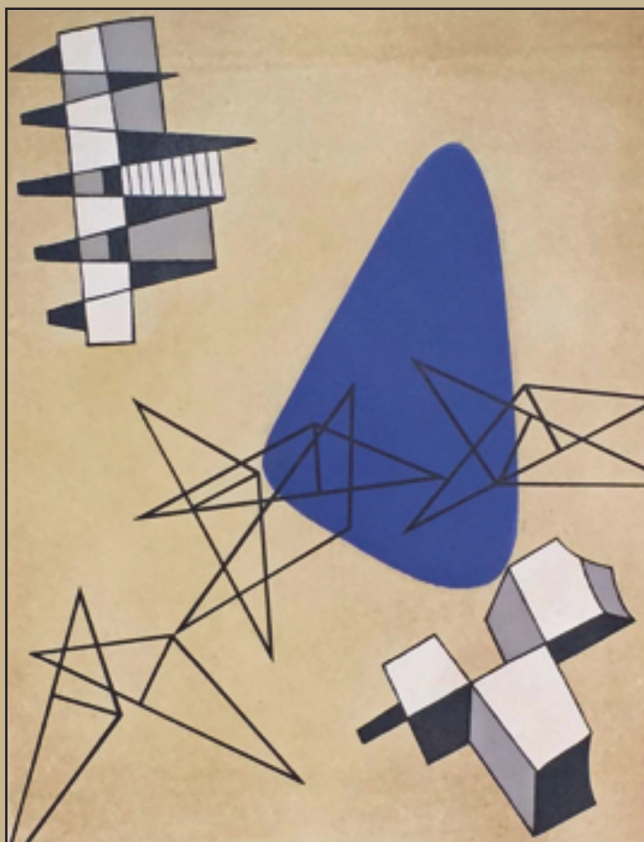


Individuals and Their Social Contexts

Edited by
Bogdan W. Mach,
Aleksander Manterys, and **Ireneusz Sadowski**



Institute of Political Studies
Polish Academy of Sciences

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Reviewer:
Kazimierz M. Słomczyński

Translators:
Agnieszka Hałas (Chapters 4, 5, 6, 7)
Tomasz Kietzman (Chapters 1, 2, 8, 9, Contributors)

Copy-editing:
Michelle Granas

Technical Editor:
Elżbieta Krzewska

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Krzysztofa Bernacka

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Jean Arp, Sonia Delaunay, Alberto Magnelli,
Sophie Taeuber-Arp

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Chapter 1

People in Networks: Individuals and Their Social Contexts

**Bogdan W. Mach, Aleksander Manterys,
and Ireneusz Sadowski**

Abstract

In this chapter we first present the concept, goals, and significance of our research project. Then we describe the data collection process and the data itself. To conclude, we give a short summary of the subsequent chapters.

Keywords: social networks, social context, “People in Networks”

In this book, we provide readers with the first results of a project entitled “People in Networks: The Influence of the Social Context on the Individual and its Role in Shaping Social Structure,” which was conducted at the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in the years 2015–2017 and financed by a grant from Poland’s National Science Centre.¹ At different times, the following individuals were members of the research team: Xymena Bukowska (Collegium Civitas), John E. Jackson (University of Michigan), Bogdan W. Mach, Aleksander Manterys, Ireneusz Sadowski (Polish

¹ The grant “People in Networks: The Influence of the Social Context on the Individual and Its Role in Shaping Social Structure” (National Science Centre, Poland; NCN #2013/10/M/HS/00526). Initial versions of selected chapters from this work were presented during the “People in Networks” conference in Jabłonna (March 31–April 1, 2017). In the preparation of this chapter we have used excerpts from the publication Mach et al (2017).

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to the personnel and interviewers of the Public Opinion Research Center [Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej (CBOS)] who participated in the research project. We are convinced that the success of the “People in Networks” project would not have been possible without their professionalism and engagement: they frequently went truly far beyond the call of duty. For months of hard work on the project we would like to thank Maciej Czerniewski, Krzysztof Janowski, Jolanta Kalka, Zbigniew Marczewski, and a hundred and fifty CBOS interviewers, who prepared, coordinated, and conducted the study, as well as the CBOS administrators, Mirosława Grabowska and Janusz Durlik, who actively supported the project from its onset, always finding the necessary time despite the constraints and responsibilities of their positions.

Academy of Sciences), Fiona Steele (London School of Economics), Andrzej Szpociński (Polish Academy of Sciences), Edmund Wnuk-Lipiński (Collegium Civitas, †2015), Jakub Wymułek (Polish Academy of Sciences), and Alicja Zawistowska (University of Białystok). The first part of the chapter introduces the concept, goals, and significance of the research project; the second describes the data collection process and the data itself; the third and final part is a short presentation of the subsequent chapters.

The Concept, Goals, and Significance of the Research Project

The fundamental goal of the project was to conduct empirical research on a scale that is unprecedented in the Polish social sciences, and to use respondents comprising a representative sample of the national population so that researchers could also reach people in the respondents' own social networks—the social surrounding, comprised of individuals linked to the respondents by lasting and significant relations. Starting with a nationwide sample comprising 5,631 addresses of individuals aged 18–75, the research was performed on our behalf by the Public Opinion Research Center [Centrum Badania Opinii Społecznej (CBOS)] from May 7 to July 15, 2016.

The conceptual work on the project consisted of planning research in which the “unit of observation” (the source of empirical information), “the unit of analysis” (for information processing—calculations and data aggregation), and the “unit of interpretation” (for theoretical generalizations and use of empirical information) would not be confined to the individual but would rather involve the individual's personal social network. In effect, the objects of the study were not specific individuals considered as separate atoms, independently of one another (as is often the case with empirical research in the social sciences), but social networks (threads, clusters) comprising a number of people who are connected by way of mutual ties and relations. We hope that this volume and subsequent publications will amply illustrate the benefits of such an approach to the “network paradigm,” which is both a significant challenge for the contemporary social sciences and a potential solution to their problems (Carrington, Scott, and Wasserman 2005;

Crossley 2016; Emirbayer and Goodwin 1994; Fuhse 2015a, 2015b; Lazega and Snijders 2016; Scott and Carrington 2011).

In terms of the subject matter, our final objectives are (1) to verify hypotheses on the influence of interpersonal networks on (a) individual attitudes, competences, behaviors, and resources, and (b) social diversification and existing social inequalities; and (2) to develop an empirically grounded theory of Polish society, as a variation of contemporary European “network society.” Although we appreciate the influence of Castells’ concept of “network society” ([1996] 2000) on the contemporary social sciences, we do not share the conviction that new social organizations simply replace old axes of social structuration. The existence of a modern “network society” is predicated upon two fundamental conditions. In such a society, the attributes of personal social networks (1) have a significant and autonomous influence on attitudes, competences, behaviors, and resources, and (2) explain no less of their interpersonal differentiation than those aggregations of individual attributes which in different theories and “poetics” are traditionally called classes or social strata. By taking an interest in networks as determinants of both individual attributes and social inequalities, we strive in effect to go beyond the oppositions of “individual–networks” and “networks–populations,” which are usually considered independently of one another.

The current project breaks radically with the model of a society as a cloud of human atoms. It was motivated by our belief that further development of the Polish social sciences required a complex, large-scale study, which from its very inception would be aimed at breaking with the atomistic model with respect to theory, methodology, and empirical praxis. Such a study—the units of data collection, the analysis, and the theorizing—would not be about individuals but about clusters or “bundles,” defined as individuals along with their social milieus or contexts. In this project, “the context” means first of all “personal milieu” or “personal environment”—a network of individuals who are close to each other in a particular, socially important, sense. Alternative analytical specifications of “context as a milieu” are “situation” and “configuration,” which are used in various strands of social theory. Paradigmatically, the last two terms appear equally in Weber’s ([1904–1905] 2001) signature classics (“configuration” as “interlacement of conditions” giving

birth to capitalism), Goffman's situational analysis (1959, 1969, 1974), and Elias's (1991) "figurations," as well as in theories by contemporary scholars such as Emirbayer (1997), White (1992, 2002), Collins (2004), and Scheff (1997, 2006).

The social context we propose to study consists of persons tied to a given individual by bonds of mutually significant social relations. An analogy in medical research would be tissue samples—excising cells along with networks of their inter-cell connections for a medical test. In the project, we study "social tissue"—social networks of connected individuals (Burt 1992, 2005, 2012). Ours is the first Polish study on a general population in which individual resources, competences, attitudes, and behaviors, as well as social structure, are systematically viewed from the perspective of a "tissue model" of society. In this model, the density and consistency of samples of "social tissue" come to the fore. No "new social-organism thinking" is offered here—we think of "social tissues," not "social organs." Yet, for the social sciences, the distinction between "tissue" and "organ" opens the way for interesting theorizing. Such a possibility benefits the project because the development of an empirically grounded theory of social contexts of different scales is one goal of the theoretical part of our endeavor. Technically, the project can be described as "a representative survey of social tissue" or "of social tissues." In a methodological sense, using the plural would be more valid here. Durkheim's ([1902] 1964) analysis of law is an excellent proto-example of "tissue research," which is at the same time far removed from "social organicism."

The significance of our research project is primarily connected with the fact that in the Polish social sciences, knowledge about society is largely built on empirical analyses that count, correlate, and aggregate the attributes of individuals (into "social categories," etc.), while considering these individuals "atomically," as independent from one another (in the same sense that elements of a well-chosen random sample are independent from one another). This type of knowledge has formed the basis for the regard in which the Polish social sciences are held internationally. Nevertheless, today the concentration of empirical attention on distributions, correlations, and aggregations of individual attributes does not make it easier for Polish social scientists to draw on the accomplishments of international social sciences with respect to the significance

of networks of interpersonal ties and relations as the building blocks of structures of a “network society” and as the autonomous determinants of individual competences, attitudes, behaviors, and resources. We hope that our research will to some degree shorten the distance between the Polish social sciences and the crowning achievements of international scholarship.

Stanisław Staszic, a Polish Enlightenment philosopher, remarked that an individual is “unthinkable” without society; we understand this to mean that individuals, considered “atomically,” are also to a large degree “unresearchable.” Not only in Poland does a gap exist between individualistic empiricism and both classic and modern theories, which continue to emphasize the non-individual level—previously conceptualized as “groups,” “social relations,” and “bonds,” and now conceptualized as “networks,” “relations,” “exchanges,” and “transactions.” We are striving to reduce this gap—if only slightly—by drawing practical conclusions from the fact that most theories locate the fundamental causes of individual attributes in the individual’s social surrounding. This point requires further clarification and elaboration.

It should be stressed that while sociological theories have long been criticized as “oversocialized” (Wrong 1961), it is not often today that attention is drawn to the fact that sociological research is significantly “undersocialized.” The research tool in particular is often treated as the main source of knowledge about society: interviews with a representative nationwide sample of respondents. Here, individuals are treated as independent units of observation, and dependent variables such as attitudes, opinions, or political affiliations are explained by drawing upon other individual attributes, such as the person’s social position, level of education, age, or degree of religiosity. Between “oversocialized” theory and “undersocialized” research a gap appears with respect to the influence of the social environment on the actions of the individual. The failure to acknowledge this surrounding (context) in explanations means that the results of the studies are burdened with the mistake known in the literature on methodology as “omitted variable bias” (OVV): an error involving the omission of a substantially significant variable. The consequences are not limited to the fact that the influence of the significant factor is not measured; another result will be the overestimation or underestimation

of the effects of other variables that are correlated with the omitted variable. If we assume—as countless theories postulate—that multiple attitudes and opinions are subject to the process of diffusion, then omitting the elementary diffusion mechanism—the interpersonal influence—in analysis is to make, in essence, a very strong assumption about the model of attitude proliferation. If we were to omit the influence of the immediate social surroundings and assume they have no impact on the influence of other variables, we would in effect assume that such diffusion is uniform for all segments, categories, and social groups. Traditional social research has attempted to tackle this problem by accounting for different indirect indicators or by obtaining information on the surroundings directly from the respondents themselves. While in the case of some categories of social relations such a solution is sound—for example, it is reasonable to expect that people are aware of their parents' and siblings' levels of education and occupations—in the case of other information this assumption is fraught with difficulties. For instance, it would be a mistake to assume that all the respondents will be both aware of, and inclined to disclose, the views of individuals who are not part of their immediate family. In this case, people usually tend to exaggerate the similarity between their own views and those expressed in their social surroundings—which makes it harder or even impossible to measure the relationships of interest to the researcher in an accurate and reliable manner.

In our opinion, there is considerable discord between the assumptions of the theoretical and empirical social sciences. Most theories, be they normative or structural, find a crucial causal factor in the influence of the social environment. General explanations concerning individual behavior tend to refer to processes of diffusion driven by, for example, group pressures or simple imitation. The central role of a milieu in culture-oriented theories seems fairly common, but contemporary rational-choice theories also embrace the fact that egoistic calculation takes into account the value of membership or a sense of belonging. As theorizing is an integral part of the project, let us elaborate in more depth on those theoretical assumptions.

Many theories point to the diffusion of behavioral patterns caused by conformity with norms, social influence, pressure, or the unmediated tendency to imitate and duplicate. Such diffusion

is obvious in the best known functional theories, which break with atomism in favor of viewing actors as making choices in situations where ends and means (values, norms, and ideas) are contextually determined (Davis 1948; Parsons [1937] 1968, 1951, 1971; Merton 1968). This intellectual tradition is critically developed by Jeffrey C. Alexander (1988, 1998). He emphasizes that the institutionalization of differentiation is caused not by adaptation and reintegration mechanisms but by conflicts contained in subsystems that are specialized in tension management. He also recognizes the autonomy of cultural structures in determining the dimensions of the *sacrum* and *profanum* in social life. Niklas Luhmann ([1981] 1982, [1984] 1995), who accepts the criticisms of Parsons' view of social integration, describes the mechanisms and processes maintaining social integration, especially the importance of symbolic dimensions: complex communication codes related to specific functional domains (e.g., politics, law, the economy, science), which make risk reduction possible in the presence of increasing contingency and uncertainty.

Contemporary cultural—or rather structural-cultural—theories characterize the significance of symbolic codes as a specific “grammar” determining both the actors' actions and the institutional conditions of their acts and interpretations. Pierre Bourdieu ([1972] 1977, [1979] 2005, [1980] 1990, 1989) accentuates the rationality of actors' practices and their concordance with the actors' own logic of interests embedded in different types of economic (material), symbolic, cultural, and social capital. Robert Wuthnow (1987, 2002) emphasizes the importance of moral rituals that “communicate,” in a dramatized or formal manner, the prevailing system of symbolic codes—the moral order, which operates in conditions of uncertainty and ambiguity, and reduces the unpredictability of social relations by evoking or initiating rituals.

Even rational choice theories (RCT) or rational action theories (RAT), which assume that individuals are self-interested and calculating, presently take into account the significant influences of different types of social affiliations and relations (see esp. Hechter 1987, 1992, 1994, 2004; Hechter and Kanazawa 1997; Hechter, Nadel and Michod 1993; Granovetter 1973, 1985; Kanazawa 2001a, 2000b; Coleman 1986, 1990; Boudon 2001, Burt et al. 1994, Burt 2001, Schelling 2006). Widely recognized conceptions of social

capital (Bourdieu 1986, Burt 2005; Coleman 1988a, 1998b; Lin 1999, 2000, 2001; Fukuyama 1995, Putnam 1995, Putnam et al. 1993; Portes 1998, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan 2000; see also Sadowski 2011) *ex definitione* conceive of the individual not only as a simple node in a network of relations, but also consider the network of relations itself as an important cause of individual choices, behaviors, and attitudes.

However, as we mentioned earlier, the state of the art in the case of empirical research dominated by social “atomism” is very different. Individual choices, actions, and attitudes are usually conceived as the derivatives, or the causal results, of other individual attributes: social origin, education, profession, income, etc. The seminal work *The American Occupational Structure* by Blau and Duncan (1967), which elevated empirical sociology to the highest level, also became a manifesto promoting methodological individualism in analyses of “the process of socioeconomic achievements.” Many “waves” of new research on processes of social mobility and subsequent “expansions of Blau-Duncan’s model” were needed to introduce effectively the characteristics of social contexts into analyses. The exposition by Baron and Bielby (1980) was very important in this respect. In the paper on “bringing the firms back in,” they consider the individual’s position in labor market networks. Although DiMaggio and Garip (2011: 1889) criticize the incompleteness of this postulate and indicate that “[e]fforts to incorporate actors’ structural locations into such models ordinarily convert social structure into individual-level variables,” Baron and Bielby’s pronouncement has played an important role in the development of contemporary interest in networks. It is worth mentioning that the present development of this interest in the direction of agency can be traced to classic works postulating “bringing men back in” (Homans 1964, Wrong 1961).

The second extension of Blau-Duncan’s classic model also contains important psychological variables characterizing friends and significant others (e.g., Duncan, Featherman, and Duncan 1972, and the vast literature on “the Wisconsin model”). Although data used in these extensions was generally only derived from individual respondents, the extension in question produced substantial interest in the psycho-sociological characteristics of the people who constitute significant contexts for individuals. In this connection,

it is worth considering the research finding that what is important is not solely whether one has significant friends but also whether others believe that one in fact has them (Kilduff and Krackhard 1994).

Moreover, in his late works Blau (1977, 1994; Blau and Schwartz 1984) moves his analysis to macro-structural dynamics, described in terms of how the nominal and graduated parameters related to individuals intersect and correlate. Referring to Simmel (1955, 1971), Blau uses the intra- and inter-personal homogeneity/heterogeneity of these parameters to build indicators of association, conflict, and mobility. However, such characteristics, treated as genuine context properties and not derived from a single individual piece of information about a person's contexts (context description), have only recently begun to be applied within specialized "network" and "social network analyses." We will discuss them more carefully below, as they constitute the perspective from which we arrange our own project.

