb the career ladder easily at the same time avoiding the exploitation and unstable employment characteristic of lower positions typically held by young adults in Poland. Moreover, they associate Poland with psychological comfort, as expressed by a 27-year-old male speaker in the following excerpt:

When it comes to my inner need, or, or, or 100% comfort psychological comfort, I think Poland.
(Adam, male, aged 27 years old)

Thus, Poland is a suitable place for them to set up their families. As for Polish Poles, Polishness is understood in terms of national identity, male
Polish Poles also see it as their national obligation to go back to Poland and participate in the changes there, which is corroborated by an excerpt from an interview with a 24-year-old male speaker, who expressed excitement at the prospect of going back to Poland:

We live in the times that are a huge, huge, let’s say such a window of possibilities for our country and it’d be great to be part of these changes, and, and you know and, and to contribute to this this all [...] and if I feel such a need, or, or someone calls me and says [Daniel] it’d be great if you came back because we’re beginning to I’m setting up a company and I think it’d be great to work or a possibility to work in a great organization opens up or on the government’s side, then I’d think about it.

(Daniel, male, aged 24 years old)

In contrast, all female participants claim that they enjoy their life in the UK as Britain gives them more possibilities than Poland. Such reasoning is demonstrated in the fragment from an interview with a 27-year-old female speaker below, where she acknowledges that life in the UK is more comfortable than in Poland:

When asked about the reasons for staying in the UK.

Such small things that make life easier here made me feel less like going back because when you go back to Poland you can feel that they put skids under everything you do and here it’s easier, yes probably forever, yes. [i.e. staying in the UK]

(Maria, female, aged 27 years old)

Some female informants, especially Polish Cosmopolitans, argue for social reasons being the key factor for their staying in the UK. They often depict Polish society as monolithic, with the standard norm to marry and set up one’s family early, which is illustrated by the following fragment from an interview with a 30-year-old female participant:

 [...] at the age of twenty five years they have kids families and just close themselves at home and nothing happens in their lives and women only cook and men their bellies only grow and they drink beer and that’s it practically. It’s only work-home, work-home and here people have ambitions more or a different concept of life.

(Iza, female, aged 30 years old)

This does not mean that women in my sample refrain from having families and getting married. On the contrary, none of them excludes such a possibility. However, they see the UK as a place that gives more flexibility and opportunities, also for their career development. Thus, their strategies for life in the UK differ from those of men: female informants less frequently have or wish to have Polish partners than male participants.

Out of fifteen women only three have or wish to have a Polish partner (3 – Polish Poles), while the rest are in relationships with English or international partners, or do not limit themselves to having a Polish partner. In contrast, ten men have or wish to have Polish partners, while five do not (most Polish Poles and both Polish Cosmopolitans). Additionally, on the basis of results of a special task conducted to establish participants’ social networks, women have more international social networks other than kinship than men. Only five women have ethnicity scores of their social networks equal or exceeding 50% (mostly Polish Poles), while this is true for most men.

Discussion and conclusions

Gender differences observed in the paper must be explained within the context of the participants’ social position as well as their symbolic value in Polish culture. Disparate tendencies in expressing the three sociocultural identities with female speakers being more likely to present themselves as cosmopolitan, which as the larger study shows goes together with linguistic innovation, link linguistic change to social change, where women and men have different socially determined obligations and thus, may react differently in the new social context. Despite a significant increase in the number of women who educate themselves and work in Poland in comparison to previous decades 12, Polish society remains patriarchal in some respects. 13 14 15 16 Like in other countries in the region, in the years of transformation women in Poland became ‘associated with the idealized and even romanticized private’ usually having ‘unstable, part-time work and multiple jobs’, whereas men belonged to the public sphere and usually had ‘regular and secure jobs’. 17 Moreover, in Poland men hold the vast majority of positions of power. Similar to other countries in the region, after the 1980s and 1990s the proportion of women within political representation significantly decreased. In recent years, some changes in gender relations can be observed (e.g. an increase in female political representation has been reported), although at the time of the fieldwork, the percentage of female parliamentarians still did not exceed 25%. 18 19 In terms of female participation in local government, a slow but steady increase has been observed from 16% in 1998 to 24% in 2010. 20

In Poland, like in Eastern Europe in general, female participation is higher at local levels, but it diminishes with rank in local politics. Furthermore, when compared to other European countries, while being professionally active, Polish women are expected to perform their roles as mothers and wives quite early, although a significant increase in the average age at which one marries has been noticed in the past two decades: the median age of first-time brides and bridgegrooms in Poland is 26 and 28 years old respectively. The image of a woman as a mother and a wife is often reinforced in Polish public discourse, where right-wing parties and the Catholic Church often give femininity a symbolic, maternal significance, as it is often associated with the Holy Mary, Matka Polka (Mother-Pole) or Poland itself. In general, for Polish nationalism, a woman-mother plays a superior role in comparison to single and childless women and sexual minorities.

Moreover, as traced by Janion, Polish romantic tradition treats a female who demands equal rights and attention of men as competition. Thus, the observations made in this study can be understood in relation to Polish social and cultural norms that differently value women and men. This may lead Polish men to express national Polish identities with language being its constitutive part more often than Polish women. Playing important roles in the UK Polish community allows Polish men to have power when living in Britain, which is in line with the social order they know from Poland. As opposed to Polish men, Polish women may be likely to develop less-Poland oriented identities with less attention paid to the Polish language, like in the case of Polish Cosmopolitans, as even when nationally Polish, women in my sample do not necessarily intend to go back to Poland. Since Britain offers more possibilities with better prospects for stable employment, it may be more appealing for women. Thus, the two genders may be developing different strategies in Britain, which is reflected in women more often having international partners and more international social networks other than kinship than men. In contrast, Polish men may be more willing to return to Poland as their international experience and education should enable them to play important roles in Polish society and economy. For both social and economic reasons, the return to Poland may be more difficult for women.

The paper shows that the informants interviewed in this study develop multiple transnational identities with different significance given to the Polish language: ranging from Polish being part of national identity, through being constituent of cultural heritage, to being a private language with a tendency, to a shift towards the English language. By examining Polish social and cultural norms, I tried to offer possible reasons for gender differences observed in the sample with Polish men being more likely to express greater affiliation with Polish national thought and the Polish language. The study shows that Polish women’s and men’s language ideologies are partial, interest-laden, contestable and contested. And as ‘a representation of language is always a representation of human beings in the world’, in this particular time and place by their linguistic choices women seem to be ‘undermin[ing] the legitimacy’ of the order they know from Poland, that is, ‘that the sense the way things are is desirable and natural, and immutable’, albeit not always in a fully conscious and deliberate way and never, as Marx said in another context, under conditions of their own choosing.
Bibliography


—. Podstawne informacje o Rozwoju Demograficznym Polski do 2015 roku. 2014.


Janson, Maria. 'Poegnanie z Polską. Jeszcze Polska nie umarła... ' Krytyka Polityczna 6 (2004): 140-151.


Small, Mario. 'how Many Cases do I Need?' on Science and the Logic of Case Selection in Field-Based Research.' Ethnography 10 (2009): 5-38.


Vasco Kretschmann
Freie Universität Berlin
v.kretschmann@fu-berlin.de

The Triple Reinvention of Wrocław in its Twentieth Century Exhibitions

KEYWORDS: BRESLAU, EXHIBITION, EXPULSION, GERMANY, HISTORY, JEWISH, MUSEUM, POLAND, RECONCILIATION, REINVENTION, SILESIA, SYNOPSIS, TRADITION, WORLD WAR II, WROCLAW

Introduction: Museums as Indicators and Generators of Historical Culture

In the twentieth century, Breslau/Wroclaw reinvented itself more than once. Without a doubt, the most radical disruption in its historical tradition occurred in 1945, when nearly the entire population of the Silesian capital was replaced and Wrocław became a part of Poland.1 In the last decades of the German period, the defeat in World War I and the Nazi dictatorship shaped the city in new ways. But the period of de-Stalinization after 1956, and the end of socialist master narratives in 1989, had consequences for the city’s historical culture as well. A closer look at Breslau/Wrocław’s museums, the generators and storage facilities of local history, helps us understand the self-images of this Central European city, shaped in the last century by violence and destruction as well as by dramatic renewal and European reconciliation. This article examines how Breslau/Wroclaw has dealt with its past in four phases of the twentieth century. Concentrating on four main exhibitions, opened in 1908/35, 1954, 1980, and 2009, the article looks at the generators and storage facilities of local history, helps us understand the self-images of this Central European city, shaped in the last century by violence and destruction as well as by dramatic renewal and European reconciliation. This article examines how Breslau/Wroclaw has dealt with its past in four phases of the twentieth century. Concentrating on four main exhibitions, opened in 1908/35, 1954, 1980, and 2009, the article looks at different attempts at narrative synopsis, a coherent construction of local past from early history to the present time. The historical presentations reveal warring images, cultural practices, and definitions of the city’s historical and current heritage.

1 Like in most cities and villages of the new Western und Northern territories that Poland gained after World War II, nearly the entire German population of Wrocław had to leave their hometown. In the 1930s Wrocław counted roughly 630,000 inhabitants; only about 2% were Polish. Between 1945 and 1947, most of the German population – more than 200,000 people – were resettled to the Allied occupation zones of Germany. Until 1949, 250,000 Poles from central Poland and the former Polish eastern provinces moved to Wrocław. In 1980 the city counted more than 600,000 inhabitants once again. See Beata Maciejewska, Wrocław: Dzieje Miasta (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 2002), 87, 139; Gregor Thum, Die fremde Stadt: Breslau nach 1945 (München: Siedler, 2003), 135, 148, 531.


Kretschmann, Vasco
Freie Universität Berlin
v.kretschmann@fu-berlin.de

The Triple Reinvention of Wrocław in its Twentieth Century Exhibitions

KEYWORDS: BRESLAU, EXHIBITION, EXPULSION, GERMANY, HISTORY, JEWISH, MUSEUM, POLAND, RECONCILIATION, REINVENTION, SILESIA, SYNOPSIS, TRADITION, WORLD WAR II, WROCLAW

Introduction: Museums as Indicators and Generators of Historical Culture

In the twentieth century, Breslau/Wroclaw reinvented itself more than once. Without a doubt, the most radical disruption in its historical tradition occurred in 1945, when nearly the entire population of the Silesian capital was replaced and Wrocław became a part of Poland.1 In the last decades of the German period, the defeat in World War I and the Nazi dictatorship shaped the city in new ways. But the period of de-Stalinization after 1956, and the end of socialist master narratives in 1989, had consequences for the city’s historical culture as well. A closer look at Breslau/Wrocław’s museums, the generators and storage facilities of local history, helps us understand the self-images of this Central European city, shaped in the last century by violence and destruction as well as by dramatic renewal and European reconciliation. This article examines how Breslau/Wroclaw has dealt with its past in four phases of the twentieth century. Concentrating on four main exhibitions, opened in 1908/35, 1954, 1980, and 2009, the article looks at different attempts at narrative synopsis, a coherent construction of local past from early history to the present time. The historical presentations reveal warring images, cultural practices, and definitions of the city’s historical and current heritage.

1 Like in most cities and villages of the new Western und Northern territories that Poland gained after World War II, nearly the entire German population of Wrocław had to leave their hometown. In the 1930s Wrocław counted roughly 630,000 inhabitants; only about 2% were Polish. Between 1945 and 1947, most of the German population – more than 200,000 people – were resettled to the Allied occupation zones of Germany. Until 1949, 250,000 Poles from central Poland and the former Polish eastern provinces moved to Wrocław. In 1980 the city counted more than 600,000 inhabitants once again. See Beata Maciejewska, Wrocław: Dzieje Miasta (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 2002), 87, 139; Gregor Thum, Die fremde Stadt: Breslau nach 1945 (München: Siedler, 2003), 135, 148, 531.
The Silesian Mirror of Culture: Witnesses of a German Stronghold (1900–40s)

The national question of defining Breslau/Wrocław’s past in terms of its Slavic and Polish or Germanic and German traces increased with World War I and debates about the new borders of Silesia. Generating historical evidence became a highly political task. In the interwar period, historians in the German and Polish parts of Silesia tried to provide historical arguments for territorial claims. Breslau became a center of anti-Slavic borderland rhetoric. But until the 1930s, the city’s museums resisted being transformed into tools of national politics. Like in many city museums, Breslau’s historical presentations going back to the nineteenth century contained valuable patrician collections of paintings and sculptures, weapons and coins. As Piotr Łukaszewicz elaborates in his rich study, at the beginning of the twentieth century the display of Breslau’s history was limited to a section in the Silesian Museum for Artistic Crafts and Antiquities. Most parts of the collection were arranged according to aesthetic principles, their historical meaning only accessible to the educated.

A first chronological show about the city’s development contained mainly cityscape sketches, paintings, and maps. Under the nostalgic title ‘Old Breslau,’ a gallery opened in 1908 and remained for nearly 25 years. This show gave insight into Breslau’s glorious times as a mercantile center under Austrian and Prussian rule; the collection was dedicated to Breslau’s old town, bewailing the rapid change of the historic townscape in the nineteenth century.

The political argument as an exhibition principle gained more significance only after the end of the Weimar Republic. In the case of Breslau, the largest city of Eastern Germany, cultural efforts tried to counter its troublesome image of backwardness. A milestone in defining Breslau’s society was a temporary show at the Silesian Museum, ‘The Jewry in the History of Silesia’ in 1929. The presentation interweaved 800 years of Jewish and Silesian history. Its mission was to demonstrate the affiliation between the third-largest German-Jewish community and civic society. Ironically, initial plans for an independent Jewish Museum of Breslau were realized only after the end of the Weimar Republic. In the case of Breslau, the largest Polish-Jewish community in the world, the museum existed until the beginning of the 1930s; it existed until the pogrom of 1938.

Processes of marginalizing Jewish as well as Polish contributions to the city’s culture started after 1935 with attempts to rearrange the old permanent exhibitions of crafts and culture. In a more chronological array, the objects became accessible to a broader public – an idea already developed in the Weimar Republic. The new museum director called it ‘the aim to reveal the great flow of artistic development within Silesia and its links with the outside world and to express everywhere the large coherent lines of history.’ A first guidebook for all historic presentations was published in 1935 with the title ‘The Silesian Mirror of Culture.’ Local heritage was defined in a highly nationalist manner as the ‘principal witnesses of Silesian Germanness.’

In the former royal palace of the Prussian kings and the Silesian Museum, local history was radicalized as a war-driven triumph story in a struggle against Breslau’s Slavic neighbors, and as the central starting point for the ‘Wars of Liberation’ against Napoleon in 1813. The intensification of nationalist narratives in the city’s exhibitions heralded the start of German Breslau’s demise.

Ten Centuries of Silesia: A New History for Silesia (1940s–50s)

Like other provinces of Eastern Germany, Wrocław experienced an extreme population shift after World War II. Poles from all areas of former Poland moved into the city whose German inhabitants were forced to leave. Especially influential in rebuilding a new intellectual infrastructure were professors and museum staff from the former Polish city of Lwów (Lviv, now in Ukraine). Gregor Thum describes the new settlers’ perception of Wrocław as a foreign city. A process of intellectually and materially adopting the city’s heritage began. The new inhabitants searched for an explanation to justify Poland’s new borders and the exchange of population. Simply being an object of Soviet geopolitics was wholly insufficient. Wrocław had Polish roots in the Middle Ages 900 years earlier: the medieval Piasts dynasty would become the key to a Polish history of the city. In 1948 Karol Małezyński, a historian from the former University of Lwów, published a first local history. It only dated to the year 1936, however, when Wrocław belonged to the Habsburg Empire and the Polish minority was still of little significance. The task was to create a coherent history of the city by emphasizing Polish heritage and devalorizing German traces in all centuries.

The museums contributed the visual objects for this story. They provided the material witnesses to the extent that they existed. Early historical exhibitions after World War II were limited to more or less uncontroversial Polish chapters, to the Slavic pre-history and early Middle Ages. The first show about the city was called ‘Medieval Wrocław: The city and its structure until the beginning of the 13th century’ and opened in the Old City Hall of the town’s history.


4 Karl Masner and Erwin Hintze, Führer durch die Abteilung Alt-Breslau (Breslau: Schlesisches Museum für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümern, 1908).