Individual action, as seen by social theory, is the product of two fundamental forces. On the one hand, it is the result of internal conviction; on the other, it is conditioned by external persuasion and social pressures. Action is seen as a calculation or "strategization" (see, for example, Schelling 1963, 1968, 2006; Goffman 1969; Jarzabkowski 2004, Samra-Frederics 2003) of the desire to present oneself in a favorable light (see, for example, Goffman 1959, 1974; Scheff 1997, 2006), of habitus, that is, the processes of mediation between the class and individual perceptions and choices (Bourdieu [1972] 1977, [1979] 1984, [1980] 1990), or of "communicative reflexivity" (Archer 2000, 2003). To explain attitudes and behaviors properly, it is then necessary to pay attention to both those forces.

Until recently, disproportional attention has been paid to the individual in contrast to the contextual variables—especially those relating to social context, and thus we have shifted our focus to the latter. Individual attributes certainly tell us much about social position or social standing. However, they are less able to explain the real causes behind individual attitudes and choices. Individualist ("atomistic") approaches often lead to irrelevant and shallow interpretations. For example, we say that "older people are more conservative, because the closeness of death brings them closer to religion"—but it may be no less accurate to say that their

conservatism arises because they “spend more time with people who have similar, conservative views,” or that “their role in the family and in society has changed and therefore they have developed a kind of postfigurative authoritarianism,” or that “they were socialized in times of more conservative *genius saeculi*, which finally ‘kicked in’ as they matured.” A sociological explanation that would refer only to the fact that these people are “old” in a single, measurable way would resemble explaining results in team sports by looking solely at the lineups and the parameters of individual players, and not at how the team actually played.

The key assumptions of the project are rooted in the sociological school that produced the “Harvard Revolution” in social networks, and particularly in the work of Harrison C. White and Mark Granovetter. The actual subject of White’s theory is not an autonomous human being—individuals are merely a kind of “sociological hardware”—but networks of interpersonal relations, in which human identities and actions emerge, are structured, and reproduced. White (see White, Boorman, and Breiger 1976; White 1992, 1993, 2000, 2002) is openly critical of empirical research based on atomistic assumptions. He sees it as producing flawed accounts of the society in two basic ways: it either (a) postulates the existence of aggregates (“classes,” “socio-economic categories”), whose relationship with the existing social structure is unclear, or (b) postulates the real existence of statistical categories produced by the cross-tabulation of individual attributes. Either way, such an approach leads to neglecting what really shapes social structures and identities, namely, networks of interpersonal relations. In a similar manner, DiMaggio and Garip (2011) have recently written on how the processes of homophily and diffusion—which are crucial in the formation and reproduction of social inequalities—are neglected by sociological research.

According to White, both social structure and identity are the dynamic consequences of multidimensional networks, and empirical research ought to be able to show the impact of these networks on individual resources, competences, attitudes, and behaviors. This objective was accomplished by Mark Granovetter (1985, 1992, 2005, Granovetter and Soong 1983) and was very convincing, especially his analysis of the role of strong and weak ties in the development of individual careers.

Similarly, there is growing interest in, and a body of evidence for, the theory of social capital developed by James S. Coleman (1988b). Related topics appear in the theory and research of Pierre Bourdieu (1986, [1979] 1984), Nan Lin (1999, 2000) and Alejandro Portes (1998, 2000); in Michael Hechter's study of class cultures (2004); in the concept of social class as "social circles" (Hradil 1987, 1997); and in the recent massive study of the British class structure (Savage et al. 2013). Additionally, the latter inspired us to offer a simple online survey, with the aim both of collecting data to supplement the main study and of creating an opportunity to communicate our findings to the public in general (thus the study will add an element of public sociology/political science to the project).

Gathering reliable and valid data on social backgrounds, milieus, networks, and external contexts may certainly help to overcome the problem of methodological atomism. However, the problem is that information obtained from a single respondent ("ego") can hardly be called valid and reliable, especially when it comes to attitudes and views. It is well established that our own accounts of ourselves and others' accounts of us often differ significantly. The classic studies by Gerhard E. Lenski (1954, 1956) on status crystallization showed that while we pay more attention to our best features, others are particularly well able to see what they think are our worst qualities. Our knowledge about others cannot substitute for the self-knowledge of others. This has important implications for social research. Studies on the adequacy of information about personal networks obtained exclusively from a single respondent ("ego") show that such information should be treated with considerable reserve (see Marsden 1990). Methodological obstacles, especially the serious risk of artifacts, may be encountered in trying to obtain information from "egos" on persons connected with them. The correlation of views and attitudes with contextual variables may be the result of either the actual influence of the social environment, or a spurious relationship resulting from the fact that perception of the social environment is derived from certain psychological characteristics of the "ego." Without asking others, it is hard to resolve the problem of the validity of such data. Thus we find surveying whole social-network fragments—social "bundles," parts of the "social tissue," or the "social fabric"—to be a reasonable solution.

Finally, it is worthwhile to relate our proposition to the state of research in the Polish social sciences. These sciences enjoy international recognition and at least one very important and historically well-documented basis for that recognition is Polish scholars' high competence in conducting empirical studies on the distribution and correlation of individual attributes and using methods of aggregating them into the "social categories" traditionally constituting social structure. However, focusing on individual distributions and aggregations prevents the Polish social sciences from relating effectively to modern approaches in which a network is considered a proper model of contemporary society and independent source of influence on individual attributes.

We do not claim, of course, that the Polish social sciences have ignored the question of social relationships and networks up until now. Especially in sociology, in theoretical and metatheoretical reflection (Domański and Przybysz 2007; Marody and Giza-Poleszczuk 2004; Mach 1998; Manterys 2008, 2000, 2017; Mokrzycki 2001; Morawski 1998; Rychard 2008; Rychard and Domański 2010; Staniszkis 1999, 2012; Sztatka 2007; Sztompka 1994, 1999; Wnuk-Lipiński 1996; see also: Mach 1989; Narojek 1982, 1996; Ossowski 1963), as well as in empirical studies (Domański and Prokopek 2011; Gadowska 2002, Gardawski 1996; Jarosz 2007, 2013; Mach 2005; Sadowski 2011, 2012; Sztompka 2000; Trutkowski and Mandes 2005; Wedel 1986) this question has drawn much attention. Nevertheless, it has not been significantly present in large-scale nationwide studies, even though the most important analyses have made considerable attempts to go beyond the perspective of the "individual respondent" (mostly with respect to collecting information from respondents on their close friends, acquaintances, social circles, and contexts). While appreciating the value of such analyses (see, e.g., Domański and Przybysz 2007, and Słomczyński and Tomescu-Dubrow 2007), we should yet stress that networks of interpersonal relations could have been accounted for only partially, as the information taken into consideration, as we noted before, came from a single link in the chain of relations (a single individual). In our research project we are going much further—information on the network comes not from a single individual but from a larger number of people, comprising the network in question.

Characteristics of the Data Collected

The most important element of our research plan was to define the unit of observation as a network comprising the main respondent (the ego) and individuals connected with that respondent by important social relations (the alters). In effect, empirical information in the data comes not from classic individual respondents comprising a sample of “independent units of observation” but rather from people forming significant networks (“social tissues”) for the respondents. Of central importance is the fact that information on alters is obtained from the alters themselves, as opposed to the ego. In this sense, such information is the actual characteristic of the ego’s context, and not just an ego-derived account of the context. By drawing upon information from the ego and alter, we are able to use the information both as a predictor of individual attributes and in multidimensional analyses, as a characteristic of the suitable degree of data organization (individuals versus dyads or networks).

The collection of data on personal networks may take different forms, which are described in the relevant literature. We selected a simple procedure which has often been performed to good effect. We asked the main respondents (the egos) from a large nationwide sample to indicate up to five persons [according to the suggestion that limiting the number to four–five individuals is the optimal choice (Marsden 1990, 2005).] who do not belong to their immediate family and with whom they yet share significant ties (the alters). We also held interviews with these individuals via different methods. In order to collect data on social networks, all the respondents were asked to provide information on the people, positions, and resources defining the network in question. The largest issue, of course, was the criterion by which the main respondents were to indicate the members of “their networks” (the alters). The selection of the criterion was made following a wide-scale pilot study, which was performed by CBOS from March 12, 2015 to April 21, 2015 on a subsample of 296 people (egos), selected randomly from the main PESEL sample, in Chorzów, Warsaw, Mielec, Mielec County, Poznań, Poznań County, and Sosnowiec. The response rate was 34.8%. 103 interviews with the egos resulted in the completion of 36 interviews with the alters.

In the pilot study, we asked the respondents to respond to the following: "Imagine that yesterday you received an award from a reputable institution. To honor you, the institution wants to invite you to a ceremony and would like you to name eight people from outside your immediate family to be invited in your name, all costs covered. Who would you include? The list should contain only those people you know personally and with whom you have conversations or contact about matters you consider important. Please write down the names, initials, or other identifiers of such individuals in the provided space."

The pilot study convinced us beyond a doubt that our optimistic request to indicate as many as eight individuals—against the best advice prevalent in the relevant scholarship—did not meet with positive reactions from the respondents, and that the contacts generator which was used had a number of flaws to be corrected. Ultimately, we decided on the following statement, which is close to the American standard: "From time to time, we talk with our friends and acquaintances about things that are important to us—such as our relations with those closest to us, difficult decisions, and work-related issues. Please think about five individuals who are not a part of your immediate family and with whom you speak the most often about issues that you consider to be important. Please write down their names, initials, or other personal identifiers."

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with all of the main respondents (the egos). A total of 1,712 such interviews were conducted, drawing on two halves (about 2,800 addresses each) of the original random sample, in two stages. Though the response rate achieved by CBOS was relatively low and amounted to 30.4%, the structure of the ego sample obtained was very close to the structure of the entire population of people aged 18–75. While the degree of the ego response rate does indeed seem minor, it should be taken into account that in the course of the study the respondents were made aware of the fact (by advance letter) that they would be asked to provide the contact information of their friends and acquaintances, a factor that clearly produced the lesser readiness of respondents to converse with the interviewer. Little can be done to alleviate this problem. Neither material rewards for the respondents (promised in the advance letter) and interviewers, nor appeals as to the significance of the study with respect to reaching alters

helped in this regard (the head of the research project even recorded special videos on the subject, which were available to the respondents and interviewers both online and on the interviewers' computers). The earnest engagement and dedication of a large number of very skilled interviewers and the institutional help of CBOS, which we experienced throughout the long course of the study, proved insufficient in this regard as well. We feel, therefore, that we did everything in our power to reach the largest possible number of ego respondents and to induce them to help the researchers reach their alters. We are convinced that in the current conditions, including the issue of severe partisanship, no other comparable (in terms of research scheme) nationwide research on a random sample from the PESEL database could obtain a higher ego response rate. With this in mind, we remain satisfied with the high degree of representiveness of our samples.

Let us compare several fundamental characteristics of the study's 1,712 ego respondents with the distributions of attributes of 29 million adult Poles up to 75 years of age, as published by the Central Statistical Office [Główny Urząd Statystyczny (GUS)]. Men comprised 47.4% of the entire population and 47.7% of our sample; individuals below 30 comprised 20.1% of the population and 21.7% of the ego respondents; people above 50—41.1% and 42%; and inhabitants of rural areas—37.7% and 37.6%, respectively. In other words, the discrepancies are minuscule. It should be taken into account that they are the result of both measurement errors (due to the sample size itself) and systematic errors, including the possibility of autoselection. The geographical structure of Polish society was also well represented. Comparisons between percentage population distributions from GUS data and distributions from the sample in question (in brackets) provide us with the following results for Polish voivodeships: Masovia 13.9 (12.0), Silesia 11.9 (11.7), Greater Poland 9.0 (10.1), Lesser Poland 8.8 (9.5), Lower Silesia 7.7 (7.2), Łódź 6.5 (7.5), Pomerania 6.0 (5.0), Lublin 5.6 (3.8), Subcarpathia 5.5 (7.3), Kuyawy-Pomerania 5.4 (5.6), West Pomerania 3.8 (3.3), Świętokrzyskie 3.3 (4.4), Podlasie 3.1 (2.7), Lubusz 2.7 (3.5), and Opole 2.6 (3.5). The distributions are similar in the case of attributes other than pure demographics. Respondents with higher education comprised 27.6% of the sample and 25.0% of the population; respondents with secondary education—30.5%

and 30.2%, respectively, and with vocational education—23.1% and 24.5%, respectively. Taking into account declarations pertaining to participation in the 2015 parliamentary elections and the official results provided by the National Electoral Commission [Państwowa Komisja Wyborcza (PKW)], comparisons of percentage distributions from PKW and the sample in question (in brackets) yield the following results: Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość) 37.6 (38.2), Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska) 24.1 (28.9), Kukiz '15 8.8 (9.6), Modern (Nowoczesna) 7.6 (8.0), United Left (Zjednoczona Lewica) + Together Party (Partia Razem) 7.7 + 3.6 (4.3 + 2.9), Liberty (KORWIN) 4.8 (4.4), Polish People's Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe) 5.1 (3.2), and other 0.8 (0.5). In effect, it can be assumed that our ego sample is a very good “miniature” of Polish society.

90% of the ego respondents declared having friends (alters)—16% declared one such friend, 21% two, 20% three, 11% four, and 21% five. A total of 1,201 interviews were held with the alters. A small number of the interviews were in the form of an online or email questionnaire. In 49% of cases, we managed to reach at least one of the alters of those ego respondents who declared having friends (alters), although this does not automatically imply that contact information to even one such friend was provided in the course of the interview. We thus obtained a sample of 768 ego respondents in connection with whom we were able to hold at least one interview with their individual alters: for 514 of the egos, the network was a dyad; for the remainder, it was at least a triad. We did not identify any significant autoselection effects between the subsamples of egos with alters (numbering at least one) and egos without alters. Small discrepancies pertained to men (43% compared to 48% for the entire ego sample), inhabitants of rural areas (41% compared to 38% of the ego sample), and individuals with higher education (27% compared to 30% of the ego sample). In summary, there are no grounds to presume that the egos with alters subsample is not representative in regard to the entire random PESEL sample.

The questionnaires for the egos and alters were very similar, with the main difference being that the alters were not asked to point the interviewers to their own alters. The questionnaires contained less than 400 variables, and took an average of 45 minutes to complete

for the egos and 41 minutes for the alters. The interviews were conducted by 155 CBOS interviewers.

Aside from surname, position, and resource generators, the questionnaires asked about the respondents' social background and current socioeconomic standing. The questionnaires also contained broad sets of questions about individual attitudes, competences, behaviors, and resources, mostly pertaining to sociopolitical dimensions. The subsequent segment of the questionnaire contained opinions on the networks of which the respondents were a part. A crucial segment of the questionnaire contained questions intended to help in constructing psychological variables.

The main study was supplemented by a simple mass online survey, in which everyone could "locate" themselves on several dimensions of social inequality and, by characterizing their contacts with individuals of different social standing, determine their membership in a "networked social class" and find out how many people in Poland belong to each. In this study, we developed the ideas and empirical results underlying an innovative study performed in Great Britain in cooperation with the BBC (Savage et al. 2013, BBC class calculator: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-22000973>). The intention of the study was to signal our respect for the concept of "public sociology." This required us to cooperate with a social partner (like the BBC), as well as to have access to social advertising. To this end, we partnered with the Polish daily newspaper *Rzeczpospolita*. Data from the study has not yet been processed but will be the subject of further independent analyses. From May to November 2016 a total of 11,074 online surveys were completed, at an average time of 15.20 minutes.

What Will Readers Find in Subsequent Chapters?

Subsequent chapters of this book contain the first analyses pertaining to the 1,712 main respondents (the egos) and 1,201 respondents belonging to their networks (the alters). And while the analyses refer to various diverse matters and do not exploit the networked and multidimensional nature of the collected data to its full, they nevertheless all use information volunteered by the egos and their alters *as a whole*. In this sense, they constitute,

even if limitedly, a contribution to the “networked reconstruction” of knowledge about modern Polish society.

In chapter two, “The Anatomy of an Inner Circle—Characteristics of Close Ties in Polish Society,” Ireneusz Sadowski and Alicja Zawistowska present the characteristics of close social ties in Polish society. They explore how the “inner circle” forms and changes shape throughout a lifetime. The results suggest that Poles do not differ substantially in this respect from the members of other societies, and notably American society, which has been the most studied and where individuals on average report having 2–3 friends in whom they confide. There is an evident life-cycle pattern, in which long-lasting friendships are forged at a young age, and a large share of a person’s friends are met in school or in the early stages of an occupational career. A similar, though even stronger “age pressure” effect is observed in the case of meeting one’s life partner. Another important aspect studied in the chapter is the homophily of close ties and how bonds with family and friends compare. Social similarity measured by educational status is relatively high in regard to parents, spouses, and friends, but less so in regard to siblings (which, *nota bene*, coincides with the intensity of contacts), showing that mechanisms of social choice can breed (gross) homophily similar to that produced by direct influence.

In chapter three, “Measuring Influence in Political Networks,” John E. Jackson, Bogdan W. Mach, and Ireneusz Sadowski present a method based on analysis of ego and alter dyads that can be used to capture interpersonal influence in social networks. The data analyzed pertains to sociopolitical attitudes and voting choices in the 2015 elections. Analyses show that while the original research scheme of the “People in Networks” project does not negate assumptions about the independence and uniformity of observations of egos and alters, it allows for the transparent parametrization of the interdependence of voter choice. The results suggest that while individuals are independent in their choices, they clearly—more or less consciously—coordinate their votes. This conclusion is reinforced by a comparison using synthetic data.

In chapter four, “A Labor Market or Labor Networks?,” Ireneusz Sadowski looks at how contemporary Poles acquired their jobs. He investigates the degree to which individuals find their work positions through impartial and commonly available sources of information

(labeled a “labor market”) and the degree to which the connection is made by personalized, informal flows of information in networks of social ties. This is not a new point, as it has appeared previously in both international and Polish research, but the study nevertheless allows us to confirm and have a more detailed view of some relations: for example, of specific market sectors in Poland. One important contribution is the provision of evidence that the work situation of ego respondents is correlated with the work situation of their alters. The clear “epidemiology” of unemployment risks is thus shown, that is, the strong structural interdependence of job-related prospects in social networks (which goes beyond a shared place of residence, that is, the general, objective availability of work).

In chapter five, “Cultural Practices and Social Relations,” Aleksander Manterys analyzes the meanings and dimensions of cultural capital. By referring such capital to the notions of class and status groups, he also addresses the performative aspect of cultural capital in the form of cultural practices. The aim is to classify the significance and potential of key analytical categories, and then to formulate rationales and hypotheses in order to construct a “map” of cultural practices with respect to class and status groups.

In chapter six, “Common or Not? The Cultural Practices of Friends,” Jakub Wysmulek distinguishes four basic types of cultural practices, conventionally denoted “high culture,” “sports culture,” “entertainment culture,” and “community culture.” The concepts thus defined were subsequently used to analyze similarities and differences in their popularity among pairs and groups of friends. The results suggest that the most popular practices from the groups “entertainment culture” and “sports culture” have a “bridging” function. On the other hand, milieus that participate in “high culture,” and also in “community culture,” are more elite in nature, while the groups themselves are characterized by a greater cohesion of shared cultural preferences.

Chapter seven, by Andrzej Szpociński, is titled “The Significance of the Past in the Context of Social Relations and Networks” and is an empirically grounded essay on the relations between participation in social networks, memory of the past, and social integration. Without questioning claims about the integrative functions of the past on a macro level, the author asks whether social memory has similar functions on the micro level, or whether the fact that

individuals remain in close (friendly, intimate) relationships results in the appearance of, or is itself conditioned by, similar opinions and evaluations of the past. Studies to date on social memory have left this aspect untouched as they have located respondents in advance in the role of members of large communities (national, regional). The author points out that events from the recent past operate in one of two manners in memory: they are simply recollected, or they are recollected while being imbued with additional meanings, that is, a secondary semantization occurs in the form of, for instance, an effective representation of group identity. Only in the second case is the recollected past an important factor in shaping interpersonal relations. Significant convergence in opinion between alters and egos is found only in the case of memories of events that have undergone secondary semantization.

Chapter eight, by Jakub Wyszczepanik, is titled “Sentiments in Networks: Attitudes toward Refugees in Poland” and concerns the testing of a number of hypotheses on the factors influencing negative attitudes toward immigrants. The major focus in these hypotheses is on the network functioning of individuals with similar attitudes toward refugees. The study points to political choices and the age of the respondents as the two most significant factors in this regard. As is the case in Western Europe, the conservative and nationalist worldviews of some of the respondents correlate with negative attitudes toward immigrants. However, while such attitudes are most common among the older generation of Europeans, in Poland the most severe animosity toward refugees is exhibited by the youngest respondents.

The book ends with a short chapter, “Perspectives on Further Analyses,” written by Bogdan W. Mach, Aleksander Manterys, and Ireneusz Sadowski.

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Chapter 2

The Anatomy of an Inner Circle—Characteristics of Close Ties in Polish Society

Ireneusz Sadowski and Alicja Zawistowska

Abstract

This chapter describes close social ties in Polish society, including how the “inner circle” forms and reshapes throughout a lifetime. The findings indicate that Poles do not differ substantially in this respect from other societies, notably American society, which has been the most studied and where individuals on average report having 2–3 friends in whom they confide. For some—but not all—Poles the network of close relations grows even smaller with age. At later stages of life people are not only more likely to have looser ties with their friends but are also less likely to make new friendships. There is an evident life-cycle pattern in which long-lasting friendships are forged at a young age, and a large share of friends are met at school or in the early stages of an occupational career. A similar, though even stronger, “age pressure” effect is observed in the case of meeting a life partner. Other important aspects studied in the chapter are the homophily of close ties and the similarity of the bonds with family and friends. Social similarity, as measured by educational status, is relatively high in regard to parents, spouses, and friends, but is less so with siblings (which, *nota bene*, coincides with the intensity of contacts), showing that mechanisms of social choice can breed (gross) homophily akin to that produced by direct influence.

Keywords: social circle, name generator, relations, homophily, gender, age

Introduction

For many years, sociological studies have stressed the importance of personal bonds for the individual (Granovetter 1973, Coleman 1988, Burt 1995). This conviction led to the coining of the term “social capital” (Bourdieu 1986, Putnam 2000, Woolcock and Narayan 2000; Lin 2000, 2001; Burt 2001). However, like other valuable

resources, social capital is limited and unevenly distributed. First, very expansive contact networks are the domain of an exiguous “sociometric elite.” Second, there are qualitative differences in the bonds that manifest themselves as close or distant relationships. We are capable of maintaining close relationships with only a handful of people, carefully selected from the entire population of our friends and acquaintances. For example, research among Americans has shown that the circle of close friends of most research participants consists of only two individuals. Interestingly, the circle of people with whom the respondents feel comfortable enough to “speak about important matters”—such being the operational definition of the close circle in this instance—turns out to consist of one person less on average than some twenty years previously (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Brashears 2006). However, American society, which is considered to be relatively individualistic, is not necessarily typical in terms of the number of close relationships. The US’s relatively high level of geographic mobility in connection with work and education may lead to the erosion of such bonds. On the other hand, maintaining close relations with other people is a form of investment all around the globe. In our research, we focus on the small circle of individuals who modern Poles consider to be their closest friends. In this chapter, we will consider the members of Poles’ social “inner circle”—that is, we will present the general characteristics of Poles’ closest friends and life partners, and then go on to illustrate the level of homophily in regard to their parents and siblings.

The Inner Circle

First and foremost, we were interested in the attributes of the five people with whom Poles maintain a relatively close relationship, besides their closest family members. Why choose five people, exactly? According to the “social brain” hypothesis formulated by Robin Dunbar (2010), five is the average number of close interpersonal relationships that people are capable of maintaining. In Dunbar’s view, the size of the close circle is determined by the cognitive structure of the human brain. Our capabilities are developed enough to store information about numerous distant acquaintances but are not sufficient to maintain close ties with more than a handful of individuals (Stocker and Bossomaier 2014).

Our capacity to manipulate information about interpersonal bonds is limited. In the course of ongoing interactions with other people, individuals must develop bonds, remember their specific nature, and even more importantly, be able to utilize that knowledge. The necessity of maintaining such personal “social catalogs” means that we do not have equally close bonds with all the people we know. According to MacCarron, Kaski, and Dunbar (2016), the more distant circles consist together of about 150 people. The authors divide the circles further into layers (clusters) on the basis of the closeness of the bond: the larger the distance from the social core, the looser the bond. By analyzing the telephone calls of the residents of one European country, the researchers determined that the first layer typically consists of three to five closest friends, and the next cluster consists of 10–15 individuals with whom looser relationships are maintained. Another 30–35 individuals are just acquaintances, even though we would still converse with them given the opportunity. The last layer consists of another 100 individuals, with whom we maintain the loosest relations (MacCarron, Kaski, and Dunbar 2016). Such results can be compared with research on culturally quite different human groups: hunter-gatherer tribes. According to studies by Hill, Barton, and Hurtado (2009), the social universe of adult members of the Paraguayan Aché tribe and the Tanzanian Hadza people consist of about a thousand individuals, including people of the same gender (300 individuals), people of the opposite gender, and children. Frequent interactions, which were present in the case of the Aché people in particular, were the result, for instance, of the regular nature of rituals and the spatial organization of the tribes (Hill, Barton, and Hurtado 2009). However, interestingly enough, even the Aché people did not maintain close bonds with a large number of individuals.

In consequence, “the inner five,” which is the subject of our research, can be said to form the core of an individual’s social world. The “People in Networks” study answers questions about the bonds formed within this “inner circle.” Using a version of the name generator utilized in the *General Social Survey*¹ and elsewhere we made the following request to a representative nationwide sample of Poles:

¹ This survey is held cyclically on a sample of residents of North America.

From time to time, we talk with our friends and acquaintances about things that are important to us, such as our relations with those closest to us, difficult decisions, and work-related issues. Please think about five individuals who are not part of your immediate family and with whom you speak most often about issues that you consider to be important.

The respondents were given an answer sheet and asked to write down the names, initials, or other identifiers of no more than five people. In other words, they were tasked with pointing to individuals whom they considered to be closest to themselves from an emotional standpoint and in whom they felt comfortable confiding, regardless of when their last conversation was held. We cannot dismiss the possibility that the responses were determined by the heuristic of availability, which means, for instance, that the respondents selected people with whom they had recently had “pleasant conversations,” without mentioning other “genuine,” less frequently contacted friends (for a discussion of this topic, see Fischer 2011). Nevertheless, the mass nature of the research enabled us, according to the law of large numbers, to establish an approximate image of the members of our society, the “indications” of which reflect the mean definition of a relationship of close familiarity. Thus in this article the individuals selected by the respondents will often be referred to as “close friends” (in Polish, “*przyjaciele*”). We realize that not all readers will be willing to accept such a term for the bond connecting the respondents (the egos) and the individuals they named (the alters). It is also worth stressing that the respondents, in writing initials or names on the answer sheet, were aware that they would not be required to return the sheet, which means that the declarations made in response to the question were not burdened with a possible reluctance to speak to us about their closest friends—at this stage, the responses were completely anonymous.

Almost half the Poles who responded to the above question answered that they had two or three such close friends (Table 2-1). The median number of friends indicated was three. By referring to the above-mentioned American study, we can conclude that the statistics pertaining to the number of close friends in Poland does not deviate markedly from the average for the US. One in ten respondents did not indicate any close friends at all. Undoubtedly, there are some people who do not feel the need to converse

on important matters with anyone except their closest family, or who simply do not have such close friends in their social circle. In this context, it is challenging to evaluate the aforementioned 10% of “loners” in terms of a high or low percentage, though the percentage is indeed a little higher in comparison with the results of the American study (Fischer 2011).

Table 2-1. Number of close friends

Number of indications	Percentage
0	10.1
1	16.3
2	21.4
3	20.0
4	11.2
5	21.0
Total	100

Though the distribution of responses corresponds with both the results of other studies and anthropological theory, it is undoubtedly not independent from the “measuring instrument” itself. Objections can be raised as to the closed form of the question, which, of course, is not neutral in terms of the findings. One symptomatic phenomenon is the sudden leap in the number of indications between four and five close friends. This bimodal distribution (with “peaks” on two and five) has at least two causes. First, if the table allowed the respondents to indicate a higher number of close friends—say, eight—we could then assume that the distribution of responses would resemble a right-skewed asymmetric distribution. The 21% would be distributed in diminishing proportions between values of five and higher. Secondly, we can point to the existence of a group of “disciplined” respondents, who regardless of other factors attempt to complete the tasks set before them to the fullest degree. Therefore, if the survey were to consist of eight options, we could expect a “peak” on the last position as well. Both explanations are not mere hypotheticals—this very effect was present in a variant with eight blank fields, which we tested in the course of our pilot study. The extension of the list “stretched out” the distribution

of answers and caused the median number of close friends to jump to four. We decided against including so many fields in the actual study due to the fact that subsequent survey questions pertained to each of the close friends mentioned, so that should the survey allow for eight answers, its length would be considerable, and the standardization of the procedure would be lower. With all of the above issues in mind, it should be stressed that the number of individuals subjectively referred to as close friends would on average be higher in the case of an open-ended question than our research findings indicated. On the other hand, it is unquestionable that the larger the limit on the number of allowed answers, the more the effective definition of a “close friend” changes. The mere fact of adding new fields results in the respondents becoming eager to think of another individual or several additional people.

In each case, about four-fifths of the respondents left some fields blank, so in most instances the influence of the answer limit is not “mechanical.” If we wanted the median or average number of close friends indicated to exceed the imposed limit of five people, the number of fields would have to be much higher or the question itself would have to be open-ended. However, other studies demonstrate that the open-ended nature of questionnaires results in the “stimulus” becoming less standardized (due to disparate definitions of friendship), and the distribution becoming multimodal (with peaks on “round” numbers), with the most numerous declarations consisting of over a hundred close friends (see POLPAN, 2008). However, even in the case of an open-ended question the first peak falls on the number five instead of a higher number.

We operate under the assumption that social factors influencing the size of the circle of closest friends will differ from properties that are traditionally used to describe the place of the individual within society. It is hard to find convincing arguments that social background or education level might define the size of the inner circle. Perhaps a diploma from an institution of higher education might not automatically make us better friend material, but it should nonetheless make us more aware of the significance of building close relationships. However, differences in terms of education turned out to be small, though the number of close friends declared did grow with the educational level: the average number of friends for individuals with primary and vocational education was 2.4;

with secondary education, 2.7; and post-secondary education, 2.9 (N=3,021). In our study, we did not find any connection between the gender of the participants and the number of close friends declared—the average number of people mentioned by both men and women was 2.6 (N=3,061). This verified commonly held beliefs about differences between men and women in regard to the size of their circles of friends. Perhaps larger differences would have been more apparent if the question posed to the respondents had referred to individuals from outside the social core, that is, friends, distant friends, or individuals who are considered mere acquaintances—people we “bump into” from time to time. Nevertheless, the size of the “inner circle” itself is seemingly independent of the gender of the respondent. Similar conclusions are obtained by analyzing responses to the open-ended question in the POLPAN 2008 study: when we consider no more than five of our closest friends, the difference between men and women is negligible. Gender does, however, become relevant when the limit is lifted.

Age is another factor that could be crucial in terms of its influence on the size of the inner circle. Supposedly, having a larger number of trustworthy friends might be influenced by the diversity of the social circles to which young people belong. School, university, the first job, the neighborhood, belonging to an interest group or a cause, are all potential sources of close friends. On the other hand, older people might have a larger inner circle due to “life experience”—in their case, the time in which they were able to select the members of their inner circle has been longer. Table 2-2 documents that the first assumption is more apt, as it is enough to turn 40 for the inner circle to begin shrinking. Among respondents below 40, about 60% indicated having at least three trusted friends—above 40, the percentage had shrunk to just 45%. The drop is sudden, but the table convinces us of the existence of a regularity—people in their twenties declare a larger number of close friends than people in their thirties. Among the reasons for the drop in the number of close friends, we can point to changes associated with subsequent stages of life. In their thirties, people enter a stage of increasingly more intense professional life, while also having to deal with family issues. In consequence, relations with their friends become looser or erode altogether—they lack the time to maintain the relationship or feel that their friends have become

more distant. The role of the friends is replaced by closer family bonds. However, one may also notice a slight jump in the number of close friends after reaching 50 and another after 60. This is a time when offspring are ordinarily independent and professional life is stable, so part of the time budget is freed for other pursuits. However, this uptick is not considerable—after all, with time grandchildren appear, and there are less opportunities to form new friendships at an advanced age than in one’s youth. At the same time, with each subsequent age category there is a rise in the number of respondents who did not indicate at least one close friend—while this number is inconsiderable among individuals before 30, the percentage rises to 15% among those in the 60+ generation. We might interpret this fact as a troubling symptom of the growing social isolation of older people. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the Social Diagnosis study, in which a research team under the supervision of Czapiński and Błędowski (2014) understands the circle of friends as the number of individuals with whom the respondents have personal or social contacts at least several times a year. On average, this circle amounted to 6.6 individuals per person for the entire category of senior citizens, but the number fell with the increasing age of the respondents (2014).

Table 2-2. The number of close friends depending on the age of the respondent (in %)

Number of close friends	Age				
	18-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-75
0	2.1	7.2	11.5	14.0	15.4
1–2	34.3	33.9	42.0	40.1	38.5
3–4	34.0	35.7	33.1	27.8	26.5
5	29.6	23.1	13.4	18.1	19.6
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The hypothesis of the “social brain” stipulates that the small number of close friends an individual might have is the result of limited abilities to manipulate information. It is not just the sheer volume of the stored information that counts, but first and foremost the limits of its effective use during social interactions. In simple

terms, in order to have friends, one needs to be with friends. Maintaining relationships, particularly close relationships, requires the constant maintenance of a flow of information, “status updates,” and agreeing on (or at least exchanging) opinions. In the course of the “People in Networks” study, the respondents were asked to indicate the frequency of their contacts with their closest unrelated friends on a three-point scale: (1) they conversed at least several times per week, (2) several times per month, or (3) several times per year. Most of the respondents (60%) speak with their friends several times a week (women slightly more often than men). For most of the respondents, maintaining a relationship seems synonymous with regular contact.

The exchange of information within a network of contacts might not always hold genuine informational value—it might simply function to maintain close bonds. However, even bonds of this type may be beneficial to the individual. In her book *The Village Effect*, Susan Pinker (2014) provides numerous examples confirming that surrounding oneself with close friends has a beneficial effect on one’s health. For example, it is known that the odds of survival for a woman with breast cancer are several times higher when she has a circle of caring friends. The exact causes of this correlation remain unknown. Perhaps the positive effect might be the result of emotional or psychological support, but it is assumed that social contacts also trigger purely biological processes responsible for protecting the patient from the illness (see Cole 2009). The lack of friends has a reverse, negative effect. It has been known for a long time that social isolation is correlated with a higher risk of death or disease regardless of any comorbid conditions. John Cacioppo and William Patrick’s (2008) research suggests that a chronic lack of social interactions results not merely in depression and feelings of loneliness, but adverse changes also occur on a genetic level, an endocrinologic level, and within the immune system, creating favorable conditions for viral infections and inflammations. According to Cacioppo and Patrick, the discomfort resulting from the feeling of loneliness is not at all different from the signals that are sent by our brain when we are hungry, thirsty, or feel pain (Cacioppo and Patrick 2008). In this context, having close friends is almost a matter of life and death.

In order to present the above results in a broader perspective, in our analysis we have also included responses pertaining to the average frequency of individuals' contacts with their parents and siblings. People usually maintain a lifelong relationship with their mother and father, which is most intense before people reach their thirties and after they turn 60 (we only studied individuals with at least one living parent), or in periods when either they require their parents' support or vice versa. In accordance with the aforementioned concept of people "overloading" their time budget in their forties and after, we also observe a certain loosening of relations with parents at that time. These two results mutually confirm the validity of the assumption that the configuration of relations is in part determined by the course of a person's life. It is also worth noting that, for Poles, the probability of having a daily conversation with a parent is higher in the case of their mothers (83%) than their fathers (74%).