5 Erwin Hintze, Katalog: Das Judentum in der Geschichte Schlesiens (Breslau: Jüdisches Museum Breslau / Schlesisches Museums für Kunstgewerbe und Altertümern, 1929);

Małgorzata Stolarska-Fronia, Udział środowisk Żydów wrocławskich w artystycznym i kulturalnym życiu miasta od emancypacji do 1933 roku (Warszawa: Nierim, 2008), 277.
in 1952.11 Like the first Polish history of Wrocław, this narration ended when Polish traces vanished. The first approach to a coherent story that included all centuries opened in 1954. ‘Ten Centuries of Śląska’ became the main historical exhibition of Wrocław’s major institution, the Silesian Museum. This approach to a synopsis was an innovation never before seen in Wrocław. It remained on display for nearly ten years, until 1963. A Marxist interpretation of history shaped its narrative and structure: the main historical factors were a conflict of class and a conflict of nationality. Woven together, both factors constructed a narrative of Silesia that perceived the German settlers summoned by the Piast dukes in the thirteenth century as a colonial upper class, while the broad population of workers and peasants remained Polish for the following centuries. The chapters of the large exhibition were titled:

1) “Feudal Śląska under Polish statehood until 1348,
2) Śląska under the rule of foreign feudalists until 1764,
3) The increase of capitalist exploitation until 1850,
4) In the chains of capitalism until 1945, 5) Liberation and building the socialist block.”12

Concerning the outcome of World War II, the exhibition ignored the population turnover and portrayed the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany as a ‘liberation’ of Śląska, which enabled the ‘return of Śląska to the motherland – and Poland regained its western border from Piast times.’13 This master narrative maintained authoritative until the end of the People’s Republic in 1989.

Interestingly, the large 1954 exhibition survived the process of de-Stalinization after 1956, followed by a limited cultural liberalization with a decreasing Marxist perspective and increasing national perspective on history. However, comparing the planning documents of 1953, supervised by the Ministry of Culture and Art in Warsaw, to a leaflet for the show published in 1958 and a guidebook from 1962, small changes are visible in the phrasing and the replacement of the section on history since 1945.14 In all versions, the curators emphasized history through a nationalist template with the construction of a permanent German–Polish antagonism. The exhibition’s main intention was undoubtedly to prove the strong Polish influence as foreign and hostile.

Closer examination of this important show also makes clear that the history of Wrocław and Lower Silesia always incorporated Upper Silesia, a drastically different region due to its large and influential Polish population throughout the centuries.15 After 1945, the change in its population was less extensive and the cultural disruption less harsh than in Lower Silesia. Thus, the largest material synopsis shown in a Wrocław museum at this time did not focus on the place of its presentation. The inclusion of Lower and Upper Silesia became a precondition for the construction of an all-encompassing Polish history exhibition for Śląska as early as 1944. An exhibition on the history of Wrocław itself was out of the question for decades.

From Wrocław’s Past: An ever-Polish City (1960s–80s)

Wrocław’s museum landscape grew rapidly. The major Silesian Museum became a national museum in 1970 but gradually concentrated its work on fine art exhibitions. History became the subject of the new Historical Museum, founded in 1965 as the major institution for local and regional history, which had branches in the Old City Hall, the Municipal Armory and the Casemate of Partisan Hill. From the beginning, one of the Historical Museum’s main topics was the Polish–Soviet liberation of the city in 1945, with exhibitions providing insight into the final days of Nazi Breslau and the city’s so-called ‘self-destruction’ during the 80-day battle of the ‘Fortress.’ The Soviet ‘liberation’ with the victory over Germany and the ‘return’ of the Western territories to the Polish motherland were annually commemorated with exhibitions. Every ten years, Wrocław’s museums developed especially big shows for this historical event, culminating in the permanent exhibition ‘The Victory of 1945’ in the underground rooms of Partisan Hill, opened on the thirtieth anniversary in 1975. For five years, this historical exhibition presented a large collection of weapons, documents, and photographs referring to the ‘liberation of Lower Silesia and Wrocław’ by the ‘heroic soldiers of the Soviet Army and the Polish People’s Army.’ The second part was dedicated to the first weeks of the Polish administration and the reconstruction of the destroyed city.16

In 1980, the large war exhibition was replaced by a second synopsis of local history called ‘From Wrocław’s Past.’ The significance of this approach to local history becomes clear by comparing it to its predecessors. In the show ‘Ten Centuries of Śląska’ discussed above (on display from 1954 to 1963), Wrocław’s history only played a marginal role. But in 1968, a history exhibition titled ‘Wrocław has always been a Polish city’ took various centuries of local history into account. The show in the Old City Hall was

12 Marian Hagis, ‘Szenariusz wystawy historycznej “Dzieje Śląska”’ (tytuł roboczy), October 15, 1953, Sygno. 5/26, Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki, Archiwum Akt Nowych w Warszawie.
15 In contrast to Lower Silesia, most regions of Upper Silesia traditionally had a Polish-speaking population at the beginning of the twentieth century. The eastern part of Upper Silesia became part of the new Polish state after the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and a plebiscite in 1921. See Ryszard Kaczmarek and Krzysztof Nowak, ‘Pojęcie i granice Górnego Śląska w ujęciu historiograficznym: Proba uporządkowania,’ in Kronikarz i historia: Atuty i słabości regionalnej historiografii, ed. Janusz Spyra (Cieszyn: Księążnica Cieszyńska, 2007), 244.
16 Monika Jaroszewska, Życiśtwro 1945: Informator do wystawy (Wrocław: Muzeum Historyczne we Wrocławiu, 1975), 5.
selective, but nevertheless it marked a milestone and a new attitude towards the city’s past.

Contrary to initial plans, the new permanent exhibition had to close after just three years because of insufficient insulation at the underground facility. Humidity started to harm the valuable documents. The Historical Museum had to abandon its branch at Partisan Hill forever. Thus, the most comprehensive exhibition of city history in the twentieth century only lasted from 1980 to 1983, by coincidence the years of martial law in Poland.

The brutal oppression of the opposition enlarged the distance between various groups of the population and the Socialist government with its official master narratives. Especially in the Western and Northern territories of Poland, the official explanation of history carried meaning only in the first decades after World War II, when the inhabitants still felt unsure about the political status of their new homes. The threat of West German ‘revisionists’ launching campaigns to reclaim the land diminished with the Polish–West German Treaty of Warsaw in 1970. After that agreement, Socialist propaganda concerning the necessity of Soviet protection lost its credibility. Resistance grew against the taboo of mentioning historical events such as the Soviet attack on Poland in 1939. The contradiction of living in a former German urban landscape while repeating the story of ‘returning’ to ever-Polish lands grew starker with each anniversary. Outside the official narrative, alternative versions of local history took root in private circles and the growing opposition movement.

People wanted to know more about their home cities. But the museums, universities, and newspapers still constituted pillars of the state controlled by strict censorship. Still, a limited space of free historical interpretation was possible. The most striking example was the temporary exhibition ‘Wrocławian Jews 1850–1945’ opened in the final year of the People’s Republic in March 1989 at the Museum of Architecture. The show was dedicated to the German Jews of Breslau and based on a conservation research project on Wrocław’s devastated Old Jewish Cemetery on Ślężna Street. Work and presentations about this graveyard started as early as 1983. Initial results were presented to the public by the Museum of Architecture in 1984. Until that point, German-Jewish and even Polish-Jewish history had been neglected by Wrocław’s museums in all decades of the People’s Republic. Attempts to liquidate this historic cemetery in the 1970s were prevented out of respect to the grave of Ferdinand Lassalle, founder of

a material demonstration of historical documents on Polish culture. The influential regional newspaper ‘Słowo Polskie’ called it a display of ‘little-known manuscripts and prints giving evidence to the Polishness of the Lower Silesian capital.’ In fact, the presentation of archival documents such as the oldest print in Polish, manufactured in Wrocław in 1474, constituted a selective array without reference to the broader cultural situation in the city. This show was an impressive example of how exhibitions and even popular and scientific texts could entangle selected historical fragments into a self-contained narrative of Polish tradition.

In 1980, with more objects and more space, the show ‘From Wrocław’s Past’ claimed to give a comprehensive picture of the past: ‘The exhibition comprises the city’s past from the Neolithic to the present times – organized for the first time in Wrocław’s post-war history.’ But as a closer look behind this promising press release confirms, the nationalist template maintained its decisive significance. The four major chapters consisted of:

‘Wrocław under the Piasts (1000–1335), the Renaissance (16th–17th century), the “Polonia”–the Polish community of Wrocław (1741–1945), and the return to Poland, rebuilding the city.’

These chapters reflect the construction of a historical narrative typical of most history books and guidebooks of the time. The pre-nationalist age until the mid-eighteenth century, which saw Wrocław’s development under the Bohemian kings and the Habsburg monarchy, did not evoke as many reservations as the Prussian period after 1741; Polish books printed in Wrocław, Polish visitors, and especially the Catholic Church in this mainly Protestant city were visible traces of Wrocław’s connection to Poland during that time. These traces faded with the city’s rapid growth and modernization in the nineteenth century. In consequence, the exhibition’s curator reduced this important chapter. But unlike earlier exhibits, ‘From Wrocław’s Past’ did not omit the two-hundred-year period between the Prussian conquest and the end of World War II. Documents and pictures of the Prussian and German authorities were part of the show along with objects of the city’s economic and cultural development. Most of this period was filled with documents on the Polish community of Wrocław, without mentioning its minority population of 2–5% of the total population. The exhibition’s approach to providing a full-scale picture of city history was limited and politically biased and insufficient. See Zofia Frąckiewicz, ‘Prawie wszystko o Wrocławiu,’ Słowo Polskie, May 27, 1968.

Piast dynasty, to cultural life in the Weimar Republic, to protests by the Solidarność union against the regime in the 1980s. The historical documents refer to Jewish settlers, Polish dukes, and German merchants in 13th century, as well as the expulsion of the Germans, Polish resettlement, and Stalinist oppression after 1945. The new presentation not only marks the first permanent exhibition of a German-Polish entangled history but also shows an attempt to bring together German and Polish historical cultures. This strong approach to former traditions is visible in references to the 'Palace Museum,' which existed in the building from 1926 to 1945. The reconstructed royal chambers of the Prussian kings as well as the culture of Breslau’s Jewish-German middle class constitute strong references to the city’s pre-war culture.

In the city’s larger context, this exhibition is not an isolated phenomenon. These references to the past have been recently reinforced at another location. Since 2012, the Centennial Hall has hosted a permanent exhibition on the history of this impressive modernist building and its political usurpation through historical exhibitions. Outstanding examples are a large-scale historical exhibition of 1913 to mark the 100th anniversary of the ‘Wars of Liberation’ against Napoleon, which started in Breslau, and the gigantic 1948 exhibition on the ‘Regained Territories,’ demonstrating the Polish roots and industrial development of these areas. The present process of deconstructing these two nationalistic exhibitions in a contemporary museum not only connects two contrasting historical traditions, but also depicts the political definition of local and regional history in various periods.

Conclusion: The Desire for Tradition

In the third reinvention of Wrocław after 1989, museums take an active part as mediums of historical authority, positioning, and understanding. After periods of nationalistic selection and official usurpation of history presentations, the cultural heritage of Poland’s Western and Northern territories has grown to be accepted as a whole. What is more, local institutions have reclaimed these aspects as the specific heritage and history of their urban environment. Once rejected and neglected, old objects gain new significance in the processes of searching for a new tradition.

But we should keep in mind that the social outreach of history museums is uncertain. A museum never mirrors the views of a society in general, but rather remains a producer of interpretations. Cultural and political elites are the visible supporters of this new approach to exhibiting history, while the perceptions of local inhabitants can only be inferred from guestbooks or survey results. Wrocław’s new exhibitions appear to be popular among

25 Thum, Die fremde Stadt, 401.
26 Iwona Bińkowska and Marzena Smolak, Niczany portret miasta: Fotografie Wrocławia z drugiej połowy XIX i początku XX w. (Toruń: Muzeum Historyczne we Wrocławiu / Biblioteka Uniwersytecka we Wrocławiu, 1992).
28 Erwin Hintze, Führer durch das Schlossmuseum in Breslau (Breslau: Grass- Barth, 1930).
residents as well as tourists, even among the former German residents of Breslau. This can be seen as a sign that these new comprehensive and open-minded three-dimensional interpretations resonate broadly.

Taken as a whole, Wrocław’s third reinvention in the 1990s was an intellectual and public process reflected in museums and influenced by museums. The strong embrace of history after 1989 showed the difficult past through idealized pictures of a former ‘multicultural’ harmony. The term ‘multicultural past’ functioned as a smooth compromise in the very first years of transformation. But serious research and critical debates differentiated these conciliatory approaches to history and allowed clear definitions of transformation. But serious research and critical debates differentiated these conciliatory approaches to history and allowed clear definitions of the local past. The city council perceived German-Polish heritage as a new strength for the region, making Wrocław an outstanding European city – a European Capital of Culture, as the city will be called in 2016. In applying for this title, Wrocław’s City Council pointed to the ‘extremely complex history’ and the ‘dramatic event [of] the complete replacement of population’ as aspects that set the city apart. This political approach highlights the diversity of the city’s cultural heritage as a positive point of reference, an object of city marketing in order to create a unique brand and a sovereign urban identity.

The city’s approach to dealing with the past is extraordinary. In 1996, Wrocław’s mayor even asked the British historian Norman Davies to write a comprehensive history of the city to mark the new millennium. Davies, Norman, and Roger Moorhouse. Microcosm: Portrait of a Central European City. London: Jonathan Cape, 2002; in Polish Microkosm Panski, znanego o numer 14, 1991. Recenzja, an object of city marketing in order to create a unique brand and a sovereign urban identity.


Ruins: Erasure and Representation

Visiting in late 1945, Irving Brant wrote: ‘[a]n American enters Warsaw with the feeling that he has stepped out of the real world into something which could not possibly exist.’ 1 Whatever did exist, whatever Warsaw was at that time, seems to have exerted the power to disrupt a sense of reality in a visitor from a continent untouched by war destruction. ‘These rows of roofless, doorless, windowless walls, reaching in parallel columns mile on mile,’ Brant continues, ‘might have been dug out of the earth by an army of archaeologists.’ This was a time when the ‘basic unit’ of urban morphology in the city was ruin;2 when the city seemed like an ancient archaeological site and yet, at the same time, when nothing seemed more pressing than the question of its future.

The destruction that Warsaw was subject to in 1939 and after the two suppressed uprisings, in the Jewish Ghetto in 1943 and in the rest of the city in 1944, has had a lasting effect. Ruination, and the response to ruination through reconstruction, was made into Warsaw’s image, writes Jerzy Elżanowski. ‘Destroyed and rebuilt’ (as the title of the iconic publication by Adolf Ciborowski has it), post-war Warsaw has a face of Lazarus among cities, ‘resurrected from ruins.’3

Although half a century old, Ciborowski’s thesis, constructed through dialectic use of imagery showing the ruin and the reconstruction side by side, seems characteristic of what one witnesses in the political, historic and...
architectural-historical discourses: that the presence of ruins in Warsaw’s imagery (photographs) and imaginary (history books, museum exhibitions) is closely related to the perceived absence of ruins in the physical city. Ruins belong to iconography of Warsaw but not to its space – unless their presence is under control, that is, for example as monuments or memorials.

Visiting contemporary Warsaw, Elżanowski describes one such ruin – a free-standing brick wall at the busy junction of Jerozolimskie Avenue and Marszałkowska Street. A memorial to the victims of a mass execution that took place in 1944, the wall bares a commemorative stone tablet, which marks the site as the exact place of the event, ‘in this place’ (‘w tym miejscu’), gives an exact number of victims, 102, and an exact date, 28 January. Until 1972 the site of the memorial wall was occupied by a sole tenement that had survived both the war and the post-war cleansing of the city from ruins and rubble. Archival images show that the first, makeshift memorial commemorating the execution was placed on the wall of the tenement. The wall we encounter today, we thus suspect, must be part of the demolished tenement, conserved as a material trace of the Nazi terror in Warsaw.

A further study suggests otherwise. Elżanowski analyses archival photographs showing that the memorial is in a different place than the tenement – the wall cannot be part of the original building’s structure. Similarly, a closer look at the back of the memorial reveals that

the entire structure [of the wall] is pierced with steel beams: sheared, broken and cut, and placed in structurally illogical configurations. [...] If it exists at all, the original structure of the tenement wall is buried so deep within this artificial ruin that it has become tectonically irrelevant.4

Through its design, however, the memorial wall lays ‘claim to authenticity’ both by being offset from the contemporary street-line and by the use of raw brick, an architectural material with little tradition as a wall finish in Warsaw and associated specifically with the 1944 Uprising.5 As a result, one faces a paradoxical condition where

‘[t]he Jerozolimskie wall, much like the reconstructed Old Town itself, is part of the reciprocal relationship between recreated object and archival image that has haunted the city’s reconstruction efforts. It participates in two interlinked narratives: one of erasure and the other of representation. [...] The ruin has been erased and recreated together with a claim to authenticity. Resolving the paradox in one direction, the artificial ruin is redefined as post-catastrophic ruin itself; in the other, it is the very catastrophe that is doubted.’6

6 Ibid.78-79.
The paradoxical conflation of erasure and representation seems to reach beyond individual objects. A Warsaw architecture historian, Marta Leśniakowska, writes that Warsaw is constantly remade by ‘censors-researchers’ operating on the city’s past. Their primary instrument is ‘silence’ – cutting across the city’s history, ‘passing over’ what should not be remembered. ‘Silence’ and ‘exclusion’ (‘milczenie’ and ‘wykluczenie’) efface facts, buildings and even entire streets in attempt to make a unified image of a city: ‘[i]f a city, its architecture and urban layout are understood as a montage of contradictory ideological fragments, then the mechanism of exclusion/silence always has the task of disassembling and unifying these fragments.’ As a consequence, Warsaw may seem like a city without ruins – as if completely reconstructed or, to follow the second resolution of the paradox, as if nothing happened there in the first place.5

A Prologue on Method (II). Hypothesis: Archive of the Virtual, Archive of the Future

Addressing the censored, the silenced, the omitted, the erased, the non-existent – in other words that which can only be imagined rather than empirically observed and analysed – requires a specific theoretical and methodological apparatus. Written from a design perspective (where imagining and speculation are part of methodology), this paper could be seen as an attempt at tracking, interpreting, and asking questions of the post-war reconstruction of Warsaw that did not exist any longer, yet, or – at all, but which at the same time left very tangible traces: archival documents, objects and marks in the physical city itself.