In the case of siblings we observe a somewhat quicker process of loosening bonds, at least in comparison with the relationship with parents. This sudden loosening of bonds is connected with siblings moving out and no longer living together, but it also accelerates in people's forties. Perhaps part of the process is the consequence of the disappearance of the familial bond—the death of the parents. It is symptomatic that while after 60 the bond with one's parents—who are now at a very advanced age—grows stronger, the bond with one's siblings becomes weaker. In this context, the bonds formed with close friends are much more stable. Even in advanced age, most Poles talk with their trusted friends at least several times a week, but less than a third maintain such a relationship with their siblings.

In light of the above data, we can see that the number of close friends turns out to be only limitedly dependent on social properties. One crucial exception in this regard is age, which only informs us about the possibilities and limitations pertaining to the stage in life. This issue will be dealt with in more detail in the next part of the chapter.

Table 2-3. The average frequency of conversations with close friends, parents, and siblings

Age	Conversations with close friends (N=1631)			Conversations with parents (N=1189)			Conversations with siblings (N=1510)		
	At least several times per week	Several times per month	Several times per year or less frequently	At least several times per week	Several times per month	Several times per year or less frequently	At least several times per week	Several times per month	Several times per year or less frequently
18–29	69.2	26.4	4.5	87.2	8.2	4.6	72.5	22.3	5.2
30–39	57.1	35.5	7.5	78.9	16.8	4.4	57.9	31.3	10.8
40–49	62.4	31.2	6.5	72.1	21.2	6.7	41.3	40.4	18.3
50–59	54.4	36.3	9.3	73	22.7	4.3	41.0	37.3	21.7
60 and above	52.2	36.9	10.9	80.9	13.2	5.9	31.6	38.1	30.4
Total	59.2	33.1	7.7	79.1	15.9	5	49.1	33.6	17.3

As an aside, it is worth mentioning the personality traits that contribute to the formation of close friendships (though the traits were not covered by this study). It may emerge that certain individual characteristics are more determinant in making friends than others. Partial conclusions in this regard were provided in a study of students by a group of psychologists under the supervision of Maarten Selfhout (2010). By using the so-called Big Five personality traits, the researchers demonstrated that extroverts, that is, individuals seeking self-fulfillment in social situations, declare a larger number of close friends than people with other personality types. However, people with more agreeable personalities, which are manifested in part through altruistic behaviors, are likely to have more friends. The findings of the study make sense in light of our knowledge of human behaviors: people who are considered to be “the life and soul of the party” have broader social networks and perhaps this fact accounts for their looser definition of a close friendship. If we were to extend our study beyond the “inner five,” we would surely arrive at a more diverse spectrum of bonds that are subjectively considered to be friendships. However, the variance of properties in each dyad would then be the larger the more inclusive the definition of a “friend.” In effect, a more methodologically

beneficial solution is to focus on a narrower scope of more uniform bonds.

Close Bonds throughout the Course of Life

In order to better characterize the stability of close bonds, let us look in more detail at regularities pertaining to age. Table 2-4 displays the average age of having made friends, categorized by the current age of the respondents. The process by which people select friends means that the average moment of first meeting those friends shifts within each subsequent age range. On the other hand, the replacement of close friends in our inner circles is not so rapid as to preclude that some of us will remain in close contact with our childhood friends in old age. Among the friends of people aged 60–75 years old, about 4% are friends from very early childhood. All together, over 13% of older respondents still have close friends whom they met before reaching adulthood. In comparison with the category of younger people, the drop is relatively small, especially if we take into account that with time the inner circle is influenced by the fact that many of its members may have passed away.

Table 2-4. Average age at which a close friend was made (in %)

		Age of the ego				
		18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–75
Age in which the ego met the alter	0–6	15.9	13.9	7.4	6.8	4.1
	7–17	46.0	21.8	10.8	11.1	9.3
	18–29	38.1	49.6	37.0	28.9	23.9
	30–39		14.6	35.7	25.6	21.1
	40–49			9.1	20.7	19.5
	50–59				6.9	17.1
	60–75					5.0
Total		100	100	100	100	100

The strongest “sedimentation” in the inner circle of close friends pertains to those whom we meet when we are in the 18–29-year-old age group, as we enter adulthood and are in late stages of education and the beginning of our occupational career. This fact means that the notion of a generation is not merely an abstract statistical

aggregation, nor is it based solely in the contemporaneity of historical experience. Bonds of friendship are forged with a particular intensity during periods of important, shared biographical experiences. As a result, a generation is not merely a social category, but also—to some degree—a social group. It is brought together by the mutual experience of entering adulthood—secondary school final examinations, university, first work, and establishing families. This last factor often “freezes” social life to a degree, resulting in the partial petrification of the social circle.

What about inner-circle similarities in terms of age? For the most part, groups of friends and acquaintances consist of individuals of a similar age, that is, people who find themselves in parallel stages of their biographies. However, some empirical research suggests that there may be a considerable age discrepancy among friends, amounting to over six years (De Klepper *et al.* 2000). Table 2-5 presents the percentage of friends of a certain age in relation to the age group of the respondent. An interesting relation may be noticed: while the inner groups of the youngest respondents mostly consist of individuals of the same age (in 81% of cases), the inner circle of older people is more diverse in age. The number of peers is smaller, with individuals of the same age being replaced by people of a different age. We may assume that the larger environmental diversity in terms of age is the result of a richer biographical experience, but it also stems from the fact that after reaching a certain age metrical boundaries become blurred and age differences become less noticeable.

We should consider the consequences of the age similarity of close friends in the case of younger people. A more age-diverse circle of friends results in better access to information, which may be indispensable (in looking for employment, for instance). Circles dominated by people “like us” are devoid of such additional contacts, thus potentially making it harder for young people to enter the workforce. On the other hand, it is easier to find a life partner in a homogeneous group of people at the same stage of life. This issue will be discussed in a later part of the chapter.

Table 2-5. Age similarity between close friends (in %)

		Age of the ego				
		18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–75
Age of close friends	18–29	81.6	16.3	4.3	2.6	1.9
	30–39	12.4	64.8	2.7	10.3	6.2
	40–49	3.5	12.3	47.7	24.6	13.9
	50–59	1.9	4.3	16.7	45.0	31.6
	60–75	0	2.3	3.6	17.4	46.4
	Total	100	100	100	100	100

The main reason behind the age similarity in the inner circles of younger respondents is the larger institutional similarity of life paths, primarily in regard to education. Another crucial life path of this kind, which has significance at a later stage, is the career path. School and work are areas which to some degree delineate the horizon of potential close friends. Such institutions “filter” individuals who are similar in terms of life experience, capital, or plans for the future. However, a majority of the respondents (59%) did not meet any of their current close friends at school. Only about 10% of the respondents are at the other end of the spectrum: their entire inner circle consists of friends made in school. The situation is different in regard to work: as many as 16% of the respondents worked with all their close friends at one point, and 58% with at least one of them.

We can suppose that age is the factor influencing where we meet our friends. Table 2-6 shows that in the case of the youngest category, on average almost half the close friends in inner circles share experiences pertaining to education. Such a large percentage seems unsurprising given that some of the respondents had not yet had the opportunity to leave school and experience other social worlds. The number of friends from school falls with age and amounts to less than 10% among the group of oldest respondents. As the number of close friends from school in the inner circle falls, the number of close friends from work rises. After retiring from work, the percentage falls considerably.

Table 2-6. The circumstances of meeting close friends

Age	Percentage of close friends with whom the respondent attended school	Percentage of close friends with whom the respondent worked
18–29	48.2	25.8
30–39	29.6	36.9
40–49	17.0	41.2
50–59	12.5	40.8
60–75	9.3	30.6

As can be seen above, close networks are contingent on institutional biographical paths. They are constructed from locally available “resources.” It is symptomatic that while school and work account for over two-thirds of friendships before a person reaches 50, after 60 this ratio drops to less than two-fifths.

The Significance of Gender—Homophily and the Significance of Romantic Relationships

Gender is another key factor that shapes our close relations: not only the bonds of friendship, but also civil unions and marriages. While civil partnerships are entered into primarily by individuals of opposite gender, people tend to be more inclined to make friends with members of the same gender. On average, 70% of the close friends indicated by women respondents are also women. Among men, the homogamy was even higher and amounted to 77%. Regardless of the age of the respondents, men’s inner circles were more homogeneous than their female counterparts. Young women in particular have more friends among men than men have among women. With age, however, they also prefer to maintain bonds with individuals of the same gender.

Table 2-7. Gender distribution among friends

Age of the respondent	Percentage of same gender friends among women	Percentage of same gender friends among men
18–29	63.0	72.9
30–39	71.0	78.1
40–49	74.0	78.4
50–59	74.8	78.0
60–75	69.5	79.6

In the case of younger respondents, the lower level of gender homogeneity may be the result of searching for a life partner, a common process at this stage in life. The rise in homogeneity with age might, in turn, be the consequence of functioning within stable relationships. In effect, does being in a relationship indeed lower the possibility of having people of the opposite gender in one's inner circle? It turns out that the genders differ in this regard. The inner circles of 22% of men in relationships also contain women, while the percentage of inner circles with women for single men is 24%. For women, the discrepancy is higher: 34% of single women have men in their inner circles, in comparison with 28% of women in a relationship. It would seem, therefore, that at the moment of committing to a stable relationship, women more often than men "clean out" their inner circles of members of the opposite gender.

The relations discussed thus far have demonstrated that we like to surround ourselves with people who are similar to us. This principle should be observed especially when we choose our life partner. Due to the essential nature of this relation in our life, the choice of a partner is often preceded by a studious "analysis" of the candidate's virtues. The theory of selection by properties, or "assortative mating," explains that this selection is not random—instead, individuals pair up on the basis of certain similarities in terms of features. These similarities might pertain both to the social standing (Kalmijn 1994) and to the physical attributes of a potential partner, such as their level of physical attractiveness (Little, Burt, and Perrett 2006), height, or weight. An explanation of why people enter into relationships with similar people can be found, for instance, in the theory of the marriage market. Among other claims, the theory states that the choice of a partner

sharing similar or more beneficial traits favors the accumulation of desired household goods (Becker 2009). In other words, having a relationship with someone similar is more advantageous than being in an asymmetrical relationship. From the viewpoint of structure-forming processes, a society dominated by pairs sharing the same traits has the features of a closed society. Such closure might be manifested, for example, in the fact that entering into a relationship with a person holding a diploma from a prestigious university is limited to people holding degrees of comparable value. The same selection would occur in regard to the less educated, which would result in the emergence of homogeneous enclaves. However, such a strong similarity in the traits exhibited by partners is at present a rare occurrence. For example, in Poland only half of all married couples share the same level of education (Domański and Przybysz 2007). Apart from individual preferences, the degree of homogamy may also be influenced by at least several other factors connected with the country's general social development. The degree of homogamy seems to be influenced by a country's overall economic development. Analyses performed by Smits, Ultee, and Lammers (1998) on data from 65 countries showed that the degree of educational homogamy is tied to macro-economic indicators. The relation can be described as an inverse U-shape, with homogamy reaching a maximum level at a certain stage of modernization and becoming less frequent after this threshold.

Similarities between partners are also observed in other areas of life. Members of a single household unit usually make similar decisions in the voting booth (Nickerson 2008) or in terms of participating in culture. Michael Van Berkel and Nan Dirk De Graaf (1995) investigated whether things have changed in this regard in recent years. According to both scholars, while in the past we could speak of the higher influence of the husband's education on the mutual participation of both spouses in culture, in recent years it is the cultural capital of the wife that influences the husband. They have also demonstrated that in relationships that are asymmetrical in regard to education, the partner who has left the educational system later adjusts his or her level of participation in culture to the individual with the lower level of education (Berkeel and De Graaf 1995). The frequency of visiting the theater, galleries, or the cinema is determined in such households by the needs

of the partner with the smaller cultural ambitions. In other words, asymmetrical partnerships tend to reduce the level of participation in culture to the common denominator. The tendency of a positive correlation between the partners has also been observed in regard to pro-health behaviors, which include engaging in sports and limiting alcohol consumption and smoking (Clark and Etilé 2006).

One of the essential questions in studies on homogamy pertains to whether the observed similarities are the result of the selection of a similar partner, or whether partners become similar in the course of the relationship itself. It might equally be possible that both mechanisms are in operation at the same time due to the existence of a tendency to reduce risks tied to the selection of a partner with dissimilar patterns of behavior. The saying that opposites attract turns out to be false, at least in regard to romantic relationships. We seek partners who are similar to us in terms of taste, education, or aspirations—criteria which become the touchstone for building a deeper emotional bond.

Most of the respondents met their partners in youth, that is, when they were between 18 and 24 years old (Table 2-8). The average age of meeting one's life partner is 22, and the largest number of respondents met their partner at 19. Half the respondents met their future life partner before 21.

Table 2-8. The age of meeting one's life partner

Age of meeting one's partner	Percentage
17 and less	19.2
18–24	56.2
24–31	16.7
32 and more	7.9
Total	100

In consequence, when we enter into a romantic relationship, it is highly likely that we met our partner early in our youth. The pressure of time turns out to be very strong. As many as 90% of respondents met their life partner before turning 30. This result indicates that the likelihood of future partners encountering each other is highly correlated with lifecycle, that is, the likelihood is higher during early adulthood and falls dramatically in later

stages of life. Perhaps youth is governed by its own set of rules, but it would seem that in this stage of life finding a partner is almost an obligation.

Among the factors that may influence the age when partners meet we can point to the age of the respondents themselves. It is worth noting that the age indicated by older respondents for when they met their partners may be more variable due to the fact that older people enter subsequent relationships in later stages of life. Younger people were simply unable to accumulate this number of experiences. Even when we account for this fact, though, youth remains the best stage for finding a life partner. Table 2-9 demonstrates that in the case of all the age categories over half the respondents met their partner between ages 18 and 24. We have no information in regard to the time it took for the respondents to enter into the relationship, nor how long the relationship lasted, but this fact alone points to a strong stability in regard to preferences shaped in youth. The first intimate contacts or strong emotional experiences clearly leave a lasting impression on personal biographies. Perhaps in the case of some part of the respondents, who entered into a relationship at a later stage in life, an “old flame” was found and an old love rekindled after many years. Such a scenario is now made more likely by the very popular social media portals such as Poland’s *Nasza Klasa*. The aim of this portal is to restore long-lost friendships from school and, if we are to believe stories in the press, it has ignited numerous romantic relationships among old school friends.

The youngest respondents are characterized by the smallest variety for the obvious reasons—they could not have met their partners in subsequent stages of life. Almost a third of them met their partner during their school years.

These conclusions allow us to formulate certain assumptions on the efficiency of different methods of searching for a life partner. In light of the data it seems that broadening the inner circle with a view to “finding” a potential candidate for a life partner may turn out to be an inefficient approach. After 30 there is a 50% likelihood that we will not need to search for our life partner on account of having already met. Though there is now an increasing number of pairs who have met on the Internet or by sheer happenstance, the circle of current friends probably still remains the most likely place to initiate a romantic relationship.

Table 2-9. Age of having met one's romantic partner in relation to the age of the respondent (in %)

		Age of the respondent in categories					
		18–29	30–39	40–49	50–59	60–75	Total
Age of having met one's life partner	17 and less	28.7	21.0	14.7	17.9	17.3	19.2
	18–24	63.8	51.8	55.9	54.0	58.1	56.2
	25–31	7.5*	18.0	18.0	18.9	13.0	16.7
	32 and more		11.4	11.4	9.1	11.6	7.9
Total		100	100	100	100	100	100

*For this category, the maximum age of having met one's life partner was 29.

The age at which one meets one's life partner also depends on the gender of the respondent. Women meet their life partner earlier than men—the average age for women was 21, and for men 23. However, in most cases women meet their partner at age 18, while men meet their partner at 22. The result obtained above corresponds with the phenomenon of age asymmetry for marriage, which manifests itself in the fact that husbands are on average a few years older than their wives.

As we have demonstrated, the time when respondents met their partner falls within the period of finishing education and beginning an occupational career. The suggestion is that school and work are areas that especially bring people together. Both environments allow for intensive interactions with individuals sharing the same interests, skills, and qualifications, and both are meeting places for individuals with different personalities. The biographies of people who are working in the same positions, or positions demanding similar qualifications, or who are taking the same class at school, are alike to a degree and this fact alone makes a good basis for deepening a relationship.

Nevertheless, the declarations of the respondents pertaining to the place at which they met their life partner pointed to something else entirely. The most opportune circumstances in which to establish a close relationship are not institutional encounters but social meetings with friends and family. Over one-third of the respondents met their “other half” this way. The second most common circumstance indicated was meeting someone in the neighborhood

(20%), though it remains possible that in the case of a certain group of respondents both factors were present at the same time. School and university were indicated by 15% of the respondents, while work by an even smaller number—12% of the respondents.

Table 2-10. The circumstances of meeting one's life partner

Meeting place	Percentage
During leisure time, e.g., on vacation, at a party, during social occasions	32.7
In the neighborhood	20.8
In the course of education in school or at the university	14.8
In the workplace	11.8
On the Internet	3.6
The marriage was arranged	2.8
In the course of mutual participation in a social organization or an interest group	2.7
In the course of mutual participation in religious life	1.6
In other circumstances	9.2
Total	100

The percentage of respondents who met their partner in the workplace rises narrowly, albeit systematically, with age. In the 18-29-year-old age group the percentage is less than 9%, while in the 60+ age group it rises to 15%. A reverse tendency can be observed in the case of individuals who met their partner in school or in the workplace. These are the circumstances in which respondents met their partner for 17% of those in their thirties, 14% in their forties, and 11% in their sixties. To reiterate, in the course of searching for potential partners we usually draw from the circle of friends and associates in our nearest environment.