Descriptions of these traces form the skeleton of this paper. Elżanowski’s study of the memorial wall in Jeruzolimskie Avenue is invaluable here as it demonstrates that, in certain places at least, interpretations are contingent on the distance of looking at a studied object. What moves the paper forward conceptually, the muscle we may say, can be found in reflections and theorisations surrounding these descriptions - the (hypo)theses on the idea of ‘archive’ as institution, as act of remembering, imagining and forgetting at the same time. Among these (hypo)theses, famously (de)posited by Jacques Derrida in his paper ‘Archive Fever: a Freudian Impression’, there is one of particular significance to what this paper wishes to address. It is fragmentary and continuous at the same time, it becomes clearer, I hope, that the fragmentary, polyphonic, speculative character of this paper is both material (bodily, architectural, physical) and immaterial (institutional, cultural, scholarly, fantastic, erotic) – at once producing and erasing, recalling and repressing various historic and architectural narratives. It draws from the past but ‘points towards the future,’ to bring forth Derrida’s words. It is fragmentary and continuous at once. The paper’s object is par excellence material, tangible and empirically verifiable: the documents, drawings and photographs from the collections of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office (BOS), the National Museum in Warsaw and the Polish National Digital Archives. As the text progresses, this paper seeks to address Derrida’s ‘archive’ as an act of imagining by drawing out an architectural imaginary of Warsaw at such time, at the moment of the city’s re-institution as a capital in the first months after the end of World War Two. If post-war Warsaw can be imagined as an archaeological site, then perhaps such an imaginary site can be excavated? This in turn may lead to the question if and how one could ensure an intellectual rigour of such an excavation. Is it at all possible to research ‘an imaginary’ of anything? Throughout this paper, these questions will re-emerge as the reader progresses through what certainly is a peculiarly structured body of writing (a paper with its own prologue and a speculation instead of a conclusion), riddled with questions, mixing chronologies, speaking through several voices. This is because Warsaw’s ‘archive,’ the subject of this paper, is both material (bodily, architectural, physical) and immaterial (institutional, cultural, scholarly, fantastic, erotic) – at once producing and erasing, recalling and repressing various historic and architectural narratives. It draws from the past but ‘points towards the future,’ to bring forth Derrida’s words. It is fragmentary and continuous at once. The paper’s object is par excellence material, tangible and empirically verifiable: the documents, drawings and photographs from the collections of the Warsaw Reconstruction Office (BOS), the National Museum in Warsaw and the Polish National Digital Archives. As the text progresses, it becomes clearer, I hope, that the fragmentary, polyphonic, speculative character of this paper is an attempt to ‘let [Warsaw’s archive] speak’ in its own, spectral voice.

Archive of the Future: an Architectural Imaginary of Reconstructed Warsaw Varsovian Gradiva

The first trace, a trace in the literal sense, is right under her feet as she walks towards the Window. She is barefoot, the tiled floor is cold.

‘This floor does not belong here’ she says and stops. Ghosts are sensitive to such things.

Can she feel the absence of the house from which this floor came?

Her foot hesitates. ***

---

8 I am thinking here of David Crowley’s reflection that, essentially, if they are ruins left in Warsaw, then they are invisible. This observation is further nuanced by a photographic project by Elżbieta Janicka and Wojciech’s Wilczyk who explore the absence of Another City (the former Ghetto) through photographs taken from an elevated, prospect point of view. I particularly have in mind one photograph, in which a ruin (notably, a remaining fragment of the Ghetto Wall), seems insignificant in the broad picture of the post-war, post-socialist city – perhaps not unlike the falling Icarus in Pieter Breugel’s iconic painting. See: Janicka, Elżbieta, and Wojciech Wilczyk. Inne Miasto/Another City. Warsaw: Zachęta - Narodowa Galeria Sztuki, 2013; and: Crowley, David. Warsaw. London: Reaktion, 2003.
10 Historically, this has kept many thinkers away from the question of imagination, which they saw as ‘private and unobservable.’ See: Paul Ricoeur, ‘Imagination in Discourse and in Action,’ in Articulating Imagination: Culture and Creativity, ed. Gillian Robinson and John Rundell (Routledge, 1994), 119.
Spectres’ Address

Why study, why learn history? This paper started as an address to a conference call that offered an answer to this: ‘We learn history [...] to know who we are.’

1. Without their context – the archive of the original text – these words by Leszek Kołakowski are an aphorism that posit history as a condition of identity. Addressing the question of identity obliquely, one may turn to notions of community and continuity – to the ‘we’ as that which brings individual experience into the social dimension. ‘We’ meaning – whom exactly?

One may turn here to Paul Ricoeur’s proposition that the historical field of experience is cultivated through an imaginative, analogical transfer of the self. ‘Like me – he writes – my contemporaries, my predecessors, and my successors can say ‘I’. It is in this way that I am historically related to all the others.’ The key to this analogical operation is subjective, emphatic imagination: ‘[t]o say that you think as I do, that you experience pleasure and pain as I do, is to be able to imagine what I should think and experience, if I were in your place.’ In other words, the individual and the social experience of history meet in the realm of the imaginary that transgresses generations and epochs. To say ‘we learn history’ would thus mean to imagine that our ancestors and our successors are more than subjects of a historic study; it would mean to welcome their own spectral subjectivity.

If productive imagination is a necessary condition for any individual relation to history, then the work of institutions such as museums is to ‘objectify’ and anonymize this relation, Ricoeur continues. A historic object cannot be touched; traces of ancestral gesture inscribed into a signature can be viewed at best. Some contemporary museums – such as the museum of the History of Polish Jews in Warsaw – are designed almost exclusively without display of historic objects, creating narrative solely through spectacular reproductions, abstracted text and citations. In institutions devoid of physical objects, photographs, voice or video recordings, the ‘I’ of the interpersonal relation – the emphatic, trans-generational imagining ‘you, just like I’, – is at risk of being lost in the crowd of a narratological spectacle.

2. To try to reconnect with our ancestors and successors means to face the obvious fact that the former have passed away, while the latter have not yet come. ‘He will never again respond, because it is a ghost, a dead person’ says Derrida about Freud to the readers of Archive Fever. These words may be addressed to interpreters of the Freudian archive, but they seem valid for other scholars. A phantom, a ghost does not respond, but it does sometimes speak through texts and recordings – sometimes literally, as in the eerie situation when one happens to call an answering machine of a dead person who, in this way, can instruct and be instructed. The dead speak through texts they wrote, drawings they made, photographs they took; scholars work, is to ‘let [them] speak’. A spectral response is possible and in fact necessary: ‘there would be neither history nor tradition nor culture without that possibility.’

If a modern museum offers a perfected narratology of interpretation, then the archive often offers little more than a faint polyphony of spectral voices. This is why we are ‘in need of archives’ – en mal d’archive – which in the French idiom means also ‘to burn with a passion’ for the archive; to restlessly seek for the archive ‘right where it slips away.’ The titular ‘fever’ is a drive to find the original, material traces of the past, ‘a desire to return to the origin, a homesickness’ which paradoxically requires that one seeks to get right through the archive and beyond, as if reaching out for the past with one’s own hands. This feverish desire for the archive is never ethically unproblematic, it may lead to ‘detestable revisionisms,’ but also to ‘the most legitimate, necessary, and courageous rewritings of history.’

Through the Greek Arkhé as both commencement (the origin of knowledge, law, ‘truth’ etc.), and commandment (a house of the laws’ guardian, a place of interpreting of laws), Derrida uncovers ‘archive’ as the origin of institutional power and authority. It is why, to bring one of Derrida’s most notable statements from his text, political control requires the control of the archive.

Traces in the literal sense

As a text, ‘Archive Fever’ is itself an archive: to say what it holds would mean to list Derrida’s multiple preoccupations. But to try to define what the text is would obscure, I think, what makes ‘Archive Fever’ an ‘exemplar’ method of critically researching archives and, more generally, of imagining the past. What makes Derrida’s text so interesting for a scholar is, among other things, the way it addresses the topic – Freud’s archive, the body of scholarship on Freud’s archive – by drawing from the topic itself; from topic as topos, the place of the archive. Freud’s archive, Derrida says, should not be thought of only in terms of his Nachlass but also as a Freudian imaginary, emerging between texts, places and objects. This imaginary includes Gradiva – a female figure frozen in a graceful walk, who...
resides in the form of a plaster-cast from an ancient Roman stone-bas-relief on
the wall of Freud’s famous consultation room in his London mansion.

In Archive Fever, Gradiva appears and disappears throughout the text
(appropriately for an ancient ghost). By the end of the paper Derrida reveals
the importance of her role:

‘Who better than Gradiva, I said to myself this time, the Gradiva of Jensen
and of Freud, could illustrate […] the mal d’archive? Illustrate it where
it is no longer proper to Freud and to this concept of the archive, where
it marks in its very structure (and this is a last supplementary thesis) the
formation of every concept, the very history of conception?’

Derrida is referring to Wilhelm Jensen’s early 20th century novel titled
Gradiva: A Pompeian Fancy, which Freud analysed in Delusion and Dreams.

In the novel the reader follows a young champion of ‘positivist science’,
archaeologist Norbert Hanold. Having studied an ancient bas-relief of a beautiful
woman in one of Rome’s museums, Hanold loses his head, abandons his
scientific method and follows his desire, the woman from the sculpture, on a long
journey that takes him to Pompeii. There, in the ‘field’ of Europe’s greatest
archaeological site, he remembers what has driven him: ‘[a]nd this knowledge,
this comprehension, this deciphering of the interior desire to decipher […] all of
this comes back to him in an act of memory […]. He recalls that he came to see if
he could find her traces, the traces of Gradiva’s footsteps […]’

In the book the ‘positivist scientist’ who abandons his scientific method
is an archaeologist, but Derrida’s interpretation allows us to extrapolate the
narrative to other fields. Writing in the advent of the rise of the Internet,
Derrida proclaims that the archive ‘move[s] away from us at great speed’,
dep into the ground, turning classical philology into something akin to
archaeological practice. Here, ‘archive’ seems to be on the move not just
deplying vertically but also laterally, in the sense of expanding its own meaning to other
fields, such as an archaeologist trying to follow-up a line of inquiry into the
architectural design in a similar way? What would this entail? – to imagine the
positivist scientist as an historian trying to follow-up a line of inquiry into the
field of an archival collection (perhaps even into the field of the city); or as

an architect who, in the advent of designing, visits the ‘site’ of his project (and
perhaps even visits an archive)? In either case, in any case, the search, the drive
for the archive – the origins of historic or architectural truth – is bound to be
futile. The archive, the original trace ‘burns itself’ in advance of exploration; it
starts to erase the multiple meanings as soon as it starts to represent, to mean
something. If there is not a unified understanding of the archive (we may now
inscribe ‘archive’ with ‘city’) it is not, Derrida writes, because of some deficits
of epistemological kind on behalf of any discipline, but due to the inherent,
fragmentary and multiple character of archive-city. Archive (city) is open to
its own paradoxicality of being capable of holding while repressing, and at the
same time to a paradoxicality of structures that try to frame it.

Archive of the Future (I). Positivist Science of Functional Warsaw
Visiting the Warsaw State Archives one may feel part of a spatio-logical
compradure: while holding records of reconstruction of the city, the archive
itself is held within an historic document of the reconstruction – the walls
of a tenement at 7 Krzywe Kolo street in the rebuilt Old Town. A similar
feeling of entanglement within histories seems to permeate other place in
Warsaw, which certainly lacks the comforting distance of time, the layers
of ash turned into soil characteristic of abandoned cities struck by wars or
cataclysms such as Gradiva’s Pompeii. Post-catastrophic Warsaw has not
been abandoned, reconstruction and surveying of damage started almost
immediately. By May 1945, just four months after seizing of the city by the
Red Army, reconstruction of the country was in the hands of three institu-
tions: the newly formed communist authorities, among which was one
concerned specifically with Warsaw – Biuro Odbudowy Stolicy (BOS), or the
Office for the Reconstruction of the Capital.

Wherever there is an office, there is an archive. From an edited introduction
to the inventory of the BOS archive we learn that the immediate start of the
Office was largely possible thanks to surveys and studies made during the war
at the Warsaw School of Architecture and in unofficial architectural studios.

Among these was Pracownia Architektono-Urbanistyczna (Architecture &
Urban Design Studio) run by Helena and Szymon Syrkus in collaboration with
Roman Piotrowski, the future head of BOS. All three architects were known

20 Ibid.: 61. The fact that Gradiva is a female seems significant in the context of Derrida’s
interpretation of Nietzsche, who in another text posits ‘truth’ as a ‘woman’ – an unattainable
object of desire in (classical, patriarchal) scholarship. While it would be reductive to think
of Gradiva merely as ‘truth’, one may think of this interpretation as yet another layer
of residue (in this case, of Nietzschean thought) in Archive Fever. For more on this see:


24 Ewa Rewers, Post-Polis: Wstep Do Filozofii Ponowoczesnego Miasta (Kraków: Univer-
sitas, 2010), 118. In this paper I refer to the introduction to the BOS inventory as a publication (see note 9. above) but readers looking
Derrida and Prenowitz’s Archive Fever should at least see the knowledge of the State Archive.

25 Ewa Rewers, Post-Polis: Wstep Do Filozofii Ponowoczesnego Miasta (Kraków: Universitas,
2010).
in Warsaw’s professional and intellectual circles. The Syrkus partnership was working at the forefront of artistic and architectural avant-garde, a heritage that will later become a burden for them.29 The Syrkus were known internationally as co-authors, with Jan Chmielewski, of Functional Warsaw – a radical, interdisciplinary study of the city in the context of its region.30 The clandestine war-time studies of the Pracownia, developed under cover of the pragmatic destruction survey works allowed by the Nazi occupiers, were indeed a further development of Functional Warsaw aimed at a deep morphological and social transformation of the city.31 After the suppression of the Uprising in October 1944 and the subsequent forced resettlements, the works moved to Krakow where Helena Syrkus and Roman Piotrowski developed a draft concept for the organization of reconstruction of Warsaw, a document outlining institutional framework for future rebuilding of the city.32 Both the designs and the structural concept for reconstruction were thought through before the end of the German occupation of the city.

What gave Functional Warsaw additional legitimacy in the early post-war political situation, was that it made an explicit call for a centrally-planned economy. The second book edition of the project opens with an introduction in which the history of humanity is shown, after Marx, as the movement from a small communal economy of pre-historic families towards larger systems of organisation that eventually find their (teleo)logical conclusion in centrally-planned production. ‘History of architecture and town building includes similar phenomena’, we read in the introduction.

‘Individual units (houses) group to make settlements, towns and finally cities. The historic cities have grown more or less chaotically. The need for planning becomes visible as technology and progress changes the inhabitants’ lives. As a result, the text continues, most of our cities are incapable of living up to today’s requirements.’33

Unlike one of the most influential architectural treatise of all time, Le Corbusier’s Towards an Architecture (Vers une Architecture) of 1923, neither the introduction nor the main body of the book’s text ends with anything as politically charged as the famous ‘architecture or revolution.’ There is, however, a sense that the ‘current situation’ is economically and politically unsustainable, and that the key to change is held by an architect-turned-urban planner.

Functional Warsaw also had an agenda for the historian. Through the introduction, a demand is placed on historic studies to take up purposeful predicting of the future. In a diagrammatic way, not unlike the design itself, the introduction specifies an algorithm of operation for history that puts it in line with the natural sciences: ‘1. observation > stating individual or relatively similar phenomena > statistical framing of these > ordering > investigating factors influencing these > establishing consequential relations between these phenomena and factors.’ In such a scheme, the key is statistics as the most objective instrument of the modern science. For both architectural and historic studies, the subjective, individual drive for material traces of a specific past, is out of the question: ‘[one] must cut ties with [...] ideological confines that have nothing to do with science, and much to do with mysticism.’34 Rather than dwell in ‘descriptive science,’ history must change basic principles and methods to make itself useful for practical tasks that can help foresee future economic and social changes. Past was made subordinate to Future.

**Archive of the Future (II). Continuity of Warsaw’s Imaginaries**

In March 1936 Functional Warsaw was presented as part of a public exhibition entitled ‘Warsaw of the Future’, organised in the unfinished modern building of the National Museum by the city’s Mayor, Stefan Starzyński, just months after his appointment. Little documentation of this exhibition is publicly available. The National Museum archives show but a few traces of such an event; the professional architectural press took no notice of it. The sense of what the exhibition was must be made in-between several known

---

29 Readers with some knowledge of the Polish language looking to track the convoluted professional-ideological path of the Syrkus should look to a monographic article by Józef Piłatowicz: Piłatowicz, J. (2009). ‘Poglądy Heleny i Szymona Syrkusów na architekturę w latach 1925-1956.’ Kwartalnik Historii Nauki i Techniki 2, 56(3-4), 123–164.


---

**Img. 3. A photograph from the opening day of the ‘Warsaw of Future’ exhibition. Author unknown (1936). National Digital Archives (NAC). Sign. 1-U-8484-2.**
photographs, documents, small mentions, and the few preserved copies of the exhibition catalogue. Yet even when holding the decades’ old copy of the catalogue, one begins to doubt whether the exhibition ever took place, or if it shared the fate of the unrealised projects it (may have) contained, thus becoming part of Warsaw’s fictitious, imaginary history of future.

A photograph from the opening day, unpublished at the time, shows the mayor pointing at an urban model of the future Warsaw. Around him, one sees Poland’s highest dignitaries, including the Polish President, the Prime Minister, the Minister of Education and Religion, and the central government’s Commissary for Warsaw. The officials are gathered around a large, white urban model, which shows a design for the Warsaw World Exposition, planned for 1943, and presented as part of the mayor’s election campaign a year earlier. The exhibition was significant for his political and social project of transforming Warsaw into a modern, European capital.

In a circular letter addressed to directors of municipal companies, the mayor encouraged them to give employees free time to visit the exhibition stating that opening hours are extended. Attendance was important. The premise for the mayor’s ambitious project is outlined in the first words of the introduction to the catalogue, where Warsaw emerges as a document, or a record of the Polish nation’s past.

‘The development of a city, its urban design and architectural clothing, are reflections of history’, we read. ‘If a city is a capital, it is not only the history of the city that is reflected, but the history of the entire nation.’ In Warsaw’s urban fabric, the thesis continues, from her origins as a mediaeval town, through the grand epoch of late 18th century royal patronage to the arts and architecture, to the monumental classical architecture of early 19th century, Warsaw has been making herself into an archive of Poland.

In this archive of Warsaw, as indexed by the ‘Warsaw of the Future’, there is, however, one record which does not deserve to be kept: the dense, 19th century urban fabric that makes up most of central Warsaw and which stands for the century of Poland’s partitions; a sour fruit of decades of chaotic construction fuelled by speculation and at the same time limited by the harsh planning regulations of the imperial Russian apparatus. This part of Warsaw’s urbanity ‘is a visible trace of the fall of a nation’s sovereignty, which after the resurrection of the nation and restoring Warsaw as a capital of a united nation must perish.’ The city-as-archive was open for erasure.

This singular imaginary of Warsaw as an (editable) archive belongs to the book catalogue of the exhibition. A closer reading of the few archival

36 The letter can be found in the archives of the National Museum in Warsaw.
38 The singularity of the noun ‘nation’ is not unproblematic if one recalls that throughout its history, Poland – whether during its long-lasting union with the Duchy of Lithuania or as an independent state – was co-inhabited by many peoples, including Germans, Jews, Lithuanians, Russians, Ruthenians, Tatars and Poles to name a few. In the 1930s, Jews alone made up around a third of Warsaw’s population.
photographs of the exhibition itself, however, shows tensions between specific designs: the avant-garde *Functional Warsaw*, a project sanctioned by the international modernist elite ⁴⁰, is presented next to models of the exposition grounds designed in a conservative, monumental style by an École des Beaux-Arts graduate, Juliusz Nagórski. Plans of the electrification of suburban railways form a background for a slender tower that resembles New York skyscrapers. It seems that the ‘Warsaw of the Future’ exhibition was a much more plural, ideologically fragmented object than the catalogue.

**Resemblances and other relations**

Speaking of resemblances: let us look at a certain tension of figural resemblance that has recently attracted Varsovian researchers’ attention to archival imagery of the ‘Warsaw of the Future’ exhibition. Looking at the image from the 1936 exhibition Beata Chomątowska admits to an uncanny feeling: so vivid is the similarity of the model of the tower with a building constructed 20 years later that one wants to check the date of the photograph, to see if the model was not, by any chance, a ‘prototype’ for the building. ⁴¹

This figural tension has the capacity to capture, to entice anyone who is aware of the architectural and political scale of the building; of its ideological charge as ‘Stalin’s gift’ to communist Poland; of the humbling sensation of walking in its shadow; of the of the number of cultural references it evokes, the books and films that mention it; of the iconic status of the Palace’s stepping silhouette that features in national television news channels, on postcards, on various merchandise and even in a shop logo where the building’s outline turns into a cardinal point (Img. 6); or of the volume of artistic projects and scholarly research made about and around the building, its form, significance and metaphysics. ⁴² What would this mean to contemporary Warsaw if one could prove, if one could state with scientific certainty, that Stalin’s gargantuan gift, the Palace of Culture and Science of 1955, had its archival origin in a design presented in the (partially) democratic Poland of the 1930s? Are there any tracks, any footprints leading to proof? Whose stride measures the distance between the two structures?

There are at least two paths one may wish to take here. One track we may call the biographic. The lives of those involved in the great reconstruction project have been a rich source for scholars – it has long been known in Warsaw, and not only to architects, that Warsaw was reconstructed by the generation of architects who gained both education and experience

---


⁴² See for example a theoretically-rich monograph/thesis on the Palace and the Parade Square by Michał Murawski, written from an anthropological perspective or a historic overview monograph by Waldemar Baraniewski.
before the war.\textsuperscript{43} One can think here of the biographies of Zachwatowicz, Stepiński, Syrkus (Helena and Szymon), Sigalin, Piotrowski, Pniewski, Wierzbicki, Mokrzyński, Kląszewski, Leykam, Larchet, Hryniewiecki, Ihnatowicz and many others who are widely known to have contributed to filling the (perceived) absence of post-war Warsaw with new, or newly reconstructed architecture.

The Warsaw of the Future catalogue also sheds some light on this path. Among members of the organization committee of the exhibition were figures who directed the post-war reconstruction: Stanisław Różański, for example, continued – until 1944 – as head of planning in Warsaw’s underground administration which developed the design of ‘levelling’ the historic Nowy Świat; while economist Michał Kaczorowski became the head of the Office for Planning and Reconstruction, in which BOS was formed. It was also on Kaczorowski’s commendation that architect Józef Sigalin, a key figure in BOS and (later) a coordinator of construction of the Palace of Culture, came to Warsaw in early 1945 to set-up the Reconstruction Office.

Another track we may call autographic. This means looking for the (material) presence of forms (texts, drawings, designs) that bear marks of these and other ‘authors’; a residue of their presence; ideally – a signature. But since we have been working through the spectrality of the archive, of the imaginary, the delusional, the elusive, one may extend this category into idiom, or ‘voice’, as a marker of one’s (spectral) presence in a document or a text. After all, ghosts, as Derrida said, have their own idiomatic preferences.\textsuperscript{44}

\textbf{Spectres’ Voice}

File 2053: ‘Department of Propaganda. Directorship’s secretariat. Papers on destruction and reconstruction of Warsaw in the English language. Years 1945-46’.\textsuperscript{45} On the pages of the long inventory that opens the Warsaw Reconstruction Office’s archival collection, file 2053 is but one among thousands of record entries whose significance was reduced and equalised into idiom, or ‘voice’, as a marker of one’s (spectral) presence in a document or a text. After all, ghosts, as Derrida said, have their own idiomatic preferences.\textsuperscript{44}

Among eight documents found in the file of the Propaganda Department, six draw from the immediacy of the grim, post-war reality. Although rich in passionate undertones, they are written with a sense of direct pragmatism – accounting the losses, calling for amendments, justifying decisions. The remaining two papers seem a little different, more distant in their outreach, positioned in a certain symmetry (conceptual and chronological) that frames the rest of file 2053: they both speak of Warsaws that in the years 1945-1946 did not exist – any longer and yet.

The first paper, ‘The Historic Buildings of Warsaw’ is an outline of the history of the city, from its foundation as a mediaeval town until the end of World War Two. This brief history of Warsaw’s urban development stops at the end of the Congress Kingdom of Poland (1830). At that point, the reader is removed from the course of chronology and placed back at the time of the ‘Teutonic aggression’ of 1939, skipping nearly a hundred years of Warsaw’s history that includes the most rapid growth in the late 19th and early 20th century, and which resulted in the dense urban fabric characteristic of Warsaw before the war catastrophe.

The ‘Plan of futur[e] Warsaw’ (as it is mistyped throughout the text), broadly describes the design and the program of the future reconstructed city – Warsaw of about two million inhabitants. Numerous ‘sites’ are described, but rather than specific locations authors describe here entire districts, such as ‘the central section’ of the city where a space for a ‘forum for national discussion’ similar to an ancient agora is imagined. To the north, artists and craftsmen will have their studios in ‘old historic buildings’ with cafés, restaurants and residential housing creating the first row of development on the Vistula escarpment. A new university district is proposed to the south, while the distant district of Żerań will become a large industrial hub with a central power station and slaughterhouse.

The ‘Plan of futur[e] Warsaw’ admits to a challenge that seems revelatory in terms of what I have been discussing throughout this paper. I am thinking here of one sentence, in which authors say they wish to ‘avoid the mistakes of [the late] nineteenth century’ that created what the text considers as a city ‘overcrowded with buildings’. The voicing of the second concern suggests that the omission of the 19th century from Warsaw’s history from the first, historical paper should not be ascribed only to a historiographic caesura which seeks to put critical distance between the contemporary and the historic. Rather, we may begin to see this as an act of (mental) erasure – of institutionalised repression of memory – to make space for imagining a futur(e) Warsaw.

\textbf{A speculation in lieu of a conclusion: Reconstructing Warsaw’s imaginary}

1. Neither of the papers deposited in File 2053 are signed. No name explicitly states authorship. No ‘trace in the literal sense’ is present. Yet this is precisely where we should not forget nor suppress the thought that the Archive, inherently, is at once an erasure and a marking – that whatever is ‘removed’ from the archive is already part of it in a spectral form.

\textsuperscript{43} See for example a retrospective interview with Maria Janion, a renowned scholar of Polish Romanticism, which contains reflections on experience of visiting the ruined, post-war Warsaw: Maria Janion and Kazimiera Szczuka, \textit{Janion: Traumy, Trame, Trangreje} (Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2012).

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid.:54.

\textsuperscript{45} The original record description is in Polish and reads: ‘2053. Wydział Propagandy. Kierownictwo - Sekretariat. Opracowania zniszczeń i odbudowy Warszawy w j. angielskim. 1945-46.’ BOS Archive. Sign. 2053. The file contains documents of the Department of Propaganda, one of the very first established within BOS. Apart from the two texts presented in the main body of this paper, the file consists of six other papers in English outlining different aspects of Warsaw’s post-war condition: a description of the extent of wartime destruction (both material and cultural), a call for amendments to be made, an accounting of infrastructural losses, an economic argument for reconstructing the city and a listing of achievements of first months of reconstruction. Both their content and the choice of language suggest that the texts addressed the international community.
The example Derrida gives to illustrate this, in his interpretation of Freud’s interpretation of biblical stories (national myths of the peoples of Israel), is that of scholarly debate over whether or not an attempt on Moses’ life was made after he returned from Mount Horeb with the Ten Commandments (the original, first archive of all things historic in the Western culture). The classical scholarly interpretation, Derrida writes, is that had Moses been murdered (or had an attempt been made) then this would have been remembered (archived) as the exemplary sin of Israel; that an attempt on Moses’ life could not have been repressed. Derrida points out that this is by no means necessary: ‘How can [one] be sure that the murder in question has not been abundantly recalled and archived (‘remembered and recorded’) in the memory of Israel? How can he claim to prove an absence of archive?’46.

Murder, after all, begins with an intention, a desire to kill; and ‘even if there had not been the acting out of the desire, the unconscious would have been able to keep the archive of the pure criminal intention, of its suspension or of its repression.’47 Freud himself claimed that the killing of Moses ‘left archives,’ that it was erased from memory (human in general, and the Jewish ‘national’ memory specifically). This is where Derrida sees the potential of Freud’s analytic project for historic studies which are invited to ‘analyze, across the apparent absence of memory and of archive, all kinds of symptoms, signs, figures, metaphors, and metonymies which attest, at least virtually, an archival documentation where the ‘ordinary historian’ identifies none.’48

2.

What could this mean for studying Warsaw’s history? Firstly, one may begin to feel more comfortable with the fact that many archival documents and drawings bear no signatures, that references are oblique; that certain traces may have ‘left the archive’ and that in spite of this, or rather precisely thanks to this, one can choose to listen to the voice of the author, the ‘idiom of the ghost’ to stick to Derridean nomology, and to look out for significances of absences. Secondly, one may welcome ‘desire’ not only as that which drives archival research (the lesson of the positivist archaeologist) both as an irrepressible foundation of the archive that can be excavated. Thirdly, one may choose to see the subjectivity of those before and after us through acts of analogical, emphatic imagining that Ricoeur speaks of: ‘imagin[ing] what may choose to see the subjectivity of those before and after us through acts.

In the ‘Plan of futur(e) Warsaw’ one can thus hear the spectral voice of Helena Syrkus, an experienced polyglot (would the missing ‘e’ in the title indicate a French/German slip?), the translator of the Functional Warsaw, and the head of the BOS Propaganda Department to which File

2053 belongs.50 One may start to wonder why a document addressed to an international audience seems so shy of its origins, only generally referring to ‘studies which were carried out before the war [and] during the German occupation’51, but not mentioning Le Corbusier or Sigfried Giedion, Functional Warsaw’s prominent, world-renowned patrons. One may ask why the ‘Plan of futur(e) Warsaw’ does not even mention the Functional Warsaw, the PAU studio or the 1936 and 1938 exhibitions by their names, as if erasing them from the archive.52 This questioning, however, is perhaps less about bringing forth answers (the ‘historical truths’ in Freud’s and Derrida’s terms), and more about the kind of emphatic imagining that temporarily suspends the disbelief in the past as something structurally different from the present, thus keeping the trans-epochal conversation with our ancestors and successors going.

There is also a broader issue. In Warsaw’s modern history, one too is moving through a national myth of murder, if quite a different one to that of Israel. According to this myth, exemplified by Ciborowski’s book, the Lazarus-city was ‘killed’ (by the Germans) and ‘resurrected’ through a mass-effort of the ‘Entire Nation’ (‘CAŁY NARÓD BVDVJE SWOJĄ STOLICĘ’). Organised by the theology of the Party (the ‘new faith’ of Communism, as Czesław Miłosz saw it in The Captive Mind, 1953), the nation is given here the ultimate miraculous power of bringing the dead back to life. Things of course get confusing if we take into account the post-Romantic meta-narrative of Poland as the Christ among nations (suffering for the world’s sins under the imperial partitions in the 19th century), as it is no longer clear who is the resurrector and who is resurrected.

There are counter-theses to this, various mythocidal narratives seeking the perpetrators within the Reconstruction Office itself, by saying: if Warsaw was in agony at the hands of the Nazi apparatus, then it was BOS that put the last nail to the coffin of the pre-war city. Both these narratives, regardless of their intentions, seem to mimic what they contest by operating a priori through categories and nomologies of destruction, death and loss; through idiom of blame and guilt. Only the roles in the spectacle are distributed differently.

3.

In light of Derrida’s and Ricoeur’s incentive, we (you, ‘like me’) may allow ourselves a very brief fantasy. Not quite a spectacle, but a speculation. We may look at the 1936 Warsaw of the Future exhibition as an original archive of the radical, morphological and ideological transformation of the city that took place in the first years after the Second World War. Through

47 Ibid.: 44.
48 Ibid.: 43.
49 Ibid.: 128.
50 I owe the point about the ‘linguistic-Freudian slip’ to Dr Ella Chmielewska, who kindly shared this observation with me during an informal review of this paper.
51 BOS Archive. Sign. 2053.:7.
52 It is through the architectural-urbanist descriptions present in the ‘Plan of Futur(e) Warsaw’ that one can see some of the specific traces of earlier imaginaries the city, e.g. in a programme for an industrial district at Żerań or a slaughterhouse that appear in the Functional Warsaw text (1934) and the Warsaw Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow exhibition (1938).
an archaeology of this archive, we are invited to see within a censored, fragmented history of Warsaw a fragile thread of continuity between the imaginary of the Warsaw of the Future exhibition and the post-war work of the Reconstruction Office. We may begin to wonder if it was not Warsaw that was reconstructed, but a pre-war architectural imaginary of Warsaw’s future.