For all age categories without exception, it is social gatherings that offer the largest opportunity for meeting one's life partner. During parties, New Year's Eve, family gatherings, or in places where social distances are smaller due to social and psychological factors, people are invited to show their best side to potential partners. Though professional life provides ample opportunities for regular interactions, which are favorable for establishing closer ties, it does not provide complete freedom in terms of making private

bonds. The code of professional conduct that is imposed contrasts sharply with the relaxed conventions of a social gathering.

In conclusion, some social contexts are especially conducive to establishing certain bonds. In their study on a sample of Dutch society, Mollenhorst, Völker, and Flap (2008) determined that we are more likely to choose friends and acquaintances from among our neighbors than we are to choose our partners there. Work was also more conducive to establishing looser friendships than to establishing deep romantic bonds. In turn, social gatherings offered a better likelihood of meeting a future partner than a future friend or acquaintance. However, since there are multiple contexts for social contact, almost one-third of the Dutch respondents met their acquaintances, friends, and partners in other circumstances, which included, *inter alia*, church activities, vacation travel, and parties. Our study also includes a large number of indications of places belonging in the “other” category. One of the most unexpected meeting places indicated in the study was a cemetery.

Table 2-11. The age of meeting one’s partner in relation to the circumstances of meeting (in %)

	The age of meeting one’s partner				Total
	17 and less	18–24	25–31	32 and more	
In the neighborhood	27.7	20.8	17.9	10.9	20.8
In the course of education in school or at the university	28.5	14.5	6.0	3.0	14.8
In the workplace	1.6	12.2	17.0	22.8	11.8
In the course of mutual participation in religious life	3.2	1.4	0.9	1.0	1.6
In the course of mutual participation in a social organization or an interest group	2.0	3.4	1.4	2.0	2.7
During leisure time, e.g., on vacation	24.9	35.4	36.2	24.8	32.7
On the Internet	1.6	2.9	5.0	10.9	3.6
The marriage was arranged	1.6	1.6	4.1	10.9	2.8
In other circumstances	8.8	7.9	11.5	13.9	9.2
Total	100	100	100	100	100

The circumstances of meeting one's life partner are also influenced by the age of the respondents. Table 2-11 reveals that the percentage of individuals who met their partner in the workplace rises with age. Individuals who met their partner after 30 were almost as likely to have met their partner at work as at places visited in their leisure time. In turn, in the case of respondents who met their partner in early youth, the odds of finding a partner were higher in the same neighborhood or in school. This once again confirms that future partners are primarily selected from among our own social circle.

Meeting a partner at a later stage in life changes the circumstances in which the meeting is likely to occur. With age, the percentage of individuals who met their partners in "other circumstances" grows. The respondents named various situations and combinations of events. In the case of people who met their partner after 30, the percentage of people who met their partner on the Internet or through an arranged marriage rises significantly. The use of such strategies is, of course, dependent on the age of the respondents. Young people are the main group searching for partners on the Internet, especially respondents between 18–19 (12%), as well as a slightly smaller percentage of people in their thirties (7%). In the case of older people, this strategy was used by a narrow percentage of respondents, presumably due to a lower degree of digital literacy. Arranged marriages were more popular among respondents in their forties (4%) and fifties (3.5%). However, it is also apparent that both arranged marriages and Internet dating are treated as a "last-case scenario" by people who for various reasons "missed" the most opportune time or are reentering the marriage market. We can expect the number of people who find themselves in this "desperate" situation to rise in the future, due to the number postponing the moment of entering a stable relationship. The market itself is not blind to this phenomenon and effectively uses the Internet in the role of a "modern matchmaker," offering a growing number of dating sites. However, the fact that both traditional and Internet-based matchmakers matched a relatively small number of the respondents points to direct interaction as the most efficient method of meeting one's partner.

The Inner Circle and Status Homophily

Data collected in the course of our study allows us to gain an insight into social changes in regard to the membership of people's inner circle in subsequent stages of life. The sequence begins in one's childhood home, with the status of one's parents (as in most analyses pertaining to social structure and mobility) as the initial metric of one's social "background." This point of departure is essential not just from the perspective of life opportunities determined by one's social background, but also due to the significance of socialization in the earliest stages of life (aspirations, the emergence of a space of allowed biographical choices). Siblings determine the second social circle "by birthright." The significance of this second circle stems from the fact that it is the effect of parallel life trajectories which began in a single household. It can be assumed that the status achieved by brothers and sisters is usually the result of similar life opportunities (the social standing of the family) but that it is also the result of the disparate influence of different peer groups (the diversification of social circles) and institutions (specific schools and work, the first occupational work in particular). The third social circle is tied to the moment of becoming independent of the initial family circle and forming a family circle of one's own. The selection of a partner is at present the result of one's free will (an independent decision), and takes place—as described above—in the later stages of education and the initial stages of occupational life. The fourth metric is the present composition of one's group of close friends, which is an approximation of one's current social environment instead of being "inherited" from previous stages of one's life. These surroundings are the most freely and independently chosen by oneself. Of course, the sequence described above is not strictly chronological in nature. We might meet our future spouse in early childhood, before our younger siblings are born. In this context, we will take a closer look at similarities in regard to a selected metric of status: education.

The phenomenon of the homogeneity of the environment has different interpretations depending on specific kinds of bonds. The composition of properties in the child-parent relation is strongly

determined by structural asymmetry (the influence of modernization) and “contamination” (the influence of parenting). In turn, the child-sibling relation is first and foremost interpersonal, with modernization having a lesser significance (the relatively small age difference between the siblings). Brothers and sisters usually have relatively similar life opportunities, which are not only the result of shared household capital but also of their very similar access to specific educational institutions (measured by distance from home as well). In the case of family circles the issue of biographical access and homophily are practically nonexistent, as the relation itself takes precedence over properties.

In the case of civil partnerships and marriages, fundamental significance is given to access (“the matrimonial market”) and homophily as such (the taste for similarity in others), with “contamination” having lesser significance due to the fact that entering a stable relationship usually happens after the most crucial educational decisions have already been made (after 20, when the issue of going to university has in most cases been decided). The similarity of traits shared by partners is asymmetrically determined only to the degree to which there is a difference in the enrollment ratio between the genders. In turn, the influence of personal preferences is tied to the actual patterns of entering into stable relationships. If it were common to marry at an early age and if divorce were rare, the significance of homophily would be limited to a short period in one’s youth, with preferences shaped later having little to no effect. With the rise in the freedom to change one’s life partner the influence of current “social preferences” is becoming higher. In the case of a circle of close friends the issue is similar to the case of civil partnerships, though less significance is given to the issue of accessibility. In the former case, the period of mutual selection is longer; while we choose our life partners just once or at most a few times in our lifetime, our circle of close friends is in constant formation. The choice of close friends is also not “disturbed” by such phenomena as romantic love or the forming of bonds on the basis of factors other than strictly sociological ones. As the issues of intimacy and physical attractiveness do not play as significant a role in our selection of friends, more importance

is given to similar interests, pursuits, and preferences. And while social standing might in fact influence the level of interpersonal attractiveness—if only, for instance, due to the types of fashionable clothing shared in a given community—it is nevertheless indisputable that biology has much more to say about mating than about making close friends.

Research on the similarity of educational status shows that education generates both a wide scope of “inwardness” and distance: on average, people have more frequent contacts with people having a similar level of education, and the probability of contact falls with the degree of educational disparity (see McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001). The method of operationalizing this trait is, of course, decisive in terms of the results on homogeneity. However, it should be stressed that we are interested in relative convergence—the mutual comparison of social circles—and not in speaking about the hermetic nature of society in any absolute sense. Education usually does not raise any concerns as a metric of status, as it is strongly correlated with other dimensions of social position. However, it contrasts with them as a property that is independent from a person’s current situation in the workplace (the non-working part of the population shares this property with its working counterpart). In this context, we will make use of a simple division into four categories: (I) primary education (including “*gimnazjum*,” Poland’s middle school), (ii) vocational education, (iii) secondary education (including post-secondary education), and (iv) higher education (undergraduate studies or higher).

The easiest form of presenting the convergence of the properties are cross tabulations, which in the context of research on status inheritance are called mobility tables. In this context, a more adequate term would be contingency or homogeneity tables, as interest is inevitably centered on properties in diagonal cells. Below are educational contingency tables for the ego respondents, with sequences of four social circles (parents, siblings, partners, close friends). The use of column percentages allows for the comparison of different categories of respondents on the basis of the composition of their social environment, while properties pertain to the fraction

of the “population” of the respondents’ parents² and analogous “populations” of siblings, partners, and close friends.³ Presenting such a simple table with the use of row percentages would only be possible in the case of spouses, which means that column percentage presentation is not just a matter of interpretative preference but of the technical possibilities it offers.

As has been mentioned before, specific values in the table are not only dependent on the force of narrowly understood homophily, interpersonal influence, and autoselective processes (or social phenomena that lead to homogenization), but also on the educational structure and the generational changes pertaining thereto (the availability of particular types of schools, which changes with time). In effect, this presentation is a “gross” evaluation of the properties of the social environment of modern Poles, which marginalizes (averages) the significance of the potential variability of specific relation patterns over time.

The strongest child-parent convergence in terms of education can be observed in the group of respondents with primary education (though it is worth noting that this category was the smallest, so in this case the distributions are more prone to sampling errors). Almost 90% of all the parents of such respondents also had a primary education. This convergence is undoubtedly partly the result of correlation with age—older respondents were the most likely to report an eight-year or shorter education, which means that their parents often received an education in the prewar period. Furthermore, among the siblings of respondents with a primary education the dominant form of education is vocational education, which indicates that we are dealing with members of a generation that was “leaving the countryside,” the majority of whom abandoned traditional farming in favor of urban labor, often in industry, which was emerging then in Poland. The convergence patterns of status properties and the social environment have clearly been influenced by modernization processes in the country. Individuals who did

² The only situations included in the table are those in which both parents were alive at least until the respondent turned 14. In effect, the standardization of actual parental influence is stronger.

³ For the number of *N* ego respondents the size of particular “populations” (the percentaging base) could reach a maximum of 2*N*, 12*N*, *N*, and 5*N*, respectively.

not “jump on the bandwagon” of postwar educational upward mobility remained in their initial environment (as is demonstrated by the relatively high educational convergence between parents and spouses). The percentage value of the homogeneity of the friend environment (only 31% in the case of people with primary education) could suggest that in some aspects such individuals experienced a large degree of structural openness. However, it is more probable that the interpretation of raw percentage values is not always meaningful—it is the result of the fact that individuals with solely primary education are a minority in today’s world, so the likelihood of their friends belonging to the same category is objectively small.

We may attempt to solve the above-mentioned issue of comparability in several ways—for instance, by using additional, relatively simple metrics, as well as by using somewhat more advanced methods of statistical modeling. The former are additionally a convenient introduction to the latter, so they will be discussed in sequence. The first helpful metric used in the table is the overrepresentation of convergent categories, which has been included in the last column. It includes diagonal values in the numerator and the values for the entire population in the denominator. Convergence measured in this way becomes “independent” of the rate of the category’s occurrence in a given population. The interpretation of the metric is easy, as it simply says how many times more (or fewer) of the respondents belonged to the same category as their parents (and by analogy, their siblings, etc.) in relation to the entire population of respondents whose parents belonged to the same category. Measured thus, a value of 2.8 of “overrepresentation” in the first row means that among the respondents whose parents had solely primary education, respondents with solely primary education are almost twice as overrepresented (in other words, there was a 2.08 times higher probability that the respondent had “inherited” affiliation in the aforementioned category in relation to all the people with parents of such an educational level). As can be seen, this metric marginalizes the size of the subsequent categories of parents in regard to work (and by analogy, siblings, etc.).

Table 2-12. The degree of convergence of the level of education of the ego respondents and their parents, siblings, partners (especially spouses), and close friends. Included are individuals aged 25–75.

		Category of the ego's education					Overrep- resentation ^b
		Primary	Vocational	Secondary	Higher	Total	
The par- ents' edu- cational level (N=138)	Primary	86.4	64.2	39.7	15.2	41.6	2.08
	Vocational	11.7	27.5	33.6	21.7	26.5	1.04
	Secondary	0.9	7.7	22.3	38.8	22.2	1.00
	Higher	0.9	06	4.4	24.4	9.6	2.54
	Total:	100	100	100	100	100	
	<i>Odds of convergence^a</i>	6.40	0.38	0.29	0.32		
The sib- lings' edu- cational level (N=1322)	Primary	34.8	10.7	4.9	2.8	8.2	4.24
	Vocational	39.4	56.2	25.0	8.6	29.4	1.91
	Secondary	19.0	25.8	44.7	33.4	34.1	1.31
	Higher	6.7	7.2	25.4	55.2	28.3	1.95
	Total:	100	100	100	100	100	
	<i>Odds of convergence^a</i>	0.53	1.28	0.81	1.23		
The part- ner's edu- cational level (N=1155)	Primary	56.9	10.2	1.8	0.5	7.0	8.13
	Vocational	29.2	53.6	21.1	5.7	24.9	2.15
	Secondary	12.5	30.5	53.6	24.3	35.2	1.52
	Higher	1.4	5.6	23.6	69.5	32.9	2.11
	Total:	100	100	100	100	100	
	<i>Odds of convergence^a</i>	1.32	1.16	1.16	2.28		
The close friends' educa- tional level (N=1315)	Primary	30.8	7.8	2.1	0.5	5.1	6.03
	Vocational	43.9	54.3	22.8	5.0	26.0	2.09
	Secondary	23.3	28.7	48.6	22.5	33.2	1.46
	Higher	2.0	9.2	26.4	72.0	35.6	2.02
	Total:	100	100	100	100	100	
	<i>Odds of convergence^a</i>	0.45	1.19	0.95	2.57		

^a The ratio of the probability of being in the same educational category as the alter to the probability of being in a different educational category.

^b The ratio of the fraction of respondents belonging to the same educational category as the alter to the fraction of all the respondents whose alter belonged to that category.

Moving on to the highest category of education, that is, people with higher education, we can note that only a quarter of the parents had a level of education comparable to that of their offspring. Does this suggest a relatively low level of convergence, especially in comparison with people with primary education? In fact, no—as the overrepresentation metric shows, in this case the convergence is in fact higher than in the case of individuals with primary education. As the extremes of the distributions show, the relationship between family home and educational career is strongest among the most- and the least-educated respondents. We should note that homogeneity in the extreme categories is quite a universal phenomenon and is one of the fundamental determinations in this field (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook 2001: 427). In the case of the intermediate levels of education we did not note a higher convergence between the respondents and their parents, which could suggest a lack of barriers or benefits in regard to education. However, it should be kept in mind that we are still speaking of “gross” effects, which are averaged for age and dependent on the educational structure of subsequent generations, so more precise patterns will be found with the use of more detailed analytical methods.

The odds, that is, the ratio of probability, of convergence in the divergence of a property (in this case the level of education, divided into four categories), is another helpful metric. In effect, this quotient has the same value in the numerator as the previous one (the diagonal fraction), although the denominator contains the fraction corresponding to divergence, that is, belonging to a different educational category than the members of one’s social circle. In other words, a value of 6.4 in the case of individuals with primary education means that there is an over six times higher probability of the parents having the same rather than a different level of education ($86.4/13.5=6.4$). In effect, this metric is quite easily interpreted, but each time its value should be referred to the appropriate “population of reference.” It is not a relativizing metric in terms of the structure of education in a person’s social circle.

By using both of the above synthetic metrics, we are able to evaluate the convergence of status properties in subsequent life stages of members of Polish society. The above-described educational homogeneity on the extremes of the distribution in the case of parents

(“the saddle effect”) changes to an extent when we look at the rows below. This happens due to the similarity in the structure of education of the respondents and the remaining three social circles, resulting from less generational distance (usually, though not always, we are simply speaking of representatives of the same generation). Among the respondents with primary education we can observe a four times larger overrepresentation of siblings with the same level of education, while in the case of spouses and close friends the overrepresentation is even larger. In this case, the “saddle” is even more asymmetrical, which points to a larger “inwardness” in later stages.

The fact that in the case of siblings and the first three categories of education the variables of overrepresentation are clearly higher suggests that the family home determines life opportunities to a larger degree than is apparent from standard tables of intergenerational mobility. Brothers and sisters share more similarities with us in regard to status properties, as in this case the influence of the “modernization effect” is low. It is possible, therefore, that convergence with siblings is a more sensitive statistic in terms of the influence of the initial environment, though this could be verified later in the course of a direct comparison of relations between the variables. Due to the almost parallel nature of the educational biographies of siblings, we can also observe a much more equal likelihood of convergence. Both general educational reform and individual educational choices have resulted in the likelihood of convergence oscillating much closer to 1 than in the case of parents (from 0.53 for primary education to 1.28 for vocational education), though it nonetheless remains lower than in the case of social circles, which are subject to personal choice.

The average likelihood of convergence becomes, without exception, higher than 1 in the case of people in relationships (both marriages and civil partnerships). This is equivalent to a probability of convergence exceeding 50% (due to the fact that we are evaluating four distinct categories, we rate the probability as high). The highest probability pertains to people who have attended tertiary education (2.28). This shows a generally higher homogeneity among spouses than siblings, which is partly due to the fact that we quite often meet our partners and spouses in the course of our educational and occupational careers (in school and at work). In contrast with previous social circles, we may speak not only of similar life

trajectories but of precisely the same career path, at least at a certain stage in life (attending the same class or being in the same year in school). The values of the overrepresentation metric reveal a somewhat different pattern than in the case of convergence with both parents and siblings. Educational “inwardness” is strongest among the least-educated—having a spouse or partner from this category was about eight times more common than in the entire population. This shows that the appearance of an element of choice in the process of finding a spouse increases the homogeneity of the social circle in comparison with assigned circles, where interpersonal influence is the most significant.