Bibliography


Modernisations of Polish identities in contemporary Polish plays: The right to individuality

1.1 Introduction

With the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, Polish playwrights were released from the stranglehold of communist censorship, becoming free to do and say whatever they liked in whatever ways they chose, no longer bound within the confines of allegorical stage languages when addressing political issues. While clandestine, politiced performances did take place under communism, the content of mainstream theatre was officially controlled by the censor. After 1989 there was an initial brief wave of restagings of classics, Western European plays, and psychological dramas. Then there came a surge of contemporary new Polish playwriting which once again engaged with politics, but now the writers had freedom of speech and freedom of artistic expression. Marginalised characters were placed in the spotlight, demanding to be heard. They frequently did so in 'real', though not realistic, language, often full of obscenities. Since Poland’s accession to the European Union in 2004, contemporary Polish playwrights have continued to engage with the ongoing processes of reshaping Polish identities and tackling national stereotypes. This paper focuses on a selection of plays written after that important moment in Poland’s cultural history.

As Elwira M. Grossman has stated, 'the process of redefining Polishness is a complex task', because during communism 'an artificial, monolithic vision of “Polishness” was promoted in which Poles are seen as uniquely white, Catholic and heterosexual. ‘Bóg, honor i ojczyzna’ have long been the supposed pillars of contemporary Polish society. Versions of history have been imposed and memorialisation of the past has been institutionalised. Supremacy continues to be valued over difference, and although contemporary

3. God, honour and the motherland.
Polish playwrights have artistic freedom, this is still within the framework of a society riddled with taboos, social stereotypes and national myths. There is a strong and clear trend for contemporary playwrights to engage with socio-political discourse around such taboos, and to advocate for changes and freedoms which are still emerging, even now.

A multitude of issues which reflect contemporary social realities are addressed by several playwrights and there is no room here to discuss them all. However, this paper examines several characters that either demand or express the freedom to be an individual and to redefine what it is to be a Pole. This is manifested specifically in ways that include (a) the freedom to cast off the metaphorical baggage of World War Two and communism, and within that, to face difficult truths about the past and to reject imposed rituals of commemoration; (b) the freedom to be openly homosexual without persecution; (c) the freedom not to follow the Polish Catholic church without criticism. I will give illustrations to support these assertions from selected plays by Paweł Demirski, Dorota Masłowska, Małgorzata Sikorska-Miszczuk and Przemysław Wojcieszek.

While there is no room here to discuss dramatic technique in detail, it is possible to summarise by saying that although the four playwrights in focus approach traditional dramatic structures differently, each of them rejects the classical rules of drama to a greater or lesser extent. They do not write mimetic, naturalistic, Stanislavskian plays. Instead, these are dramas of free speech and free expression, in which dominant structures are challenged: those relating to dramatic form, linguistic form, genre, the relationship with the audience, social hierarchies and inherited modes of thinking. In the majority of the plays in hand, social reality is approached through entirely non-realistic dramatic techniques, and while the plays are too text-based to be labelled postdramatic in Hans-Thies Lehmann’s definition, they share some characteristics with the broad notion of the postdramatic, more so than with realism or naturalism.

1.2 Down with the war!
In Był sobie Polak, Polak, Polak i diabeł (There was a Pole, a Pole, a Pole and the Devil), Demirski brings together an unlikely combination of characters who are all dead, awaiting transportation from limbo. A young actress character, Gwiazdka, a committed capitalist who takes her visa card everywhere, even to the grave, sees Poland’s history as being utterly irrelevant to her. She asks ‘do czego mi jest ta wasza historia...a do czego mi jest ta wasza narodowa tożsamość?’ In the same play, the young boy, Chłopiec, wants to identify with realism or naturalism.

Precz z pamięcią! [...]
Precz z historią! [...]
Precz z pamięcią! [...]
Chcemy żyć! Chcemy żyć!

In Sikorska-Miszczuk’s Burmistrz cz.II (The Mayor II) the play’s abstract action is set in contemporary Jedwabne, the small town that was the site of a 1941 massacre in which at least 340 Polish Jews were killed by their non-Jewish neighbours, but culpability was assigned to the Nazis. The truth has only been publicly acknowledged in recent years, and it is still a controversial issue for those who do not wish to accept Polish responsibility. There are three members of the young generation, Młode Pokolenie I, II and III, who are tired of being defined by their town’s difficult past and by World War Two in general. Młode Pokolenie III says ‘urodziliśmy się pięćdziesiąt lat po wojnie. Jasne? Mamy w dupie tę wojnę. Całą wielką drugą wojnę światową mamy w dupie.’ He or she continues: ‘Mam dość tej afery z Żydami.’ Sikorska-Miszczuk encapsulates the idea that the young generation are in tension with national mythology and at odds with inherited versions of Polishness. She has them sing the national anthem with altered lyrics:

Marsz marsz Dąbrowski –
Chcemy iPony!
[..]
Precz z stodołą!
[..]
Marsz marsz Dąbrowski –
Żydów zabił Voldemort!
(wszyscy razem) Żydów zabił Voldemort!
[..]
Precz z historią!
[..]
Pacz z pamięcią!
[..]
Chcemy żyć!
Chcemy żyć!

8 Demirski, Był sobie Polak, 37, ‘I don’t want to be the child of an insurgent, or of someone from the Workers’ Defence Committee, or of a shipbuilder or a commie, I want to be the child of a Real Madrid player’, trans. Natasha Oxley, unpublished.
10 The publication of Jan T. Gross’s book Sąsiedzi (2000) was a catalyst for this cultural process.
11 Young Generation.
12 Sikorska-Miszczuk, Burmistrz cz. II, 192. ‘We were born 50 years after the war. Got that? We don’t give a shit about the war. We don’t give a shit about World War II’, Sikorska-Miszczuk, The Mayor II, trans. Artur Zapalowski, in (A)Pollonia: Twenty-First-Century Polish Drama and Texts for the Stage, ed. by Carol Martin (Calcutta : Seagull, 2014), 191.
14 Sikorska-Miszczuk, Burmistrz cz. II, 194. ’March, march Dąbrowski | We want iPhones! [...] | Down with the barn! [...] | March, march Dąbrowski | The Jews were killed by Voldemort! [...] | Down with history! [...] | Down with memory! [...] | We want to live! [...] | We want to live’, trans. Zapalowski, The Mayor II, 115.
Sikorska-Miszczuk emphasises the connection the Młode Pokolenie has to modern technology (iPhones) and to contemporary foreign literature – Voldemort accused here of killing the Jews being a character from J.K. Rowling’s Harry Potter books. The young generation are firmly located in a modern, capitalist international context. They see no connection with the war or Jedwabne and refuse to inherit any associated postmemory, in Marianne Hirsch’s definition. This version of the song conveys the idea that the young generation represented here, presumably young teenagers, want to ‘live’ beyond their cultural context. By singing the national anthem in this way, they are rejecting and reshaping a ritual that reinforces national narratives. This notion of wanting to live, that is to have the freedom to live according to their own desires, is reiterated by several young characters in many plays.

While Sikorska-Miszczuk’s Młode Pokolenie are trying to get rid of the history they have inherited, in Masłowska’s Między nami dobrze jest (Things are Good Between Us) the Mała Metalowa Dziewczynka is unaware of having received any such memories. This is encapsulated in the exchange in which her grandmother, the Staruszka, says ‘Ja pamiętam dzień w którym wybuchła wojna’, and she replies: ‘Wojna cenowa?’ Here Masłowska conveys the idea that the Mała Metalowa Dziewczynka doesn’t even know what the war is, and that she is so entirely immersed in capitalism that the concept of a price war is more familiar to her than the concept of the Second World War. Similarly, the grandmother and granddaughter have completely different impressions of Germans. Staruszka remembers: ‘Aż do Warszawy wkrzyczył Niemcy’, to which the girl replies, ‘Niemcy, Niemcy, coś słyszałam o jakieś Niemczech...O Jezus, wiem, to ci, co tak jodłują!’. The girl’s stereotyped image of the Germans has nothing to do with her grandmother’s experiences. Within the context of the play it would have been impossible for the grandmother to pass on memories to the granddaughter because neither of them actually exists, the grandmother having been killed during the war and the grandmother hears sounds of bombs going off, the granddaughter interprets them as bikes burning. While the grandmother describes air raids, the granddaughter imagines toy planes.

In saying this, the imagined Pantofelnik symbolically gives Fransua the permission to let go of their parents’ past. Fransua’s held breath and the tense state it causes symbolises the internalisation of his father’s painful history, which Pantofelnik says is not necessary. Having opened his father’s suitcase and faced the truth, Fransua refuses to talk, because he was killed in Auschwitz. When Fransua opens the suitcase, he imagines meeting his father. Fransua tells him not to breathe in the gas around him, imploring him to hold his breath, demonstrating how to do so himself: ‘The father, Pantofelnik, tells the son...

...Oddychaj Synku
Oddychaj
Nie możesz tak żyć.

In the production directed to observe a minute’s silence to commemorate the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. A man-dog by his experiences of war, barks orders at the younger generation.

In saying this, the imagined Pantofelnik symbolically gives Fransua the permission to let go of their parents’ past. Fransua’s held breath and the tense state it causes symbolises the internalisation of his father’s painful history, which Pantofelnik says is not necessary. Having opened his father’s suitcase and faced the truth, Fransua receives reassurance that he does not need to carry his father’s story as his own, which allows a healing process to take place.

1.3 Rejecting rituals of commemoration

25 Sikorska-Miszczuk’s Walizka, 26 Fransua visits the Holocaust Museum in Paris. The Przewodniczka is being driven insane by her daily dealings with the museum’s artefacts. She argues in favour of destroying everything in the museum, saying:

Przestańmy pamiętać!
Bo nic to nikomu nie daje
Nie ma żadnego efektu
Poza tym, że ja
Przewodniczka w muzeum zagłady
Jestem wrakiem człowieka.

However, her spirits are lifted when Fransua finds a suitcase that turns out to belong to his father, whom he never met and about whom his mother refuses to talk, because he was killed in Auschwitz. When Fransua opens the suitcase, he imagines meeting his father. Fransua tells him not to breathe in the gas around him, imploring him to hold his breath, demonstrating how to do so himself: ‘The father, Pantofelnik, tells the son...

...Oddychaj Synku
Oddychaj
Nie możesz tak żyć.

In the production directed to observe a minute’s silence to commemorate the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. The younger characters attempt to comply, but in the production directed...
by Monika Strzępka which premiered in 2009,30 they cannot keep still or stop laughing, and they eventually speak out against Szarik’s attempt to impose the ritual. Gustlik says, ‘ja nie mam żadnej takiej minuty w głowie’31. Lidka also expresses the fact that she has personal feelings about the war and the country’s past but that she doesn’t want to be dictated to about how she should respond to those feelings: ‘Ja mam takie emocje | ale mnie że on o nich mówi wkurwia’32. Throughout the scene, Szarik makes repeated attempts to get the younger characters to observe a minute’s silence, shouting, ‘ani kroku w tył’33 each time somebody moves or talks. In Strzępka’s production, the scene is both amusing and poignant, and it perfectly encapsulates Demirski’s point that commemorative practices should be individualised, and that it is meaningless to thoughtlessly participate in collective rituals. Gustlik says he is able to remember the people who died in the Warsaw uprising but feels it is unnecessary for Szarik to tell him who, what, or how to remember:

ja mogę
ja te dwieście tysięcy osób pamiętać mogę
ale czemu on ma mówić co ja mam pamiętać? Właściwie?34

Czereśniak not only wishes to find his own way to express his emotions about the past, but also wants to include within his retrospection a protest against the authorities who gave the command to begin the Warsaw Uprising:

ja mam takie emocje różne
ale sam je sobie woleć mieć
niż z wami
minutę mogę stać
ale moja minuta jest przeciwko władzy
która wydała rozkaz żeby rozpocząć powstanie
a potem każe nam ten rozkaz świętać
stoję przeciwko takim świętom.35

In the Polish social context it is controversial to challenge the Warsaw Uprising in this way, but the point is succinctly made and communicated in performance with a conviction that makes it seem very reasonable. It is part of the dismantling of a framework of generalised attitudes in favour of personally thought through and freely expressed opinion.

In the same play, Szarik wants to set up a new monument, which Gustlik opposes and urinates on. This is clearly a symbolic act expressing disregard and disrespect for the proposed monument and what it represents, exemplifying generational differences in attitudes to remembering. Gustlik argues that the place in which Szarik wishes to make his monument holds different meanings to different people, and that the location has been witness to various events in the recent past, none of which should take precedence. Although the character is ostensibly male, in the Strzępka production the actor is female and uses feminine verb endings, saying:

W tym miejscu w roku takim tam a takim – o godzinie 13.45 [...] Zginęły trzy sanitariuszki państwa podziemnego [...] w tym miejscu zachorowałam na grępę jak się całowałam z chłopakiem pierwszy raz Potem w tym miejscu mnie rzucił [...] potem zdarzyło się całe mnóstwo rzeczy [...] gdzie jest w sercu tego miasta moja tabliczka?36

In Wojcieszek’s ‘Cokolwiek się zdarzy, kocham cię’37 the female character, Sugar’s girlfriend Magda, articulates her disdain for monuments that represent national heroic narratives and prejudicial attitudes by writing in a poem:

jesteśmy kochankami /
zbęty to na grobach królów naczelników powstań przegranych
w dniu ich rozpoczęcia /
zbęty to na pomnikach patriotycznej młodzieży.38

This leads on to the next section which focuses on characters expressing their right to be openly homosexual without fear of persecution.

32 Demirski, ‘Niech żyje wojna’, 389, ‘I have these emotions | but the fact that he’s talking about them pisses me off’, trans. Natasha Oxley.
34 Demirski, ‘Niech żyje wojna’, 391, ‘I can | I can remember these two hundred thousand people | but why does he have to tell me what I have to remember? | Really?’, trans. Natasha Oxley.
35 Demirski, ‘Niech żyje wojna’, 391, ‘I have these various emotions | but I prefer to have them alone | than with you | I can stand for a minute | but my minute is against the authorities | who gave the order to start the uprising | and then tells us to celebrate the order | I stand against these commemorations’, trans. Natasha Oxley.
36 Demirski, ‘Niech żyje wojna’, 386-387, ‘In this place in such and such a year at 1:45pm [...] Three nurses of the Polish underground state were killed [...] | In this place I got the flu after I kissed a boy | for the first time | then in this place he dumped me | [...]. Then loads of things happened | Where in the heart of this town is my plaque?’, trans. Natasha Oxley.
38 Wojciech, Cokolwiek, 287-288 ‘we are lovers | let’s do it on the tombs of kings, of commanders of uprisings lost the day they began | let’s do it on monuments to patriotic youth’, trans. Artur Zapałowski, I Love You No Matter What, in (A)pollonia: Twenty-first-century Polish Drama and Texts for the Stage (London, New York, Calcutta: Seagull Books), 587.
1.4 Open the closet!

While ‘the homosexual taboo is fading’39 in Polish society, prejudice against non-heterosexual people of all kinds remains a particular problem in contemporary Poland, and ‘constructing the homosexual as nationally-alienated derives from the fantasy of a real, unchangeable core of national identity’.40 By writing homosexual and transsexual protagonists whom they support, contemporary Polish playwrights contribute their voices to activism against homophobia and anti-gay prejudice, engaging with the ongoing socio-political discourse seeking to assert the acceptability of being Polish and being gay.

In Między nami dobrze jest, Masłowska writes a minor ‘Fryzjer-gej’ character who is ‘niewielkotolerowany’. It is an example of her biting irony when being Polish and being gay.

The ongoing socio-political discourse seeking to assert the acceptability of homosexuality and transsexual identities to activism against homophobia and anti-gay prejudice, engaging with contemporary Polish playwrights contribute their voices to activism against homophobia and anti-gay prejudice, engaging with the ongoing socio-political discourse seeking to assert the acceptability of being Polish and being gay.

In Tęcza Trybuna 201245 (Rainbow Stand 2012), Demirski’s protagonists are a group of gay football fans protesting for their own stand in the stadium for the 2012 European Cup final held in Poland and Ukraine, to protect them from violence. In the production of this play directed by Strzępka, premiered in 2013.46 characters approach the audience, asking them if they will sign a petition in favour of the stand for the gay fans, putting them on the spot with regard to this controversial initiative. This play drew a lot of attention, not least because Demirski pretended that it was based on a real group of fans, but in fact he and his colleagues had set up the Tęcza Trybuna group, which was reported as real in the international press. In this play, a gay teacher who fears violent attacks wonders, ‘co wynika z mojego karate które ćwiczyłem przez dwa lata jak teraz się boję wyjść na ulicę’?47 Later he declares: ‘ja już dłużej nie będę sobą na to pozwalał | bo właśnie przyszłeś czas żeby nie wstydzić się wychodzić na ulicę’.48 Here, Demirski is clearly supporting and giving a voice to this character and the people he represents. In the same play, Demirski presents what is one of the most controversial and complicated characters possible in a Polish context: a transsexual priest who used to be a nun. In the Strzępka production this character is played by a female actor dressed in a priest’s outfit. The example of this provocative character leads us on to the final section on the church.