It is interesting to note that overrepresentation variables for convergent categories are very similar for both the circle of partners and the circle of close friends. The difference characterizing individuals with primary education (8.1 vs. 6.0) is first and foremost tied to the fact that many couples married in the past—in the case of older respondents, in youth—and such relationships are statistically more stable than close friendships (as defined here). In other words, this is the result of the convergence of a separate property—age. In turn, by analyzing odds, we can note that the “inwardness” of the highest positions is most clear in the case of friends, somewhat lower in the case of partners, and lowest in the case of the family. This suggests that the taste for similarity in relations is most significant “on the top” of the distribution of status properties, whereas “on the bottom” more significance is given to different social barriers.

Conclusion

The “People in Networks” study allowed us to look at patterns of closest relations in modern Poland. This chapter presented the basic facts of the matter. The data shows that close ties are maintained with a small number of people—in the case of looser bonds the circle becomes larger. Our social instincts are usually satisfied by having 2–3 close friends; in other words, Poles are not significantly different in this regard from representatives of other nations, for example, Americans (see Fischer 2011). Making this “handful” of friends sometimes requires years of work. However, obtaining an education or pursuing a career does not significantly

influence the size of the circle of close friends. It would also be wrong to think that we have complete freedom to select potential candidates for friends. We usually meet such individuals in our youth, that is, at a time when we have the most intensive interactions in different social environments. The shared experiences of that time formed the social lubricant that connected a considerable part of our respondents with their friends for years to come. It would also be a mistake to say that meeting friends is a completely random process. For younger people, school is a good source of potential friends, while for older respondents that role is often filled by the workplace. Both institutionalized biographical paths result in a relatively high level of homophily (in the broad sense) of status properties within relationships initiated on one's own behalf, especially when we consider that homophily in the context of the similarities of properties in comparison with parents and siblings.

The results of the study convincingly demonstrate that in building close relationships we primarily draw from our daily environment. The horizon of possible compositions of our social network is delineated by educational institutions, the workplace, family life, and social life, which is determined by all of the former. At the same time, the inner circle of close friends is not set in stone but changes at subsequent stages of life. People generally prefer to maintain friendships with others of the same gender, which means that civil partnerships and marriages perform a certain "bridging" function between both social categories. However, the choice of a romantic partner is more limited than the choice of a close friend. We have more freedom in regard to the latter, but in consequence the level of the "inwardness" of different social properties, including status properties, turns out to be highest in the circle of close friends. Paradoxically, it is the institutionally defined familial and spousal relations which in certain contexts have a limiting function in regard to social processes of segregation.

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Chapter 3

Measuring Influence in Political Networks

**John E. Jackson, Bogdan W. Mach,
and Ireneusz Sadowski**

Abstract

This chapter demonstrates the importance of studying individual political behavior in the context of interpersonal networks. The view presented here contrasts with the convention of studying individuals as autonomous entities. The chapter begins with a model of opinion formation that uses responses to three questions about politically relevant issues to compare the iir model (the model of identical and independent respondents) with one where members of a dyad are interdependent. Respondents' voting choices, including not voting, are then related to their own and to the other dyad member's opinions and to a term measuring the amount of interdependence in voting choices. The final section presents a test of a possible alternative explanation for the statistical finding of interdependence.

Keywords: individual political behavior, interpersonal networks, vote choices

Introduction

This chapter begins by demonstrating the importance of studying individual political behavior in the context of interpersonal networks, in contrast with conventional studies that analyze individuals as autonomous independent entities. A powerful and important exception to the latter approach is the work of Robert Huckfeldt, who is quite persuasive on the importance of locating individuals in networks and political contexts (see Huckfeldt 2014; Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987, 1995; Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague 2004; Ahn, Huckfeldt, and Ryan 2014). Then methods for measuring the magnitude of interactions among individuals in networks are demonstrated. Studying individuals in networks is important only if the relationships are large and meaningful enough to warrant the expense and complexity involved.

The politically relevant interactions of a pair of respondents, referred to here as a “dyad” and composed of an ego and an alter,

are hierarchically characterized. The construction of the hierarchy begins with opinion formation; we test whether egos' and alters' opinions on political issues are formed jointly. These opinions then form the basis for voting decisions, which is a second area for possible ego and alter interactions. Two null propositions are examined as alternatives to the proposed model of interdependence among dyad pairs. The first of these is homogeneity, meaning that egos and alters are drawn from identical populations. Identical coefficients in the opinion-formation and voting models are evidence of this homogeneity. The second null proposition is independence, which means that egos' behaviors do not reflect any attributes of the alter and vice-versa. The traditional survey-research paradigm is based on the assumption of identical and independent respondents (referred to here as "iir")—the respondents are drawn independently from the same population and can be studied in isolation.¹

This essay begins with a model of opinion formation that compares the iir model with one of interdependence among members of the dyad, using responses to three questions about politically relevant issues. The next analysis relates respondents' voting choices, including not voting, to their own and to the other dyad member's opinions and to a term measuring the amount of interdependence in voting choices. The final section tests a possible alternative explanation for the statistical finding of interdependence.

Opinion Formation

Egos' and alters' respective opinions are modeled with a pair of structural equations that relate each respondent's opinion to the pair member's opinion and to a set of individual variables describing each respondent. These equations are:

¹ The homogenous proposition can be altered with the inclusion of interaction terms and or random coefficients, but these alternatives simply specify homogeneity and independence among individuals within certain groups.

$$O_e = \gamma_e O_a + X_e \beta_e + U_e \quad (1)$$

$$O_a = \gamma_a O_e + X_a \beta_a + U_a \quad (2)$$

where O refers to opinions, X to the exogenous individual characteristics expected to be related to opinions, γ is the coefficient measuring the amount of interdependence among opinions and β estimates by how much opinions vary with differences in the individual characteristics. The identity proposition argues that the β and γ coefficients are identical in both equations. The independence proposition argues that the γ coefficients are zero.

The three opinions analyzed are:

1. Gay—Do you agree that persons of the same sex have the right to marry?
2. Church—Do you agree that the Catholic Church has too much political influence?
3. EU—Do you agree that integration within the EU went too far?

The possible responses were strongly disagree, disagree, neither disagree nor agree, agree, or strongly agree, which were coded from one to five respectively. Higher values indicate support for gay marriage, for less church influence, and for opposition to EU integration. For statistical purposes these are treated as interval variables. Estimation is done with three-stage least squares, which treats the opinion variables as endogenous and jointly determined and should provide consistent estimates for the coefficients. This estimation procedure also permits a direct test of the equality of the coefficients in the two equations and then, if warranted, imposition of the equality constraints. The model is estimated using only the observations where both ego and alter offered an opinion rather than by trying to infer or impute opinions.²

The first results displayed are from the test of the identity proposition. Table 3-1 shows the F -tests and p -values for the test

² The method runs the risk of selection bias. The bias is likely to be small, though, as between 94% and 97% of the dyads had complete data. This expectation is tested using the Heckman procedure, estimating a selection equation, and including the accompanying inverse Mills ratio in the opinion equations. The p -values testing the significance of the inverse Mills ratio term ranged from 0.30 to 0.76, indicating we are unlikely to be making a statistical error by ignoring any selection bias.

of the null hypothesis of identical coefficients in both equations. Collectively the results are consistent with the identity proposition with p -values of 0.05, 0.17, and 0.46. Only in the equation for EU opinions would there be a chance of rejection of the null hypothesis that the coefficients are identical. In the other two equations this null hypothesis would certainly not be rejected and it would be safe to accept it. The opinion equations are then re-estimated with the coefficients constrained to be identical in both equations.

Table 3-1. Test of the identity proposition in opinion equations

	Gay Marriage	Church Influence	EU Integration
<i>F</i> -test	0.95	1.50	2.11
<i>p</i> -value	0.461	0.173	0.050

Table 3-2 shows the estimated opinion equations with the identity constraints imposed. One very important result is the large and statistically significant relationship between egos' and alters' opinions. The coefficients range from 0.35 to 0.39, indicating that a unit difference in one person's opinions is associated with almost a 0.4 point difference in the other's, where a unit is the difference between each of the response categories, such as "strongly agree" and "agree." This is a substantial, expected difference. Only the relationships between church attendance and opinions on gay marriage and the Church's influence have a larger relative impact, where the opinion difference associated with never attending mass and going once a week or more is about 1.2 points. Also, for comparison, the expected opinion difference between men and women ranges from 0.1 to 0.4 and the variation associated with a difference of eight years of schooling varies from 0.1 to 0.4.

Table 3-2. Opinion-formation equations

Variable	Gay Marriage	Church Influence	EU Integration
Dyad Member ^a — γ	0.393 (0.071)	0.360 (0.072)	0.348 (0.106)
Age/10— β_1	-0.027 (0.012)	0.072 (0.012)	-0.027 (0.012)
Education— β_2	0.034 (0.007)	0.014 (0.006)	-0.053 (0.009)
Female— β_3	0.384 (0.054)	0.106 (0.037)	-0.095 (0.043)
Church Attendance— β_4	-0.234 (0.028)	-0.225 (0.024)	0.108 (0.021)
Constant— β_0	1.882 (0.229)	2.836 (0.315)	2.274 (0.381)
N ^b	1125	1167	1144

Standard errors in parentheses below coefficients.

^a Dyad member refers to alter's opinions in the ego equation and to the ego's opinions in the alter's equation.

^b Number of dyads in the analysis.

The coefficients on the other variables, with one exception, are consistent across issues and with expectations. The exception is age, which is associated with opposition to gay marriage, as might be expected, but is positively and strongly associated with the opinion that the Catholic Church exerts too much political influence and opposition to the claim that EU integration went too far. One might think that younger Poles would be more supportive of EU integration. The other coefficients indicate that support for gay marriage and EU integration, and opposition to Church influence, increase with education and among females, and decrease with church attendance.

The evidence is that egos and alters are very likely identical, meaning they come from the same populations, but they are anything but independent. Their opinions reflect both their own characteristics, such as education or church attendance, and the opinions of their partner. What we cannot rule out is whether the estimated interdependence effects are causal, in that the two

members are adjusting to each other, or whether it is a consequence of the selection of partners with similar opinions.

Voting Choices

This section examines whether egos' and alters' voting choices are identical and independent. The model is more complicated than the opinion model because of the nature of the outcome variable, which is a dichotomy for each respondent. People either vote or do not vote, vote for PiS or do not vote for PiS, vote for PO or do not vote for PO—the choices examined here. These variables preclude the use of a linear model such as 3SLS. To accommodate this structure the outcomes are structured as a categorical variable, with one indicating that neither votes, two indicating the alter voted but not the ego, three indicating the reverse, and four indicating both voted. The probability of each outcome is denoted by P_1 , P_2 , P_3 , and P_4 respectively.

These probabilities are modeled as a multinomial logit function of variables describing egos and alters, such as their opinions O , and their individual characteristics X , such as education, with the e and a subscripts denoting the ego or alter:

$$\log(P_2/P_1) = L_1 = \beta_{01} + (O_e\gamma_{e1} + X_e\beta_{e1}) + O_a\gamma_{a1} + X_a\beta_{a1} - 2r, \quad (3)$$

$$\log(P_3/P_1) = L_2 = \beta_{02} + O_e\gamma_{e2} + X_e\beta_{e2} + (O_a\gamma_{a2} + X_a\beta_{a2}) - 2r, \quad (4)$$

$$\log(P_4/P_1) = L_3 = \beta_{03} + O_e\gamma_{e3} + X_e\beta_{e3} + O_a\gamma_{a3} + X_a\beta_{a3}. \quad (5)$$

The model shown in eq. 4 argues that egos' voting decisions, such as whether to vote, are related to their own opinions and characteristics (the O_e and X_e variables), and to alters' opinions and characteristics (the O_a and X_a variables). There is a symmetric proposition about alters' voting choices in eq. 3. The r term represents the amount of interdependence in voting choices that is not accounted for by the effects of partners' opinions and characteristics. The identity proposition predicts that $\gamma_{ej} = \gamma_{aj}$ and that $\beta_{ej} = \beta_{aj}$ for all j . The independent proposition predicts that the coefficients in the terms in parentheses in eqs. 3 and 4 are

zero, that $r = 0$, and that $\beta_{01} = \beta_{02} = \beta_{03}/2$. (See the appendix for this derivation.)

The first results are the tests for whether egos and alters are identical and independent in all three vote decisions. The test for independence here is only whether the coefficients shown in parentheses in eqs. 3 and 4 are zero. Subsequent analyses address the other conditions related to r and the constant terms. Table 3-3 shows the results of these Wald tests. The evidence is strong that egos and alters are identical and that egos' vote decisions are independent of alters' opinions and characteristics, and vice-versa. The p -values for these tests range from 0.16 to 0.53, clearly well above any acceptable rejection criteria.

Table 3-3. Test of whether respondents are identical and independent in voting choices

	Vote		PiS		PO	
	χ^2 Statistic	p -value	χ^2 Statistic	p -value	χ^2 Statistic	p -value
Identical	25.40(21)	0.230	38.07(36)	0.376	34.79(36)	0.526
Independent	11.81(8)	0.160	15.98(14)	0.315	16.03(14)	0.312
$\beta_{01} + \beta_{02} = \beta_{03}$	20.58(1)	0.000	17.82(1)	0.000	12.86(1)	0.000
Chi-squared statistic degrees of freedom in parentheses						

The model is re-estimated with the identity and limited independence constraints added. The independence test shown in row two of Table 3-3 is a test of limited independence, namely that the coefficients in the terms in parentheses in eqs. 3 and 4 are zero, meaning that alters' opinions and characteristics are unrelated to egos' voting choices, and vice-versa. In these equations there is a second term, r , that also measures interdependence, and that must be examined once the other constraints are imposed. This interdependence could be generated by, among other things, the influence of alters' voting choices on egos' voting choices, and vice-versa.³ The model with full independence requires that $r=0$, which then implies that $\beta_{01} + \beta_{02} = \beta_{03}$, which, with the identity

³ Franklin and Jackson (1985) derive the form of the multinomial logit model used here from a structural equation model where the r term captures the coefficients relating the two endogenous variables, which in this model are the egos' and the alters' voting choices.

constraint that $\beta_{01} = \beta_{02}$, means that $\beta_{03} = 2\beta_{01} = 2\beta_{02}$. The Wald test and associated p -value of the test that $\beta_{03} = 2\beta_{01} = 2\beta_{02}$ is shown in the third row of Table 3-3. This null hypothesis is clearly rejected as it is very inconsistent with the data and results.

Table 3-4 shows the estimated voting choice models with the identity constraints. The no-opinion variable in these equations is the number of “no opinion” responses to the fifteen issue questions in the survey.⁴ An important finding is that the estimates for the amount of interdependence, the value of r , are between 0.15 and 0.17 and statistically significant. To assess the substantive result we compare the probabilities of the same voting choice in independent dyads, $r=0$, with that in otherwise identical interdependent dyads, $r=0.16$. By “otherwise identical” dyads we mean the same values for all opinions, exogenous variables, and any unobserved random terms so that interdependence is the only difference. The comparisons are complicated because the logistic functional form is non-linear, thus we compare one dyad with a very low probability, 0.05, of the same outcome and a second dyad with a very high probability, 0.5, of the same outcome. For the first dyad the probability of identical voting choices increases by 0.017 and of opposite choices decreases by the same amount for a net difference of 0.034. For the second, highly similar dyad, the probability of identical voting increases by 0.079 and that of opposite choices decreases by the same amount for a net difference of 0.158. These are substantial shifts in both examples.

⁴ The average is about 0.5 “no opinion” responses per respondent, and only about 5% have more than three “no opinions.”

Table 3-4. Estimated voting choice multinomial logit models

Variable	Voted	PiS	PO
Opinions			
No opinion ^a	-0.095 (0.031)	-0.093 (0.046)	-0.040 (0.042)
Support gay marriage		-0.210 (0.058)	0.167 (0.053)
Less Church influence		-0.341 (0.056)	0.313 (0.072)
Oppose EU integration		0.312 (0.060)	-0.381 (0.063)
Characteristics			
Education	0.129 (0.019)	-0.006 (0.023)	0.055 (0.023)
Age/10	0.222 (0.035)	0.124 (0.038)	0.246 (0.046)
Church attendance	0.203 (0.043)	0.377 (0.062)	0.101 (0.062)
Female	0.309 (0.118)		
Interdependence – r	0.154 (0.034)	0.167 (0.039)	0.170 (0.048)
N^b	1201	1201	1201

Standard errors in parentheses below coefficients.

^a Number of “no opinion” responses to all fifteen issue questions.

^b Number of dyads in the analysis.

The coefficients on the other variables are as expected. Those who support gay marriage and desire less influence for the Catholic Church are much less likely to vote for PiS and more likely vote for PO, while the opposite is true for those who oppose EU integration. Those with the largest number of “no opinion” responses are less likely to vote, which translates into also being less likely to vote for PiS or PO. Increases in education are associated with a greater likelihood of voting, and voting for PO, with no association with voting for PiS. Increases in age are associated with a greater likelihood of voting and maybe, surprisingly, with a greater likelihood of voting for PO relative to PiS, controlling for opinions.

Church attendance is associated with higher probabilities of voting and of voting for PiS. Women are more likely to vote than men. This variable is omitted from the PiS and PO equations because there was no association of gender with a vote for either party.