1.5 Down with the church!

Another clear commonality in plays by several playwrights is the presence of characters who do not feel connected to the Polish Catholic Church. Given the dominance of the Catholic Church in Polish society, the inclusion of such characters represents another aspect of engagement with contemporary socio-cultural discourse. In Sikorska-Miszczuk’s Popiełuszko,49 the protagonist is an Antypolak50 who articulates the problem of the Polak-katolik myth, saying:

Mój Kościół postawił mnie przed wyborem. Jeśli jestem Polakiem, to muszę wierzyć w Kościół katolicki. Jeśli nie będę wierzył w Kościół katolicki, nie będę Polakiem. Bo wtedy ża karę pozbawi mnie obywatelstwa.51

He goes on to assert his right to choose his religion and how he practices it. He addresses the audience with the unambiguous lines:

41 Masłowska, Między nami, 80, ‘an oasis of tolerance and multiculturalism’, trans. Natasha Oxlwy.
42 Wojcieszek, Sokolowick, 270, ‘Grandfather’s sister wasn’t no lesbian when he laid down his life at Monte Cassino! [...] Mogłem zginąć, a ty...Jestes taka na złość mnie!’.42 Sugar and Piotr’s mother, Teresa, supports her daughter’s right to sexual freedom over her son’s nationalist tendencies. Sugar says, ‘Stworzyłam małą lesbijką rodzinkę. Maleńką wywrotową komórkę, która wysadzi w powietrze to popieprzone społeczeństwo.’43 Teresa tells Piotr ‘Twoja siostra ma takie jak ty prawo mieszkać tu, z kim chce! To duży dom, where did two years of karate classes get me since I’m scared to go outside’, trans. Artur Zapałowski, Rainbow Stand 2012, 2011, unpublished, received by email from Demirski’s assistant, 7.
43 Demirski, Tęcza Trybuna, 6, ‘where did two years of karate classes get me since I’m scared to go outside’, trans. Artur Zapalski, Rainbow Stand 2012, 2011, unpublished, received by email from Demirski’s assistant, 7.
44 Demirski, Tęcza Trybuna, 34, ‘‘I won’t stand for it any longer | because the time has come to stop being ashamed of going out in the street’, trans. Artur Zapalski, Rainbow Stand 40.
47 Demirski, Tęcza Trybuna, 6, ‘where did two years of karate classes get me since I’m scared to go outside’, trans. Artur Zapalski, Rainbow Stand 2012, 2011, unpublished, received by email from Demirski’s assistant, 7.
48 Demirski, Tęcza Trybuna, 6, ‘where did two years of karate classes get me since I’m scared to go outside’, trans. Artur Zapalski, Rainbow Stand 40.
50 Anti-Pole.
51 Sikorska-Miszczuk, Popiełuszko, 721, ‘My church presents me with a choice. A choice about nation. If I’m a Pole, I must believe in the Catholic church. If I’m not going to believe in the Catholic Church, I’m not going to be a Pole. Because then as a punishment it will deprive me of my citizenship’, trans. Natasha Oxlwy unpublished.
To, co mogę zrobić, to wstać z kolan. I wzywam wszystkich: wstańcie z kolan. Tak. Bo ja wstaję z kolan. I mówię: Nie potrzebuję Kościoła, żeby wierzyć. Jestem Polakiem. Wolnym człowiekiem.52

In Masłowska’s Dwoje biednych Rumunów mówiących po polsku53 (Masłowska: 2006), protagonist Parcha is an actor who plays a priest in Plebania, a television series that was shown in Poland between 2000 and 2012. Despite this role, he explains that he fears he will not receive eternal salvation and complains: ‘Kościół katolicki się przypierdoli ze swoimi dogmatami, spowiedziami, postami i udupią mnie. Mnie. Księża Grzegorza udupią’. In Wojcieszek’s Made in Poland54, the central character, Boguś, has lost faith in the church, telling the priest Edmund: ‘Mam dosyć tych kłamstw, nie widzisz?’55 and ‘Nie wierzę w życie wieczne, nie wierzę w Nowy Testament, nie wierzę w objawienie Proroków’.56

In Demirski’s Był sobie Polak, Polak, Polak i diabeł, the Gwiazdka again expresses herself bluntly, asking ‘a do czego mi jest kurwa mać ta cała wasza religia…[,]…a do czego mi jest ta wasza narodowa tożsamość’.57 The Pole-Catholic myth is no longer sacred for these characters or their playwrights.

In presenting such characters, the playwrights are supporting open debate around religion, advocating freedom of choice when it comes to religion and how it is practised.

1.6 Conclusions

The playwrights discussed here clearly engage in contemporary Polish public debate and social discourse, particularly in relation to history, sexuality and religion, and they all challenge oppressive myths of homogeneity. These writers advocate the democratisation of memory and freedom for postwar generations to sever the continuation of passing down memories of the war. The plays discussed here give the clear message that it is, or should be, acceptable for postwar generations not to be nationalistic and not to internalise the dominant narratives surrounding the history of World War Two. The plays also demonstrate a challenge to prejudice against homosexual and transsexual people, emphasising the point that being Polish does not have to mean being heterosexual. Neither does being Polish equate to being Catholic, according to these plays, which voice the conviction that it is acceptable for Poles not to believe in God, or to have a religious faith outside of the Polish Catholic church. These plays are vibrant, cacophonous reactions against existing structures, both social and theatrical. Collectively they emphasise the importance of individual expression, conveying a sense of anger at certain aspects of the status quo, but at the same time projecting a sense of optimism about the future for individual Poles.

---

52 Sikorska-Miszczuk, Popiełuszko, 723, ‘What I can do is get up off my knees. And I urge you all: get up off your knees. Yes. Because I’m getting up off my knees. And I’m saying: I don’t need the church to believe. I am a Pole. A free man’, trans. Natasha Oxley.
54 Wojcieszek, Przemysław. ‘Made in Poland’, in Made in Poland. Dziewięć sztuk teatralnych z Polski, eds Roman Pawłowski and Henryk Sulek (Kraków: Ha!art and Horyzont, 2006), 404-463.
55 Wojcieszek, Made in Poland, 407, ‘I’ve had enough of these lies, don’t you see?’, trans. Dominika Laster, in Loose Screws: Nine New Plays from Poland, ed. Dominika Laster (Calcutta: Seagull), 303.
57 Demirski, Był sobie Polak, 47, ‘what fucking good to me is your whole religion? […] and what good to me is this national identity or yours?’, trans. Natasha Oxley.
Introduction
Except for the brief period between August 1980 and December 1981, post-war Poland had only one autonomous political organization - the Communist party - which, in Polish case, (after 1948) was called the Polish United Workers’ Party or PZPR.¹ In July and August 1980, that changed. During that summer, in almost 1000 factories, strikes broke out. The dramatic events ultimately led to a compromise between the state and a society in rebellion. On 31th August, representative of the Interfactory Strike Committee Lech Wałęsa and Deputy Prime Minister Mieczysław Jagielski signed the Gdansk Accords.² Strikes ended, and pursuant to the main demand by the strikers, the Independent Self-governing Trade Union Solidarity was born - an institution foreign to a Soviet-type country. Uniquely, it was managed independently from a state, and decisions and activity didn’t had to be approved by the Communist party. While it started as a labour union movement, it soon turned into a much wider social movement.³

¹ Poland knew obviously many other organizations including youth ones, trade unions, cultural societies and even two additional political parties: rural United People’s party and Alliance of Democrats. The principles of the state-socialist system nonetheless prevented them of acting independently. All of those bodies were under Communist supervision to the point of determining their yearly budgets.

² The best brief historical description of the process see Andrzej Paczkowski, The spring will be ours. Poland and the Poles from occupation to freedom (University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State University Press), 405-410.

The protest quite naturally was aimed at the party-state and the Communist party itself. Motivations for joining the Communist party changed drastically during the 1970s. Among almost three million members, only a minority would call themselves Marxists-Leninists. Loyalty to the organization and the party-state was also not built on fear of brutal repressions, but the expectation of improving one’s living conditions and gaining personal favours. Party members at the lowest level voiced much criticism even before the summer 1980 strikes. The first modest protest from below could be observed during Party’s 8th Congress in February 1980. Many officials and commentators saw the February Congress as a missed opportunity to change policies and propaganda directions and appeal to the popular discontent, which due to economic shortages was omnipresent. Edward Gierek, then the PZPR First Secretary and leader, was, at the time, convinced of his popularity and implemented only minor changes. Probably never before were rank and file Party members and the general public sharing so many postulates and longings. PZPR members should not be viewed as a ‘united front’. Party membership, in most cases, was not considered a polemical attribute. What signals were being sent to them from the ruling elite during summer 1980 protests? They were far from reassuring. On 15th August Prime Minister Edward Babiuch gave a television address. Above all, it was widely considered boring and was delivered in a monotonous manner, underlining the pervasive lack of dynamism in the ossified regime. Babiuch, a committed functionary of the Party, informed the audience about ‘temporary breaks in production’ (which was a common euphemism for strikes). He acknowledged the economic situation as ‘complicated and in a difficult situation’. ‘We didn’t prepare to meet the hard times’, he stated. He also explicitly spoke about Polish foreign debt and economic shortages, confessed that in the 1970s Poland lived ‘on credit’ and the time had come to pay it all off. Instead of mobilizing the party and influencing the general public, he managed to do the opposite. First Secretary Edward Gierek, in similar speech the following week, asked for ‘calmness and consideration’ - to no visible effect.

In 1980, strategic use of Party members placed within the strikes was seen as one way of shutting down the strikes. They were to influence the strikers and try to repair it from within. Or you can also simply leave it, especially if you have somewhere else to go, when an alternative organization. "The Party, Solidarity or Both?..."

162

THE PARTY, SOLIDARITY OR BOTH?...     163JAKUB SZUMSKI    162

to leave the premises of the factories. The reply to this idea must had been sobering: ‘At the moment we don’t have a Party. It is turning to the other side and sympathises with the protesters. We don’t know if they will step forward. We could end up all on our own,’ said the PZPR Warsaw secretary.

How did Party members behave during the protest at the Gdańsk Shipyard, the cradle of Solidarity movement? One of the strike leaders, Krzysztof Wyszkowski, recalled an out of the ordinary situation. A representative from a small factory near Gdańsk arrived at the Lenin Shipyard to request admission to the Interfactory Strike Committee. Some of the workers recognized him as the PZPR secretary and voiced deep misgivings. To redeem himself he bent on his knees and swore on the holy cross that he would never betray the workers again. After this symbolic gesture, forgiveness was granted by the rebelled workers. In most situations such dramatic displays of contrition were not necessary. The Great Strike was seen as a new chance, a new beginning for everyone - including Communist party functionaries. ‘It didn’t matter whether some were Red,’ said Zenon Kwoka, a strike participant. ‘The point of Solidarity is the coming together of a people, a nation united in a common cause. [...] Thinking in categories of “us” and “them” was banal and destructive.’ In other parts of Poland in 1980 strikes were co-organized or led by Party members. The symbolic and quasi-religious prostrations witnessed in the Gdańsk Shipyard were not common to other protest sites. The shared values in most cases were equality, social justice and dissatisfaction with the ruling class starting from the Politburo down to factory managers.

The PZPR leadership wasn’t unanimous as to whether Party members should be allowed to join the new union. No clear instructions were given. In fact, they had little or no influence over it. PZPR members flocked to the union despite any Politburo’s remonstrations. It is unclear how many were motivated by genuine commitment to the movement, but research suggests that the majority was genuinely excited by the development of a movement which could act as a counterweight to the regime.

Polish United Workers’ party was no doubt in structural crisis. Economist Albert Hirschman divided reactions to crises in organizations into ‘voice’ and ‘exit’.

appears. Both of these processes took place in PZPR in 1980 and 1981 - members were both condemning the party and reforming it (as insiders) or withdrawing their membership and leaving for Solidarity - for many a likely substitute.

What would happen when people tried to be members of both the communist party and Solidarity trade union? In the further parts of the text I would like to present three individual biographical cases that transcend Hirschman’s division, which can be paraphrased as a ‘should I stay or should I go’ dilemma. Various participants of the strike showed that a third way was indeed possible.

I chose three cases of different social backgrounds, ages and geographical regions. I called their attitudes ‘the Mediator’, ‘the Radical’ and ‘the Orthodox’. The ‘Mediator’, Stefan Bratkowski, in 1980 and 1981 was head of the Polish Journalists’ Association (SDP) and who, against all odds, tried to negotiate between PZPR and Solidarity. The ‘Radical’ was Zbigniew Iwanów, leader of the so called horizontal movement in PZPR. The ‘Orthodox’ was represented by Zofia Grzyb, who joined Solidarity in 1980 and later became the first female member of the Communist Politburo.

The Mediator - Stefan Bratkowski

Stefan Bratkowski was born in 1934 to a well-connected and respected family. His father Stefan Janusz (1890-1941) held a position of Polish General Consul in (what was at that time) German Wrocław/Breslau. After the Second World War he followed a path typical for many Polish intellectuals of his generation. He accepted Communism as a New Faith, moved to Kraków where he received a law degree. At a surprisingly young age he started his academic career teaching Marxism-Leninism. He joined PZPR at the age of 20. The Thaw and de-Stalinization of Polish October 1956 shaped him politically - he was active in various discussion clubs within the Party and youth organizations.

He started his journalist career in the late 1950s. He couldn’t land a steady job, and so circulated between various press titles. In the 1960s, economic modernization became his idle fix. He wrote or co-wrote several books in which he advocated the idea of well-organized and technologically advanced socialism. In the next decade of Edward Gierek (1970-1980), those notions started to rise into prominence. Bratkowski also developed an interest in new technologies and computer sciences - he saw them as a way to advance socialist economy without introducing dangerous political changes. His views on managerial socialism, the importance of modernization, located Bratkowski in the vanguard of Polish journalism of that time. Historians point to the year 1976 as a turning point away from the relative prosperity – the economic situation worsened and the Polish deficit in international trade grew. Bratkowski was out of steady employment from 1974 and lived only from publishing his books. Despite that, he was widely regarded as a mentor and authority figure. He started an informal discussion circle, ‘Experience and the Future’, where dissidents, communist party liberals and free-thinking intellectuals met and critiqued openly Gierek and his policies.

In 1980 he was one of the few members of his intellectual formation who decided to stay in the Party and make attempts to repair it from within. Such attitudes were common in the times of revisionism of late 1950s and early 1960s - when in fact Bratkowski was politically formed - but in the wake of Solidarity and political opposition it became obsolete. The economic situation looked catastrophic to him. He said in 1980 that ‘with the system of economic management that exists in Poland, the Lord Himself would have to hand in his resignation at the end of three months’. After August 1980 he became the chairman of The Polish Journalists’ Association (SDP) - an institution directly in between the Party-Solidarity conflict. Most of its new board members were either in Solidarity or political opposition or were simply fed up with media being steered from behind the desk at party’s Central Committee.

At first he acted neutrally in the conflict, with obvious sympathies to Solidarity. He was a mediator. He acted in this role especially during the so-called Narożniak Affair. On 20th November 1980 two Solidarity volunteers from Warsaw were arrested for exposing an official memo designed to illegally harass the union. The confidential document named On the present methods of prosecution of illegal antisocialist activity was secretly taken by Piotr Sapela, a clerk at the Prosecutor’s General Office, and passed to Jan Narożniak, a Mazovian Solidarity printer. The authorities charged the two for ‘disseminating state secrets’ with maximum sentences of five years. In reaction, occupation strikes began. Threat of a regional strike was announced if the authorities wouldn’t meet further radical demands.