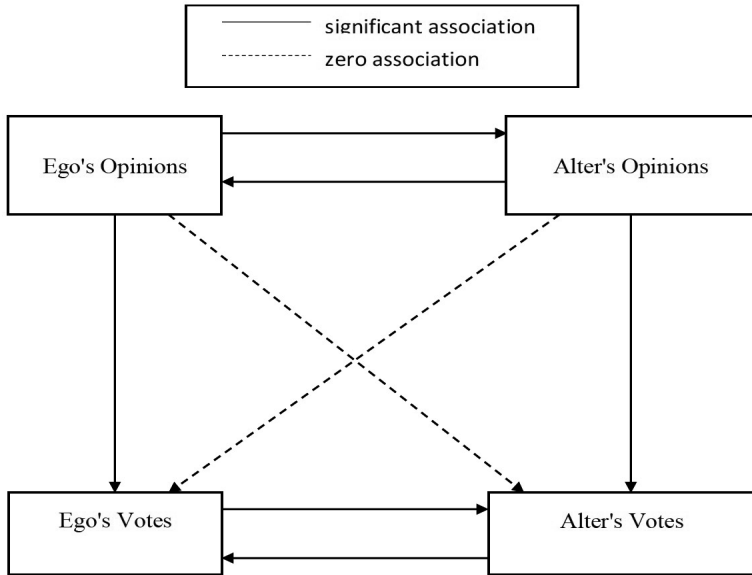


Fig. 1: Schematic for Ego's and Alter's Interdependence

Figure 3-1 schematically summarizes the results with solid lines depicting significant relationships and dashed lines depicting where there are no observed relationships. The figure shows the hierarchical structure going from opinions to votes. It also shows the patterns of interdependence with ego's and alter's opinions and votes reflecting their interactions, but no association between alter's opinions and ego's votes and vice-versa. What is not shown is that the relationships depicted by the solid lines are equal for egos and alters. Egos and alters are identical but not independent.

Modeling Voting Interdependence

The next analysis tests propositions about whether r varies systematically with characteristics of the dyad members. The specific proposition examined here is whether r decreases as the members become more diverse. This diversity is measured by the absolute differences in education, age, church attendance, and gender. The formal expression examined is

$$r = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 |\Delta \text{Ed}| + \alpha_2 |\Delta \text{Age}| + \alpha_3 |\Delta \text{ChurchAtt}| + \alpha_4 \Delta \text{Gender}. \quad (6)$$

The expectations are that the coefficient signs will be negative, implying that the level of interdependence decreases as egos and alters become less similar. The value of α_0 is the estimated interdependence if the ego and alter have identical characteristics.

Table 3-5 shows the estimated equations with these additions. Only the coefficients on the variables modeling variations in r will be discussed as there is very little change in the other coefficients in Table 3-4. The only relationship with the expected sign in all three models and that has any statistical significance is the difference in education. The more equal are ego's and alter's educational levels the larger the interdependence term. This relationship is statistically significant in the models for voting versus not voting at the 10% level and for voting for PiS at the 5% level. Differences in gender have the opposite from expected sign but are statistically insignificant in all three models. Differences in age and frequency of church attendance are statistically insignificant in all three models and have unexpected signs in several.

Table 3-5. Estimated voting-choice models with variations in interdependence

Variable	Voted	PiS	PO
Opinions			
No opinion ^a	-0.094 (0.031)	-0.093 (0.047)	-0.042 (0.042)
Support gay marriage		-0.208 (0.058)	0.166 (0.054)
Less Church influence		-0.341 (0.056)	0.309 (0.072)
Favor EU integration		0.313 (0.060)	-0.382 (0.063)
Characteristics			
Education	0.127 (0.019)	-0.007 (0.022)	0.053 (0.023)
Age/10	0.220 (0.035)	0.127 (0.038)	0.252 (0.047)
Church attendance	0.197 (0.044)	0.380 (0.063)	0.114 (0.061)
Female	0.307 (0.121)		
Interdependence			
α_o	0.213 (0.061)	0.185 (0.062)	0.207 (0.074)
Δ Education	-0.024 (0.014)	-0.029 (0.014)	-0.009 (0.016)
Δ Age/10	-0.002 (0.034)	0.034 (0.038)	0.045 (0.041)
Δ Church attendance	-0.023 (0.029)	0.012 (0.029)	-0.050 (0.034)
Different gender	0.072 (0.072)	0.025 (0.079)	0.009 (0.081)
N ^b	1201	1201	1201

Standard errors in parentheses below coefficients.

^a Number of “no opinion” responses to all fifteen issue questions.

^b Number of dyads in the analysis.

The estimate for the interdependence among voting decisions, as measured by α_0 , remains strong and statistically significant. The coefficients of about 0.2 indicate the expected interdependence if egos and alters have the same education level, for example, $|\Delta Ed|=0$. This is a slightly higher level of interdependence than discussed in regard to Table 3-4. The coefficients on the $|\Delta Ed|$ variable indicate by how much this interdependence decreases with each additional year of education difference. For example, in the voting/non-voting model the interdependence term is reduced by 0.1 if there is a four-year difference in education, such as between a high school and a college education. This would bring r down to about 0.11, meaning much less difference between the probability of similar voting in an independent dyad and in an interdependent dyad with a difference of four years of education than when comparing independent and interdependent dyads with the results in Table 3-4.

The best summary of these results is that they show evidence that the interdependence term has a systematic component that varies with the characteristics of the dyad. In this case, education level could be an example. The evidence for a systematic component and the methodology used to examine this component should encourage further thought about likely additional factors. A strong search area might be the nature, frequency, duration and intensity of the interactions among egos and alters. This exploration was confined to similarities in personal characteristics, which may not be the most important factors predicting interdependence.

Synthetic Dyads: A Test of an Alternative Explanation for Voting Interdependence

The previous analysis of opinions and the voting patterns of egos and alters accepted the null hypothesis of identical respondents. These results also showed strong levels of interdependence among egos and alters in their opinion formation and voting decisions. Egos' opinions are significantly and importantly related to alters' opinions and vice-versa. The voting equations also showed this interdependence in the form of a term common to both respondents' decisions, a term we denoted as r . This interdependence term implies definite coordination between ego and alter in their voting choices, either through direct interaction or through the selection

process. Even given information about alters' opinions, knowing whether egos voted or how they voted provides information about whether alters would vote and how they would vote. And vice-versa for egos' votes.

A possible explanation for these results, aside from being evidence of influential communication within a network, is the existence of omitted variables, shared by both egos and alters, that would explain both of their opinions and their voting decisions. For example, there could be a demographic variable related to both persons' opinions or voting decisions or an omitted opinion from the voting model that affects both voting choices. Furthermore, because the alters identified by egos are not chosen randomly, any omitted variable is likely to be correlated among egos and alters, leading to the observed associations we have interpreted as interdependence.

This alternative explanation is examined by analyzing what we call synthetic dyads. A synthetic dyad is created by matching randomly selected survey respondents who are not in fact dyads in terms of knowing and communicating with each other. The intent is to create dyads of respondents who are as similar as possible but who have no connection with each other, that is, they are fully independent. The opinion and voting models are then estimated with the synthetic data, with the expectation that with no interdependence the coefficients on alters' opinions in the egos' opinion equation, on the egos' opinions in the alters' opinion equation, and the interdependence term in the voting equations, should be insignificant, both statistically and in magnitude. If, however, there are variables related to opinions and votes omitted from the estimated models and if these variables are correlated within dyads, as we expect from the way the dyads are constructed, then these estimated interdependence terms should still be statistically and substantively significant. This strategy, of course, depends upon these unmeasured omitted variables being correlated with the measured variables used in matching pairs in the synthetic dyads.

The matching process is based on a propensity score matching egos and alters in a quasi-experiment structure where alters are the treatment group and egos are the control group. (The seminal piece on propensity matching scores is Rosenbaum and Rubin 1983.) (The full process used to match individuals and to create

the synthetic dyads is described in detail in an online appendix.) The propensity matching scores are then used to rank all individuals in the original survey. The dyads are created by matching those with the most similar propensity scores. The intention is that by matching individuals based on this linear combination of observable variables they are also matched on relevant unobservable variables.

An assessment of the matching is done by comparing the correlations between the individual variables in the real and the synthetic dyads, shown in Table 3-6. These produced much lower correlations for age and city residence and a much higher correlation for education than in the real data. Despite the differences we proceed with the synthetic dyads, which appear to be well matched, in Table 3-6.⁵ The conclusion from these comparisons is that the synthetic dyads are sufficiently well matched on observable variables to support the claim that the major difference in the two data sets is that the pairs in the real dyads directly interact with each other while the pairs in the synthetic dyads do not. This difference bolsters the expectation that there should be no evidence of interdependence among the synthetic dyads.

Table 3-6. Correlations in real and synthetic dyads^a

Dataset	Age	Education	Attendance	Female	City
Real	0.74	0.54	0.36	0.48	0.78
Synthetic ^b	0.43	0.71	0.26	0.60	0.18

^a Entries are the correlation between the egos' and alters' variables for each data set.

^b Results estimated with synthetic dyads from original propensity scores.

The opinion and voting-choice models are estimated using the same procedures and variable definitions shown for the analysis of the real dyads. Table 3-7 shows the relevant coefficient estimates from the two data sets along with the results with the real dyads. An important finding is that all of the coefficients estimated with

⁵ We adjusted the propensity scores, increasing the weight on age and decreasing that on education. These changes definitely improved the similarity of the correlations in Table 3-6, though they did not appreciably change the similarity between egos and alters in the synthetic dyads.

the synthetic dyads are small and statistically insignificant—and the largest one is negative, contrary to expectations. It seems safe to conclude that there is no evidence to support the claim that omitted variables, correlated with the observed variables, are producing the significant interdependence coefficients found among the real dyads. It may be that omitted variables that are uncorrelated with the observed variables and that are correlated in the real dyads but not the synthetic dyads are producing the results, but this is a narrower set of possibilities.

Table 3-7. Comparisons with real and synthetic dyads

Model	Real ^a	Synthetic ^b	N ^c
Gay marriage ^d	0.393 (0.071)	-0.002 (0.066)	1010
Church influence ^d	0.360 (0.072)	0.060 (0.069)	1014
EU integration ^d	0.348 (0.106)	-0.177 (0.089)	990
Vote ^e	0.154 (0.034)	0.006 (0.035)	1045
PiS vote ^e	0.167 (0.039)	0.033 (0.040)	1045
PO vote ^e	0.170 (0.048)	0.044 (0.051)	1045

^a Results from previous tables.

^b Results estimated with synthetic dyads from propensity scores.

^c Number of dyads in synthetic data set.

^d Coefficient relating egos and alters opinions.

^e Interdependence term, r .

Conclusion

The evidence is quite strong that information flowing in political networks has important effects both on people's political opinions and on their voting choices. Furthermore, the interdependence shown in the opinion and voting models is large and consistent across three issues and three aspects of voting. These results answer in the affirmative the first question posed in the introduction.

The results extend the question to the pattern of interdependence. There is also a well-defined hierarchical structure to the way this information is associated with political behavior. Egos and alters share opinions in such a manner that a shift in one person's opinions is associated with a shift in the other person's opinions on that issue. These opinions as well as the other dyad member's voting choice have large associations with individuals' voting choices. The absent link is that alters' (egos') opinions are not directly related to the egos' (alters') voting choices, but only exert an influence through the association between attitudes. This chapter also presented a methodology for estimating these interdependencies. The methodology was then used to analyze synthetic dyads comprised of randomly selected individuals matched on the basis of observable variables. All the estimates of interdependency among synthetic dyads are small and statistically insignificant. These results are consistent with the proposition that the observed dependencies among the real dyads are less likely the result of omitted variables that are correlated among egos and alters who actually interact with each other, lending further credibility to the main finding about the importance of studying politically relevant networks.

Appendix: Voting among Identical and Independent Respondents

This appendix derives the voting model in eqs. 3–5 for identical, independent respondents, which is then contrasted with the one with interdependent but identical respondents. Begin with the model for the ego's voting variable—vote/not vote or vote/not vote for one party,

$$P_e = \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}}. \quad (A1)$$

To simplify the exposition we only consider opinions as the explanatory variable. There is a comparable equation for the alter's voting probability, P_a , with the opinion variable O_a . The identical condition implies the coefficients are the same in the alter's equation as in the ego's. The independence condition gives the following expressions for the four possible voting outcomes,

$$\begin{aligned}
P_1 &= \left[1 - \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}} \right] \left[1 - \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}} \right] &= \frac{1}{D} \\
P_2 &= \left[1 - \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}} \right] \left[\frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}} \right] &= \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}}{D} \\
P_3 &= \left[\frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}} \right] \left[1 - \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}} \right] &= \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}}{D} \\
P_4 &= \left[\frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta}} \right] \left[\frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}}{1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta}} \right] &= \frac{e^{2\beta_0 + O_e \beta + O_a \beta}}{D},
\end{aligned}$$

where $D = 1 + e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta} + e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta} + e^{2\beta_0 + O_e \beta + O_a \beta}$.

These equations produce a very constrained multinomial logit model,

$$\begin{aligned}
\log(P_2/P_1) &= L_1 = \beta_0 + O_a \beta \\
\log(P_3/P_1) &= L_2 = \beta_0 + O_e \beta \\
\log(P_4/P_1) &= L_3 = 2\beta_0 + O_e \beta + O_a \beta.
\end{aligned}$$

The constraints include equalities on the β coefficients in all equations, zero coefficients on O_e in the first equation and on O_a in the second equation, and that the constant term in the third equation equals $2\beta_0$.

The model with identical coefficients but interdependence adds the r term to the equations for P_1 to P_4 ,

$$\begin{aligned}
P_1 &= \frac{e^r}{D} \\
P_2 &= \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_a \beta - r}}{D} \\
P_3 &= \frac{e^{\beta_0 + O_e \beta - r}}{D} \\
P_4 &= \frac{e^{2\beta_0 + O_e \beta + O_a \beta + r}}{D}.
\end{aligned}$$

The entry r in the first and fourth equations indicates that the probability of the ego and alter voting the same way is higher by that amount than would be predicted solely by their similar

opinions. Similarly, the entry of $-r$ in the second and third equations indicates the probability of the ego and alter voting in opposite ways is lower by the same amount.⁶ This addition of the interdependence term gives the following log-odds equation,

$$\begin{aligned}\log(P_2/P_1) &= L_1 &= \beta_0 + O_a\beta - 2r \\ \log(P_3/P_1) &= L_2 &= \beta_0 + O_e\beta - 2r \\ \log(P_4/P_1) &= L_3 &= 2\beta_0 + O_e\beta + O_a\beta.\end{aligned}$$

With the identity constraints and the constraints that the terms in parentheses in eqs. 3–5 are zero imposed, the two sets of equations are identical.

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⁶ The symmetry of adding r to equations one and four and subtracting it from equations two and three maintains the constraint that all four probabilities must sum to one.

Chapter 4

A Labor Market or Labor Networks?

Ireneusz Sadowski

Abstract

This chapter looks at how contemporary Poles acquired their jobs. In the light of theory, it investigates the degree to which a person is connected with a new work position by impartial and commonly available sources of information (called a “labor market,” in the narrow institutional sense of the term) and the degree to which finding employment is influenced by personalized, informal flows of information in networks of social ties. Such a perspective has previously appeared both in English-language literature (Rees 1966, Granovetter 1973) and in Polish studies (Śloczyński 2013, Pawlak and Kotnarowski 2016); this study corroborates earlier findings, while also providing additional detail, for example, on the specificity of employment sectors in Poland. One important finding presented in the chapter is evidence that the work situation of ego respondents is correlated with the work situations of their alters. This shows the clear “epidemiology” of unemployment risks, that is, a strong structural interdependence in regard to job-related prospects in social networks (beyond a shared place of residence, i.e., the objective availability of work). **Keywords:** labor market, social network, employment, getting a job, hiring process, information flow, Poland

Employment: A Market Phenomenon or Network Phenomenon?

The economic concept of the market refers to the exchange model and the associated concept of balance between demand and supply. The term “labor market” is used in the context of a mechanism that matches people with positions, where remuneration, that is, the “price of work,” is in balance. However, as early as the 1960s George Stigler (1962) wrote that the supply-demand mechanism functions imperfectly even in the case of commodity markets, whereas in the case of the labor market (where information is relatively less accessible, and workers constitute a highly varied group) the issue is even more complicated. New light was cast

upon the matter by the concept of limited rationality, which was developed around the same time (Simon 1955) and was associated with broadening the economic model to include real processes of information flow and possibilities for processing information. When information is not treated as perfectly and costlessly available, the market model becomes noticeably nuanced—to the point where it becomes reasonable to speak of a separate model of behaviors. This also implies the extension of other definitions of economic concepts. As Stigler (1962: 103) wrote, “The information a man possesses on the labor market is capital: it was produced at the cost of search, and it yields a higher wage rate.” In this context, Stigler uses the concept of social capital, which became popularized only in the following decades.

Another researcher who empirically studied the channels of employment in the 1960s was Albert Rees (1966). Half the white-collar workers studied by his team had found employment thanks to information from private, informal sources. In the sample of blue-collar workers the percentage was much higher: over four-fifths. Thus, these two employment sectors followed completely different rules. In the 1970s, Mark Granovetter (1973) conducted a study that took into account the type of ties, and thus effectively extended the issue beyond the strictly economic field of study. The basic premises on which the classic market model was based did not match the labor market realities that emerged from empirical evidence. The difference did not lie solely in additional transaction costs (see Coase 1937) associated with employees and vacancies searching for each other, but also in the deeply socially embedded nature of the phenomenon (see Polanyi [1944] 2001, Granovetter 2005).

On the basis of earlier research findings, the modern theory of social capital distinguishes two kinds of such capital—bonding capital and bridging capital—and recognizes their contextually different consequences. The former kind of capital is based on strong ties and support from membership in relatively close-knit groups (such as families, but also small communities); the latter consists of more fleeting contacts, which, however, provide network access to more unique information (see Woolcock and Narayan 2000, Putnam 1995). Empirical studies have provided many illustrations, as well as a description of the mechanisms of both in different

social contexts (see Coleman 1988, Lin, Fu, and Hsung 2001; Burt 2001), including in Polish society (Sadowski 2012, Pawlak and Kotnarowski 2016).