Sitting in PZPR Central Committee’s headquarters in Warsaw simultaneously on the phone between Warsaw and Gdańsk, from where Lech Wałęsa operated, Bratkowski brokered a compromise. His unique position between Solidarity and the Communist party, close contacts and trust from both sides, and trust from the new PZPR First Secretary, Stanisław Kania, enabled him – at least for the moment – to quell the conflict. SDP vouched for two arrested activists and posted bail. His position wasn’t easy. In exchange for Narożniak and Sapela’s release, the union was to desist from a general strike. ‘Around 1 a.m.,’ Solidarity advisor Waldemar Kuczyński recalled, ‘a red Škoda arrived and the two detainees got out of the car with Stefan Bratkowski. A huge crowd gathered at the gate. Some American reporters

16 Quote from: Garton Ash, The Polish revolution, 73.
17 Paczowski, The spring will be ours, 416.
18 Stefan Bratkowski as an independent contractor couldn’t be a member of Solidarity, which formally was a labour union, gathering people holding job positions.
19 Wicentcy, Załamanie na froncie ideologicznym, 76-77.
were taking pictures. Narożniak and Sapela were carried into the room,20
27th November at 2 am Radio Free Europe announced the success.21

He continued his mediating role also in other minor conflicts - with visible
effects.22 Nonetheless, in October 1980 he told Mazovian Solidarity leader
Zbigniew Bujak that ‘no positive aspects of Solidarity’s activity get through
to the authorities. The Party sees the union as an organized force which
has started to struggle for political power’. His pro-Solidarity stance was
negatively evaluated by the Soviet officials. According toLeonid Zamyatin,
a leading Soviet specialist on foreign propaganda who visited Warsaw in
January 1981, Bratkowski, despite being a Party-member, found himself ‘on
the edge of anti-socialism’23.

In March 1981, after brutal police beatings in north-western city of
Bydgoszcz, another party-Solidarity conflict emerged.24 Bratowski again
tried to be an intermediary. He issued an open letter To my comrades in
which he criticized confrontation-oriented party factions and advocated
for the acceptance of Solidarity as a permanent element of the political
system. The letter was seen as a form of illegal communication and drove
Bratkowski further away from the Communist party. It was copied and
distributed through PZPR cells, journalists’ unions, Solidarity and was
finally read out on Radio Free Europe, which Polish broadcast services
regularly interfered. ‘Let us have no illusions,’ he wrote in the letter,

‘This is a crisis of the last chance for those who would like to drive our party
from the path of social agreement, bringing our state and society to an inevitable
catastrophe. Our hardliners stand for no programme except of confrontation
and disinformation. Today they are trying to involve the whole Party leadership and
government in a clash with the entire society. With incalculable consequences,
they are trying to provoke society to behaviour justifying the use of force’.25

The Warsaw PZPR organization dominated by mavericks and members
of anti-Solidarity faction didn’t elect Bratkowski as a delegate to the Ninth
Extraordinary PZPR Congress. His pre-war intelligentsia background gave
reasons for anti-Semitic attacks. The Party shifted toward confrontation with
the union so Bratkowski’s common sense appeals fell on deaf ears. Instead,
he appeared at the First Solidarity National Congress as a representative of
Polish Journalists’World.26

The wide distribution of the letter – at home and abroad - and protests
among journalists, which he instigated, led to prosecution against Bratkowski
at the Party’s disciplinary court, the Central Control Commission. From all
around the country Party members and its local chapters forwarded letters
and fomented protests in favour of Bratkowski.27 Regardless, he was expelled
in October 1981. In reaction to this one party member from Warsaw sent
a postcard to the chairman of the Control Commission. On the flipside he
wrote in big, red capital letters: ‘Comrade! To protest the decision to remove
comrade Stefan Bratkowski from the party, I’m turning in my membership
card and withdrawing from its activity until the decision is changed. It would
be better to fire the whole Central Committee and to save Bratkowski – he is
one of a kind!’28

Despite his expulsion, Bratkowski succeeded in activating compromise-
oriented members of the Central Committee to speak up, and he appealed
to common sense and against confrontation. When pressured by the Control
Commission to recall his open letter he answered: ‘I need to react.
I suppose that future historians will acknowledge that’.29

The Radical – Zbigniew Iwanów
North-western city of Toruń became the headquarters of the so called hori-
zontal movement within the Communist party. Working-class party cells,
together with academics from the local university, instigated forms of mutual
cooperation without the consent of the higher structures. They advocated for
democratic socialism, free elections and procedures, accountability of PZPR
leaders, and acceptance of free trade unions as a socially beneficial fact.30

The guiding spirit behind the movement was Zbigniew Iwanów,  
economist, state-run factory manager and PZPR secretary. He was born in
1948 in a village 80 km out of Toruń. Struggling the first years after finishing
high school, he worked physically and at other low-end jobs. He never gave up
and finally in 1977 graduated from Toruń University in economics. In 1970 he
joined the Polish United Workers’ Party. A year before the end of his studies
he started working in Toruń’s Towimor marine engineering plant - one of
the biggest enterprises in the city, at that time employing 1,500 people. It
constructed cranes and winches for cargo ships also for export markets:
including Romania, Bulgaria and Denmark. Beginning as an intern, he
quickly became its economic manager. He was also active as a Party man and
served as economic secretary in PZPR factory cell.

Towimor in 1980 was in close production links with Gdańsk Lenin
Shipyard, so on 21st August the strike also started in Iwanów’s factory.
He immediately became one of its leaders stating on its first day that ’the
party and its policy demoralized the whole nation and it holds the full
responsibility’. He joined Solidarity after its registration, but didn’t limit his
activity to the new union. As he explained afterwards, he felt that so many
valuable persons were engaged in Solidarity that there was no one to clean up

2002), 126.
166-168.
22 Wicentyz, Zalanamie na froncie ideologicznym, 78-79.
23 Both quotes from: Friszke, Rewolucja Solidarności, 167, 250.
24 Paczkowski, The spring will be ours, 422-424.
26 Friszke, Rewolucja Solidarności, 469.
27 The protest united factory committees, universities, newspapers’ and journals’ editorial
boards and rank and file members including famous writers, actor, academics see: Archive
of Modern Records (AAN), Central Committee of the Polish United Workers’ Party (KC
PZPR), IX/138, AAN, KC PZPR, IX/140.
28 Quote from: AAN, KC PZPR, IX/140.
29 Quote from: Wicentyz, Zalanamie na froncie ideologicznym, 134.
30 Garton Ash, The Polish revolution, 171-172.
the mess in the Party. He was the one to do it, starting with his own factory. Among the crew, Iwanów advised not to withdraw PZPR membership and to start the process of repairing the Party from inside. Next month in genuinely free elections he was appointed First Secretary of PZPR Factory Committee and started applying his principles in practise. On micro-level this was a dress rehearsal for democracy: organizing referendums, open debates and consultations. Iwanów was listening to the workers in his office, hearing their complaints, sharing their disapproval towards Communist hierarchy.

His plans spanned wider. From October 1980 he started to export his revolutionary ideas into other PZPR committees and factories. ‘We must go and see as many people as possible who think as we do, to educate and revolutionary ideas into other PZPR committees and factories. ‘We must consult workers. Iwanów was listening to the workers in his office, hearing their complaints, sharing their disapproval towards Communist hierarchy.

Among the crew, Iwanów advised not to withdraw PZPR membership and to start the process of repairing the Party from inside. Next month in genuinely free elections he was appointed First Secretary of PZPR Factory Committee and started applying his principles in practise. On micro-level this was a dress rehearsal for democracy: organizing referendums, open debates and consultations. Iwanów was listening to the workers in his office, hearing their complaints, sharing their disapproval towards Communist hierarchy.

His plans spanned wider. From October 1980 he started to export his revolutionary ideas into other PZPR committees and factories. ‘We must go and see as many people as possible who think as we do, to educate and revolutionary ideas into other PZPR committees and factories. ‘We must consult workers. Iwanów was listening to the workers in his office, hearing their complaints, sharing their disapproval towards Communist hierarchy.

Indeed, he was never afraid to speak out. From the beginning of Iwanów’s public activity he exposed cases of local corruption, fraud and political scandals. He openly spoke about unjust privileges and disparities in earnings between workers and officials. This egalitarian, anti-establishment narrative probably gained him more followers than his plans for democratization within the PZPR.

From the beginning, his suspicious behaviour was carefully observed by Communist officials on the regional level. In October 1980 he was called to the PZPR Regional Committee Headquarters and in a hasty procedure expelled from the party. The list of his wrongdoings was long: organizing illegal meetings (The Consultative Commission), denouncing PZPR official policy on religion and political opposition. Following this, he called for a big meeting at Towimor. The crowd was upset with the decision - many Party members said that day that Iwanów’s leadership were the only thing still keeping them in PZPR. Towimor’s committee as a whole officially rejected the higher decision and still recognized Iwanów as their secretary.

Being a PZPR secretary without a membership card wasn’t easy. Nonetheless, he still campaigned for his vague programme of ‘housecleaning throughout Poland’. His case at the end was brought to the same PZPR Central Control Commission at which few months later Stefan Bratkowski would also be questioned. In March 1981, the Commission once and for all removed him from the Party. ‘The Iwanów Case’ was widely commented on and showed that even in the PZPR there were still examples of non-conformism and dissent.

On 15th April 1981 Toruń held a national conference of horizontal structures enthusiasts from all over the country. There, New York Times reporter John Darnton spoke with Zbigniew Iwanów, ‘a flamboyant figure with tinted glasses and a tiny moustache’, as he described him. He still hoped that somehow he could be reinstated to the Party and take part in the 9th Extraordinary Congress in July 1981. More and more he put his organization in a difficult position, having to constantly defend him paralyzed Towimor’s activity. In spring and summer 1981 he made his last tour around the country giving lectures and attending public discussions. He stopped his attempts to reform the Party in June 1981 and retreated to Solidarity-only activity. He became the union’s vice-chair in Toruń. ‘I am a radical’, he said when being questioned at the Control Commission.

The Orthodox – Zofia Grzyb

Zofia Grzyb was born in 1928 in Radom, a medium-size once industrial city, south of Warsaw. We know very little of her younger years. Most of her life she worked physically: from 1947 to 1955 in various factories in Radom, then she settled in textile and leather manufacturer Radoskór, where she remained until 1983. She joined the Communist party in 1947 at the age of 19.

34 Quote from: AAN, KC PZPR, IX/141.
35 Caen, Interview with Zbigniew Iwanów, 153.
36 Caen, Interview with Zbigniew Iwanów, 154.
37 AAN, KC PZPR, IX/142.
38 Paczkowski, The spring will be ours, 430-431.
41 Quote from: AAN, KC PZPR, IX/142.
Her superior[s] must have seen some potential in her, because she was twice selected to participate in political courses in late 1940s and early 1950s. After the training she began teaching political classes in her factory on her own. In 1949 she received an honorary Cross of Merit for socialist labour competition.

In June 1976 another price increase resulted in strikes and protests. The city of Radom was the scene of dramatic fights between protesters and the police, two people were killed and many were subjected to brutal beatings and detained. In nation-wide propaganda the citizens of the city were blamed and presented as instigators of the protest, which – as the press announced – resulted in further worsening of economic situations. The public, together with rank and file Party members, waited for an opportunity to reckon with local secretaries and central leaders for ill-prepared actions and chaos which led to brutal events.

Grzyb joined Solidarity as a common activist in her Radoszków company. Many times she claimed that she treated Solidarity as a ‘real’ trade union, as opposed to the bureaucratic and inefficient one that existed until 1980. In her factory, being both in Solidarity and in the Party was not unusual. Modus operandi between PZPR cell and the union was developed – they had the same views on the future of shoe industry in Poland.

After the fall of Edward Gierek, questions were raised as to who was responsible for ruining the economy, and where did the political culpability lie. To make things worse, allegations about former leaders’ corruption and abuse of their posts started to surface. In order to investigate those matters in May 1981 PZPR Central Committee established a special body, called the Grabski Commission. Zofia Grzyb became a member. Unaccustomed to such high level of administration she tended to ask inconvenient questions. During her service in the Grabski Commission she expressed her disappointment with the former PZPR leadership. She often spoke about broken promises of betterment of life and the poor PZPR personnel policy. Again and again she revealed the sheer incompetence of the ruling class. ‘No one had any education nor professional background’, she said, ‘one might get a sense of their impotence from those conversations’. At the same time, she was not at all convinced that the sole responsibility for the economic crisis lay only in the hands of fallen dignitaries. She wanted the current leadership (Stanisław Kania and General Wojciech Jaruzelski) to also account for their role in the 1970s policy making.

Her star shined bright at the Party’s Ninth Extraordinary Congress in July 1981. Much to the audience’s surprise, she was appointed to Politburo. She represented an unlikely mixture: a woman, a worker and a Solidarity member all at once. Grzyb gave the Party a chance of new legitimization strategy. The press advertised that she was still employed in her old factory. In a few interviews she denied having an apartment in Warsaw and special privileges. ‘It will help that people know me well and wouldn’t treat me as a Party official, but rather as a human being, with whom one might share his troubles and even make demands’, she stated in an 1981 interview. The only benefit of being a member of the Politburo, she underlined, was the company car. She struggled with her newfound public persona. ‘We suffered terribly,’ recalled Marek Barański, one of the leading TV journalists in the 1980s, ‘because she couldn’t control her stage-fright before the camera. She was rescuing herself by reciting previously prepared text. The outcome was dreadful. Zofia Grzyb never gave TV interviews again. She knew she wasn’t made for it and didn’t push for them again.’

Her sympathy toward Solidarity gradually changed. At the PZPR Second Plenary Session in September 1981 she started to criticize the union: ‘To some of my comrades my affiliations with Solidarity seem strange. I want to clearly state that I joined the organization because I believed that it will take care of the workers’ problems better than the old unions. I’m beginning to wonder if in fact I don’t belong to an alternative political party’. Above all she didn’t trust intellectuals – ‘irresponsible’ as she put it – union advisors from Workers Defence Committee (KOR). She accused the union leadership of betraying the workers and of extra-statutory (read: political) activity.

In October 1981 she went even further. In her own words, Solidarity at its First National Congress presented its ‘real image’, which ‘raises unrest where would it lead us’. Solidarity was no longer associated with a beneficial labour union, which deals with everyday problems, but rather, as Zofia Grzyb said, ‘opposition political organization, with a negative or even hostile attitude towards socialism, towards the Party, towards everything that can be associated with the notion of socialism’. She ended her speech with an important announcement: ‘I decided to leave Solidarity. If I would have stayed in this organization, I’d be approving not only all beneficial initiatives in our factory but also everything to which the extremists within central and local union management are driving us. And this for me as a member of the Party is unacceptable!’ By extremism she – among others – referred to the famous Message to the Working People of Eastern Europe, advocating human rights among Soviet bloc. Such declarations perfectly chimed with the propaganda signals, which focused on the division between regular workers and cynical ‘politicians’ in the union leadership who were exploiting their discontent. It is hard not to raise a question of authenticity of such announcements.

---

42 Zofia Grzyb’s early biography based on her personal file from PZPR’s Central Committee’s Archives: AAN, KC PZPR, GK XX/9628.
44 Slowo Luda, 1981 August 14th-16th.
46 Quote from: Slowo Luda, 1981 August 14th-16th.
51 Brian Porter-Struc, Poland in the modern world, 302.
From the files of the Politburo we can reconstruct that during her term, Grzyb focused on the interests of big industrial factories and tried to back up the Party committees in their struggles with Solidarity. The price hikes, especially in food and energy, was a source of great consternation. Her main goal was to promote stability within the Party. In June 1981 she reminded her comrades that papers concerning Party’s trade union policies needed to be ‘concrete, clear, understandable for an average worker’. Her recantation of Solidarity in the long term led to her demise, without the ‘union factor’ she was no longer that attractive to the PZPR leadership.

Conclusions
Moving from the biographies of these three individuals, their political identity is also key. The rise of Solidarity allowed for a broader political spectrum, which in turn meant that Poles could begin to politically identify beyond the Manichean: Party member/non-Party binary. Its core lied in the premise of dual (PZPR and Solidarity) membership. For many politically active people, old rationales for joining the party or opposing it became obsolete. They continued to accept state socialism, but pushed for democratic reforms from within and saw Solidarity as a now-permanent element of the system.

Stefan Bratkowski laid out his main postulates in a press article called Five Polish Deviations. In what he called ‘socialism for real’ or ‘socialism without a sham’ he presented five points which should serve as titular ‘deviations’ – uniquely Polish elements in state socialism: religious tolerance, inclusion of non-Communist leftism in PZPR, acceptance of independent trade unions and other civil society institutions, private property in farming and the general rule of law. Iwanów’s programme was more vague. He focused on reforming the Party and although a radical, he knew that in the Polish geopolitical situation only a ‘mini-pluralism’ could be achieved. He embodied what Lawrence Goodwyn called ‘politics of protest’ – taking unorthodox actions (especially in the realm of the Communist party), often performed by previously little-known people. Zofia Grzyb might look like an unlikely match to Bratkowski and Iwanów, but her idea that Communist leaders should be held accountable and that grassroots movements could take on politics was not possible before the advent Solidarity.

The cases I presented show that at least for a limited period of time it was imaginable to be both in the Communist party and Solidarity. Finding oneself in such an unknown situations demanded new political ideas and strategies. Everything happened fast. Let us remind ourselves that the events described took place during a short period of time – some sixteen months, filled with emotional turmoil. Each actor represents a different path. Stefan Bratkowski sought reconcilement between PZPR and Solidarity. ‘Solidaritizing’ the Party was advocated by Zbigniew Iwanów. And incorporating Solidarity in the system as subordinate to the Communists was espoused by Zofia Grzyb. These challenges to Communist monopoly came to an end with the declaration of martial law in 1981. Arguably, the full longue durée effects of that political upheaval are still yet to be revealed. These individuals continued in their public activity, but in a much changed climate.

53 Życie Warszawy, 1980 December 1st.
55 Goodwyn, Breaking the barrier, XIX.
Ilona Wysmulek
Institute of Philosophy and Sociology Polish Academy of Sciences / Visiting scholar at the Mershon Center for International Security Studies, The Ohio State University and National Opinion Research Center, the University of Chicago
ilonawysmulek@ifispan.waw.pl

Corruption during Transformations of Polish Society: Survey Data Analysis of Perceived Changes and their Determinants

KEYWORDS: CORRUPTION PERCEPTION, GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS, POLITICAL TRUST, TRANSFORMATION, PANEL SURVEY, POLPAN

Introduction
Corruption is currently perceived as ‘one of the greatest evils of our times.’ Regardless of whether one has given a bribe or not, most Poles have an opinion about the level of corruption in the country and often consider corruption as a social problem. The literature investigating the causes and consequences of the perception of corruption establishes that a) depending on the context, perception of corruption might be different than the experience and behavior, b) corruption perception, although being an abstract phenomenon which may not reflect reality, has a direct influence on the attitudes of citizens and their political trust. Thus, even the appearance of corruption is critical with respects to the legitimacy of the political systems and quality of governance. In some respect, the perception of corruption may have more

1 The paper is a part of the project ‘Public Sector Corruption in Europe: Micro and Macro Determinants of Perception and Behavior’ financially supported by the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, Polish Academy of Sciences (grant for PhD students nr 22/2014) and is partially supported by the project ‘Polish Panel Survey 1988-2003: Social Structure and Mobility’, financed by the Polish National Science Centre (UMO-2011/02/A/HS6/00238). Earlier draft of the paper was prepared for the ‘Modernities, Transformations and Evolving Identities in post-1945 Poland’ conference, organized by Programme on Modern Poland at St Antony’s College, University of Oxford, 11-12 June 2015. I am very grateful to the suggestions made at this meeting, especially by the chair of my session Ann White. I am also thankful to Kazimierz Slomczynski for his insightful comments.


devastating effects than actual corruption itself, such as generating a ‘culture of distrust’ in the society, for example.\textsuperscript{5} Although corruption is a problem found in all European countries, regardless their economic development,\textsuperscript{6} high levels of perceived political and administrative corruption have been often understood as the distinctive disease of the countries ‘in transition’.\textsuperscript{7} Poland, as the largest Central-Eastern European country which has gone through a number of political, social, and economic changes, is a particularly interesting case for analysis. Since 1989, Poland has transformed from ‘the authoritarian state with a planned economy to a democratic, prosperous country at the heart of European Union’.\textsuperscript{8} If we take GDP growth as a measure, researchers call Poland ‘a miracle’ due to its rapid economic success.\textsuperscript{9} If we take the measures of democratization, Freedom House’s annual report on global political rights and civil liberties classifies Poland as a fully free country (score 1 in \textit{Freedom in the World} 2014) with a consolidated democracy (score 2.18 in \textit{Nations in Transition} 2014). If we check the indexes of the quality of life and access to knowledge, we will find that Poland gets the maximum scores on the \textit{Human Development Index} (score in HDI 2014: very high). Although we can argue whether such general aggregated indexes measure what they intend, there seems to be persuasive evidence from a variety of sources that the situation in Poland has improved. How does it relate to the level of citizen satisfaction with their government and evaluation of the effectiveness of its policies?

In this paper I investigate the perceptions and hopes of citizens on reducing corruption levels in Poland. First, I present prospective and retrospective evaluations of corruption levels in Poland as seen by Polish citizens. Second, I highlight the dynamics of change in evaluation of the government effectiveness in fighting corruption. Third, I concentrate on the relationship between trust and corruption, examining what determines or what influences the perception of corruption in Poland now.

My analysis is based on the Polish Panel Survey POLPAN 1988-2013, which offers unique information on the opinion of Poles since 1988, through the transformation period and up to the present. The panel format of the data offers a new angle in the analysis of corruption and enriches the understanding of changes that Poland has gone through.

\textsuperscript{8} Hough, \textit{Political Corruption and Governance}, 84.

---

\textbf{Perception of Corruption in Poland: tracing public opinion in POLPAN}

Perhaps tellingly, in 1988 when the Survey first launched, there were no questions covering either attitudes towards corruption or perception of corruption in current government. This is not to claim that researchers had absolutely no freedom to ask about corruption; however, there is the theory presented in a number of previous studies that in the Communist period corruption was ‘swept under the carpet’.\textsuperscript{10} As to Makowski, corruption at that time has not been presented (and also considered) as a social problem.\textsuperscript{11} Generally, the public did not have access to information about high level political corruption. Had that been the case, it may have led to the “corruption paradox” described by Krastev: independent of expert evaluation of corruption level, based on public opinion surveys, citizens in post-Communist countries perceive post-Communism as more corrupt than Communism.\textsuperscript{12} On the other hand, Hough (2013) argues that despite little access to formal information, people living in Communist times knew through their personal experience that political connections and bribery could solve many everyday problems. Poles prior to 1989 also suspected government of active involvement in a series of corrupt relationships.\textsuperscript{13} However, in the eyes of Polish citizens, did the situation improve after the regime change? Did the radical change of government lead to changes in perception of the level of corruption of those in power?

The Polish Panel Survey of 1993 asks respondents to evaluate on the 11 point scale whether the current government is corrupt or honest. It asks about the respondent’s feeling about the situation in Poland five years ago (in 1988), currently (in 1993) and in five years.\textsuperscript{14} In Table 1 there are the results of the distribution of answers to this question. We can see that despite the lack of information, generally, Poles considered government in 1988 as very corrupt and the majority of the answers fall in the negative evaluation side. It is interesting that despite the regime change, the opinion about corruption level of those in power did not change. We can observe that the distribution of answers about the retrospective evaluation of government as compared to the evaluation of current government is almost identical. However, it should be underlined that Poles expressed a certain level of hope in change of this situation in the future. When asked about the evaluation of the scale of corruption of the ruling government in five years, respondents tended to answer more optimistically and believed that government will become more honest (see Graph 1).

\textsuperscript{11} Makowski, \textit{Corruption as a Social Problem}.
\textsuperscript{12} Krastev, \textit{Shifting Obsessions}.
\textsuperscript{13} Hough, \textit{Political Corruption and Governance}.
\textsuperscript{14} Question wording in POLPAN 1993 questionnaire: Below there are twelve pairs of antagonistic/contrasting features. Below each pair there is an eleven-point scale showing whether we are getting nearer the feature on the left or on the right hand side. Taking into account your feelings, on each scale please indicate the point where:

- Poland was 5 years ago, i.e. in 1988 – Poland is currently situated - Poland will be in 5 years
In order to capture the differences between the prospective and retrospective evaluations of the ruling government, the opinions were combined in five categories, presented in Graph 2. Such rescaling allows us to better illustrate and compare the opinions, as well as the direction of change of the opinion. A large percentage of respondents consider the government as very corrupt now (44%) and a very similar percent of respondents think that the government was very corrupt in 1988 (42%). Regarding the situation in five years, the group of respondents that evaluated the future government as honest, compared with the current government, increased by 29% (11% in 1993 compared to 30% in five years from 1993). It is also worth mentioning that the number of respondents who have chosen middling responses have increased (up to 14%), which shows uncertainty, yet a general hope for a more honest government in future.

Influence of government on corruption: dynamics of change

Similar hopes of reduced corruption were observed in responses in the following 2003 and 2008 waves of the survey. In the succeeding waves of the research, though, respondents were not asked to evaluate the corruption scale of the past, present and future ruling government. We can ascertain, however, how the same people evaluated in 2003 the ability of the government as an institution to influence the reduction of the level of corruption. A similar question was repeated in 2008.

With the general decline of trust in government depicted in other empirical studies, alongside the corruption scandals around the main ruling party SLD, we would expect people to not see government as an institution capable of fighting corruption effectively. However, when asked about the potential of such influence, 76% of Poles replied that theoretically this influence may be very high. The hope that government can change corruption levels is also expressed in the responses in 2008, where only 22% of respondents said that government can have low influence on the overall fight against corruption.

However, if we analyze the responses more deeply, we can trace a slight tendency of increased political trust in Poland, when asked about the potential but not real influence of government on corruption. Table 1 presents the correlation of the opinion of the same respondents that took part in POLPAN wave 2003 and 2008. It shows that out of all 264 respondents with a negative opinion about the potential influence of government on corruption in 2003, 70% have changed their opinion into a positive one in 2008. If we look at the positive opinions in 2003 we can observe that out of all 816 responses only 20% have changed their opinion into a negative one. Thus,

---

15 Question wording in POLPAN 2003 questionnaire: We are interested in people’s views on corruption. In your opinion, is the influence of the government on corruption (1) very significant (2) somewhat significant (3) negligible, or (4) practically nonexistent?

16 Question wording in POLPAN 2008 questionnaire: How do you evaluate the influence of the government on corruption. In your opinion, the influence of the government on corruption is (1) very high (2) somewhat high (3) somewhat low (4) very low (5) practically none.


18 The Democratic Left Alliance party (SLD) was accused in 2004 of corruption and incompetence and its popularity went into a rapid decline and further on it led the party into the split. For more information check for example: Frances Millard (2008) Party politics in Poland after the 2005 elections in: Myant, M. R., & Cox, T. Reinventing Poland: Economic and Political Transformation and Evolving National Identity. Routledge.
if we look at the overall results, the distribution of opinions between 2003 and 2008 is very similar. However, if we trace the changes of opinion, we can observe a broader trend moving toward positive perceptions.

**Graph 3. Influence of government of corruption.**

![Graph showing the influence of government of corruption with percentages indicated.](image)


**Table 1. Correlation of opinion on influence of government on corruption in 2003 and 2008.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low influence 2003</th>
<th>High influence 2003</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low influence 2008</td>
<td>79 (30%)</td>
<td>185 (70%)</td>
<td>264 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High influence 2008</td>
<td>166 (20%)</td>
<td>650 (80%)</td>
<td>816 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>835</td>
<td>1080</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**Determinants of government corruption policy evaluation**

The optimism and hope for effective governance reflected in the previous POLPAN waves change dramatically if we ask respondents to evaluate the current governmental fight against corruption. In the opinion of the majority of respondents, the effectiveness of actions undertaken by the current Polish government towards the reduction of corruption is somewhat low (30%) or very low (29%). Only 13% of all respondents consider the actions undertaken by the government in this field as satisfactory. The question arises: what determines opinions about the effectiveness of current government’s success in fighting corruption? How are opinions about the current government related to evaluations of the potential capacity of government as an institution to cope with corruption? What are the characteristics of the group of individuals

---

19 Question wording in POLPAN 2013 questionnaire: Many countries experience such problems as unemployment and corruption. Do you evaluate the effectiveness of actions undertaken by the current government towards reducing corruption as very high, somewhat high, average, somewhat low or very low?
that negatively evaluate the actions of the current government and its specific anti-corruption policy in Poland?

In order to explore the impact of some attitudes and socio-demographic characteristics on the probability of a negative evaluation of the effectiveness of current government in fighting corruption, I have used in the analysis a binary logistic regression.

The dependent variable in the regression models presented in Table 2 is the evaluation of the effectiveness of the current government in fighting corruption, where 1 stands for low and somewhat low effectiveness.

The independent variables in the model were selected on the basis of previous research in the field, and include a) variable measuring political trust (specifically trust to political parties), b) variables identifying party affiliation of the respondent through the declared voting behavior and general attitude to the current government coalition, c) basic socio-demographic variables, such as age, gender and education. Below I present the assumptions connected with each set of the independent variables.

The level of political trust and satisfaction with the government’s policy are tightly interconnected. People become trustful or distrustful depending on whether they are satisfied with their government. In other words, low trust in government in fighting corruption, people tend to be satisfied with the actions of the political party if they identify themselves with this particular party. Thus, I hypothesize that older generations tend to be more tolerant of the attempts of a democratic government to fight corruption. The authors assume that it might be due to the experience of older generations with authoritarian institutions and, in comparison, bigger political trust in democratic ones. However, such positive association of age and evaluation of government is not observed in industrialized countries, where together with age, the level of satisfaction with government policies and political trust decreases.

In Table 2 there are two logistic regression models presented. The first model explains the negative evaluation of effectiveness of the current government’s fight against corruption by examining such factors as a) attitude to PO-PSL coalition, b) trust in political parties, c) voting behavior, d) education, c) gender, and d) age. Estimates are based on the sample of respondents who took part in 2013 wave of Polish Panel Survey. In the second model, the same determinants are included with the addition of the evaluation of government effectiveness in 2008, which means that the estimation is made on the sample of respondents that took part in both the 2008 and 2013 waves of Polish Panel Survey.

Based on Model 1 (Table 2) we can say that, ceteris paribus, the respondents that expressed a low level of general trust in political parties are two times more likely to evaluate government effectiveness of fighting corruption negatively. However, voting for PO during the last elections (with all other things being equal) decreases the odds of negative evaluation of corruption policy by 41%. The opinion that the PO-PSL coalition has brought Poland more losses than gains increases the odds of evaluating of current government effectiveness with fighting corruption negatively by three times.

20 Blind, ‘Building trust in government...’.
24 Question wording in POLPAN 2013 questionnaire: To what extent do you trust the authorities in the Dominican Republic, to a very high extent, to a high extent, to a moderate extent, to a low extent, very little or not at all?
26 This is a parliamentary coalition of center-right Civic Platform (PO) party and the Polish Peasant Party (PSL).
27 Question wording in POLPAN 2013 questionnaire: In your opinion, changes introduced in Poland since 2007 – that is, since the PO-PSL coalition came to power – brought most people in Poland... only gains/only loses?
28 In the model, age is measured in years; gender is coded as 1 for male and 0 for female; and education is coded as 1 for tertiary education of respondent and 0 for any other level of education
The data also show that a negative evaluation of the government increases together with age of respondent by 2.7% every year (which gives 27% for respondents that are 10 years older compared to younger respondents and controlling for other factors in the model). Gender and tertiary education appear to be not significant in evaluating current government, although controlling for this factors seems to be reasonable for the clarity of interpretation.

In Model 2, the evaluation of the government’s potential to fight corruption, although suggestive of an association with evaluation of current government effectiveness in fighting corruption, did not achieve statistical significance (p-value = 0.09). However, we see that controlling for the respondents’ opinions in 2008 did not change the level of significance of the other factors in the model, such as political trust, party affiliation and age.

Conclusions

Fighting corruption in Poland is one of the most sensitive issues in public debate. It is the process accompanied with many hopes and expectations. This paper has analyzed corruption levels in Poland since 1988, and the effectiveness of government in reducing corruption, as seen through the eyes of Polish citizens. My main aim was to highlight the changing dynamics of corruption perception in Poland and to investigate the characteristics of the group that is currently unsatisfied with the current government’s efforts, with the special attention to the relation of corruption and political trust.

The results of the analysis presented herein show that the majority of Poles consider government to be very corrupt (44%), both in 1989 and in 1993, despite the regime change. We can trace, though, the hope for more honest government in the future, which is expressed in the prospective question asked in the 1993 survey wave about corruption levels in five years, where only 20% of respondents state that the future government will be very corrupt.

Interestingly, the results from the 2003 and 2007 waves of surveys, reveal that around 76% of Poles declare the belief in the capability of government as an institution to fight corruption effectively. In the context of the general decline of political trust in Europe and growing number of publicly discussed corruption scandals, this high percentage of support for the potential of the government to fight corruption is unexpected. A deeper analysis of the panel responses show a slight increase of satisfaction in effectiveness of government in 2008 as compared to 2003. It might be related to the fact that corruption is understood here as the sphere limited to authorities and the view that government can fight it is rather not support for the government, but strong criticism underlining the unfulfillment of clear expectations.

In 2013, only 13% of respondents considered the actions undertaken by the current government in fighting corruption to be satisfactory. The results of logistic regression analysis have shown that, ceteris paribus, there is a positive correlation between the low level of political trust and evaluation of current government in fighting corruption. The negative evaluation of the PO-PSL coalition in 2007 also significantly increases the likelihood of having an opinion that the current government is not effective. There is a strong negative correlation observed between the opinion of low effectiveness of government corruption policy and voting for PO, which can be explained by the fact that respondents tend to support parties that they identify with. The older respondents tend to perceive government as less effective in fighting corruption as compared to younger respondents.

The characteristics of the group dissatisfied with the actions of the current government against corruption are presented here in a brief manner and need a deeper analysis of possible explanations of the observed tendencies.

---

31 In public perception, among older generations of Poles there are more partisans of Law and Justice party (PiS), than Civic Platform, which, in contrary, is associated with ‘younger, educated, from big cities’ voters.
Bibliography