Many modern studies have directly researched the association between job search results and networks of personal contacts. In a review of research on this issue, Yannis Ioannides and Linda Lounsbury (2004) mention the following stylized facts from this field: (i) it is relatively common to find employment through informal networks, and such cases are on the rise, (ii) job searching through acquaintances and relatives is fairly productive, (iii) the degree to which personal relations are used during a job search depends on the searcher's position, both social and geographical, and (iv) differences in the effectiveness of network use partly reflect the degree to which those networks are being used, but only to a certain extent. The level of usage and the effectiveness of "labor networks" differed in various studies, ranging between 10% and 90% depending on the society or its segment (cf. Ioannides and Lounsbury 2004), and this discrepancy resulted both from specific characteristics of the groups studied and the diversity of the approaches themselves. Analyzing data from fifteen member states of the "old" European Union, Michele Pellizzari (2010) showed that even within those countries, there are very distinct variations in the pay-related effects of the route to finding employment. Personal contacts were responsible for the largest number of successful job searches in Spain (over 40%), but constituted a negligible source of job information in Finland (less than 20%), where they also had the least impact on pay (the most impact was recorded in Belgium). Pellizzari indicated the effectiveness of formal information channels, along with the institutional landscape of diversified labor "markets," as the main factor influencing this diversity. He interpreted salary bonuses in categories of the quality of the match between employee and job, since this effect faded as length of employment increased. Interesting illustrations are also provided by research on job searching by immigrants, that is, people who are not rooted in the social structure of the host country. Maria Enchautegui (2002) showed that the chance of new immigrants finding employment in the U.S. depends significantly on who they reside with after arrival: other unemployed immigrants with a long history of residence in the U.S., or working immigrants with a shorter history of residence. The correlation of the occupational

status of immigrant roommates is, in a sense, a case “selected” from a wider array of social conditions. It shows that the social environment can be crucial for a person’s occupational status.

An important contribution to the description of the socio-institutional conditions of employment was the model developed by Antoni Calvó-Armengol and Matthew Jackson (2004). In their analysis of the network mechanisms of employment, these authors revealed the key importance of the domino effect (or contagion effect) for both individual and group chances of finding work (these chances can be interpreted in categories of externalities). They showed that adopting the premise that information flows through networks leads to the conclusion that the risk of unemployment is determined by context. In an analogous model, Marcelo Arbex and Dennis O’Dea (2011) analyzed the sector of informal work (the gray zone) as one where family and friendship ties are the only source of information about work. They showed that formal institutions and social networks constitute functional alternatives to each other as regards employment sector structuration. Thus, in model terms we can speak of “labor networks” and a narrowly understood “labor market.” This narrow definition is built around the universality and impartiality of information flow. A comparison can be made with the distinction between standard retail trade (the market in the strict sense) and multi-level marketing (which functions like a sales tree, i.e., a specific network structure). In the broad sense, both forms may be referred to as “market forms,” but from a detailed perspective they should be treated as alternative models.

The publications mentioned above suggest the existence of important links between policies, the condition and structure of the economy, and individual careers. They depict the method of finding employment as one of the important elements shaping social structure. At the same time, this phenomenon is largely a derivative of social networks whose topology and functioning are heterogeneous. This means that the meeting point of labor supply and demand is strongly socially embedded.

An Analytical Perspective

Survey-based studies of employment can follow at least two different logics of representativeness. One involves recording current instances of employment (finding a job), while the other focuses on biographical experiences, taking into account more information about a person's occupational history. In the first case, the study population consists only of people who are in the process of changing jobs (i.e., *de facto* the acts of hiring); in the second, the study population encompasses all employees, that is, both those who changed jobs more often and those whose vocational situation was relatively stable, meaning that they changed jobs rarely or not at all. This difference is also reflected in the basic unit of analysis, which can be either a job change (for people taking up new employment) or all currently employed persons (or a "work month" or "work year" when employment in the perspective of event history is being analyzed).

The first approach is exemplified by the nationwide study¹ conducted relatively recently in Poland by Mikołaj Pawlak and Michał Kotnarowski (2016), who replicated Granovetter's original study (1973, 1995). They analyzed a representative sample of current employments, that is, jobs started in the last twelve months. In this case, the approach adopted naturally leads to weaker representation of the category of people who have stable, long-term jobs. Such employees change jobs less often, so there is less chance of their being present in the sample of vocationally mobile people. Thus, while the study by Pawlak and Kotnarowski (referred to further on as P-K) diagnosed the current mechanism of finding people for jobs (the study dealt with the broadly defined labor market in the years 2014 to 2015²), the objective of my analysis will be a synthetic description of the biographical experiences of different generations of employees and their jobs. The analysis will focus on variations in individual careers, that is, the summarized consequences of the action of employment institutions in different

¹ As part of the project "Co wypełnia próżnię socjologiczną? Reinterpretacja tezy Stefana Nowaka z perspektywy sieciowej, na przykładzie zachowań na rynku pracy" ["What Fills the Sociological Void? Reinterpretation of Stefan Nowak's Thesis from a Network Perspective, Using the Example of Behaviors in the Labor Market"].

² This study lasted for ten months (see Pawlak and Kotnarowski 2016).

periods, rather than institutional “rules in action” (Ostrom 2005) during a specific, narrowly defined time period. The analyses presented below are based on interviews conducted with ego respondents as part of the study “People in Networks”; however, only vocationally active respondents (990 people) were included (some sections of the analysis involved retirees as well, that is, a further 301 respondents). These interviews are representative of Polish society in general, so the relative majority of information they contain pertains to permanent jobs rather than temporary ones.

Because these studies exhibit the above-mentioned differences in representativeness, along with similarities in other important aspects (both were conducted over a similar period by the Public Opinion Research Center [*Centrum Badań Opinii Publicznej*, CBOS]), these two analyses constitute an important reference point for each other. Both have their own unique advantages, but it is worth pointing out at least one significant aspect in which the P-K studies were superior: their respondents referred only to events from the previous twelve months, and thus the data was less affected by the unreliability of memory recall. On the other hand, data from the cross-sectional study allows us to describe jobs in their proportional number, that is, both short-term jobs (those changed more often) and long-term (less often changed) ones, and even to take into account the vocational experiences of people who are no longer employed. This may be of relevance, among other things, for testing hypotheses pertaining to the correlation between employment and its consequences, such as income or job satisfaction. If long-term jobs differ in these aspects from short-term jobs, the differences in representativeness may imply differing conclusions.

The methodological specifics of research on the formation of an employment relationship are not limited to the population on which such research is conducted. Markers are another significant component, and analyses carried out worldwide pertain both to job search results (what method actually enabled the seeker to find employment), the intentions of job seekers (declared methods of searching), and the subjective evaluation of the chances of finding a job. For example, Dominik Batorski, Michał Bojanowski and Kamil Filipek (2015) have recently studied the beliefs of Warsaw inhabitants about the difficulty of finding a job comparable to the work they currently perform. The study measured the subjective sense of risk

associated with a possible decision to change jobs. Thus, we can study the institutional employment sector, biographical experiences related to contact with it, and beliefs about this sector, and in each case the research will capture different, yet sociologically relevant, facts.

The actual wording of survey questions may be of significance as well. For example, in a study from 2005 (also a cross-sectional one, on a nationwide sample of the Polish population) CBOS asked the question “How did you find your present job?” with a list of fourteen possible answers, including those classifiable as non-formal sources of employment, for example, “I made use of family contacts” (see Wenzel 2005). In the “People in Networks” study, the question was introduced as follows: “We usually learn about job opportunities from ads, friends, or the labor office, but also from other sources. Can you tell us how you learned about the possibility of obtaining your current job [if the respondent was employed] or your last job [if he/she was unemployed]?” The analogous answer in the cafeteria-style checklist was “I learned about it from a family member.” It seems there is an important difference in both denotation and connotation between the statement about “making use of family contacts” and the statement about obtaining information. The first phrase implies instrumental, intentional, and assertive action on the respondent’s part, while the second is more neutral in this respect, and only indicates the source of information. The first also appears slightly fraught with a suggestion of nepotism, and thus may activate the barrier of self-accusation (Oppenheim 1966). This probably explains some of the differences in the results; in the CBOS study from 2005 only 29% of respondents selected answers containing some variant of “I make use of my contacts” (family, acquaintances from work, acquaintances from school), whereas in our study, as many as 59% of employed respondents indicated acquaintances and family as a “source of information about the possibility of obtaining a job.” It is also worth noting that in the international study ISSP 2001, where one of the questions was phrased rather similarly to ours,³ the analogous percentage was 63%

³ “People find out in different ways that someone is looking for an employee: from other people, from job boards, or in employment agencies, etc. Please tell us how you learned that your present [...] employer is looking for a new hire” (Słoczyński 2013).

(Śloczyński 2013). Furthermore, among the Polish 30-year-olds studied in 2001, as many as 75% declared having had some help when finding employment, while around 60% of the representatives of small and medium-sized enterprises admit that their employees are often found via informal contacts (see Sadowski 2012).

Employment Sources

Data about information channels that lead to effective hirings can be classified according to the fundamental mechanism that governs the process of job searching. The first channel fits the label of a narrowly defined “labor market.” This is the impartial, general availability of information about the possibility of employment. Unlike the network model, where this availability depends on each individual’s fixed position in a system of relations, here there is no such dependence. Information sources (labor offices, employment agencies, but also all forms of public advertising to find new employees) have an institutional character rather than a personal one. The employer’s requirements are the only criterion of selection (on the demand side). From a theoretical viewpoint, comparing the above-mentioned mechanisms of the institutional labor market with the mechanisms of “labor networks” appears most interesting. It lets us define situations in which the signal about a potential job flows through specific arteries in a web of diverse social relations. Thus, the potential employee and the existing vacancy are matched via informal and particular (personalized) channels. This situation is qualitatively different, because the possibility of taking up employment becomes exclusive, and the level of this exclusivity depends on the specific configuration of the social network where the information is available. In some cases, “recruitment” takes place via two channels in parallel: the “labor market” and “labor networks,” but from a practical point of view, the key question is: which source directly contributed to the actual hiring? More precisely, we want to determine which channel allowed the information to reach the candidate effectively (this usually means that information reached him/her faster) and whether the recipient took up employment as a result; in this case we are dealing with two distinct classes of phenomena. At this point, it should be emphasized

once again that the specific, narrow conceptual convention adopted in this work is a direct consequence of this precise distinction.⁴

Not all employment situations can be unequivocally classified using the above categories. Many cases require distinguishing additional, separate classes. Namely, not only people find jobs; sometimes “jobs find people.” Occasionally, the prospective employer directly informs the potential employee about the possibility of employment, without engaging any intermediaries, either formal or informal. Such a situation is ambiguous, because the employer may act (in his/her own opinion) impartially (under the given circumstances, he/she would also offer the job to someone else), but even so, the circumstances surrounding the employer’s contact with the prospective employee should be interpreted as particular (the given person was available at the time, instead of someone else). Depending on the trade, the nature of the work, and the type of business, such situations can be very diverse; the situation may happen both during head-hunting for experts in the given field and in the case of simple casual jobs. The criterion can be either a person’s reputation in the given environment or random availability. In the first case, there is a clear component of network knowledge (or common knowledge typical for the given environment), so this example is closer to the theoretical category of “labor networks”; in the second case, the scope of the search becomes a recruitment criterion, a component that fits into the “labor market” model. We would probably classify some of these situations as the action of personalized mechanisms and others as the action of non-personalized ones, so it is safest to treat them separately. Incidentally, it is worth mentioning the issue of asymmetry in information use by job seekers and employers; such asymmetry is undoubtedly founded on the balance between labor supply and demand. As shown in the table below, the employer played

⁴ The concept of a “labor market” is usually treated as synonymous with the entire employment sector, not with the types of information flow between employers and employees. However, it should be noted (as I mention in the first section of this paper) that in this case, too, using the term “market” in a literal fashion is at best only partly justified; thus, in fact, we are moving here between different conceptual conventions. The distinction between depersonalized and personalized channels of information flow is also not fully synonymous with the distinction between formal and informal channels.

the initiating role in the effective hiring of about 32% of currently employed persons (labor office, advertisements, direct offers made to specific persons). On the other hand, in 45% of cases the offer was not directly addressed to the new employee, but he/she learned about it through his/her social environment. It is safe to assume that these proportions are changing, following phases when either the “employee market” (greater demand for staff) or the “employer market” (lower demand for employees) dominates. Although analysis of the scope of the “labor market” and “labor networks” is oriented somewhat differently, it is worth noting that the supply-demand balance is of great importance here, and the year when the study was performed (2016) can be viewed from a long-term perspective as more or less typical in this regard.

Another separate occupational class involves the endogenous combination of people and work: jobs created independently, including inherited ones. This category includes, above all, entrepreneurs. By establishing a business, they themselves become a “source of employment,” so there is no direct dependence on any of the mechanisms discussed above. Market and network conditions may have indirectly influenced the situation, determining the availability of other types of opportunities and chances, but this is not the subject of our analysis. It is also difficult to clearly separate “creation” and “inheritance” in the case of decisions made within households. In this context, it would be nearly impossible to identify truly “self-made” people. This is equally true for entrepreneurs and for farmers, who may start their farms on land inherited from their parents, on rented land, or combine both approaches in various proportions.

Despite employing the four variants of categorization described above, it was still necessary to apply a residual category (“other”) as well. This is because some respondents were unable to place their job in any of the situations described in the cafeteria-style checklist. This category was chosen much more often by older people, whose current or last job dated back to the times of the Polish People’s Republic. In the context of that regime, one can hardly speak of “market” mechanisms, although administrative hirings were, at least formally, impartial (or even impersonal) in nature. In practice, much undoubtedly depended on the type of job. As in the case

of direct hirings, this means that such cases should be treated as mixed-class.

In reference to the above distinction between perspectives regarding present-day trends either on the broadly defined labor market or among the currently active labor force, the results obtained in the “People in Networks” study are worth comparing with those from the P-K study. Differences between the source of newly created employment relationships and the origin of all currently held jobs are significant in terms of both information and validation. In both studies, more than half the hirings took place thanks to information obtained from friends or directly from the employer. If the category of labor networks were treated equally broadly, it would have to be concluded that such mechanisms permanently account for a predominant percentage of all hirings. 15% of all currently employed persons received information about the possibility of getting a job from a family member: a percentage similar to the one noted in the P-K study in relation to new hirings (11%). The significance of formal channels also appears similar in both studies; these channels accounted for, respectively, around 30% of hirings in 2014–2015, and around 25% in the entire group of existing jobs. The only significant difference concerns the number of people who created their own jobs. Self-employment constitutes 6% of current new-job situations, whereas in a longer temporal perspective (all employed respondents), the percentage rises to 17%. The difference stems from the fact that in the case of this form of employment, “job loss” happens at a completely different speed. The vocational situation of “relatively successful” entrepreneurs and owners of private farms (or, if not relatively successful, then at least capable of staying in business) is simply more stable than the situation of the average wage worker. Thus, in data about the entire labor force in Poland we observe the effects of “sedimentation” among the category of employees who have the strongest connection to their workplace.

The experiences of present-day retirees are more strongly fraught with the statist character of the economy before 1990: these respondents more often mentioned non-network and non-market channels of finding employment. It must be remembered, however, that the vast majority of them retired after 1990. The employment restructuring associated with the systemic transformation

and transition to a market economy meant that in many cases their last work experiences before retirement were similar to those experienced by the younger generations. Conversely, the occupational biographies of retirees significantly less often contain episodes of self-employment or of checking newspaper help-wanted ads, and overall, social networks had even greater significance for them than for persons currently in the labor force. It is worth noting at this point that people who have left the labor force are not significantly different in terms of the structure of employment sources, but on the contrary, highly similar as regards the fractions of respondents who found jobs thanks to family contacts, school friends, and other acquaintances. Situations where the employer found the employee occurred more often in the retiree group, but this is linked to the age differences between both groups. All things considered, it must be remembered that the average number of a person's occupational contacts grows in direct proportion to the length of work experience.

Table 4-1. Sources of information about the current job (currently employed respondents) or the last job (retirees)

Source of information about job	Social and occupational category		Mechanism	Social and occupational category	
	Vocationally active	Retirees		Vocationally active	Retirees
Labor office	5.1%	6.6%	Institutional labor market	18.0%	12.9%
Advertisement	12.9%	6.3%			
Family member	15.0%	15.0%	Labor network	45.0%	43.5%
Acquaintance from school	7.4%	8.6%			
Other acquaintance	22.6%	19.9%			
Employer (direct offer)	13.5%	18.6%	Direct	13.5%	18.6%
Self-employment or inherited job	17.1%	9.0%	Endogenous	17.1%	9.0%
Other sources (e.g., administrative)	6.4%	16.0%	Other	6.4%	16.0%
Total	100%	100%		100%	100%
N	990	301			
(percentage of the entire sample)	(58%)	(18%)			

Diversification of Employment Sources Depending on Job Characteristics

Differences of experience in the above-described range are worth considering in the context of the time period when current employees took up employment. This makes it possible to directly capture the previously mentioned effects of “sedimentation” in the employment sector. The picture presented in the table below is shaped not only by the mechanisms of filling vacancies in a given period, but also by other characteristics of these jobs: above all, by employment stability. The structure of the group of people hired before 1990 is most strongly affected by selection processes based on the longevity of the employment relationship. In this group, farmers are clearly over-represented, as are people hired neither via the market channel nor via the network one (e.g., via the administrative, formal path of a closed profession). The smallest degree of vocational mobility observed in this case can also be described as the strongest effect of work inertia.

Table 4-2. Sources of information about the current job (currently employed respondents) ordered according to the beginning of employment

Mechanism of employment	The beginning of employment (moment of hiring)		
	Before 1990	1990-2004	After 2004
Institutional labor market	10.8%	11.5%	22.5%
Labor network	37.7%	47.3%	45.9%
Direct	18.5%	15.4%	11.8%
Endogenous	23.8%	22.3%	13.4%
Other	9.2%	3.5%	6.4%
Total	100%	100%	100%
N	130	260	595

The most long-lasting jobs are those created by the employees themselves (including inherited jobs) and those found via a non-market route. Jobs found via typical labor market institutions, that is, information flowing through ads and labor offices, are the least long-lasting and even more significantly they prove inferior in this

regard to jobs found thanks to information gained via a person's social environment. Among the people who remained in the same employment relationship since at least 2004, only 12% found their current job through the narrowly defined labor market, in contrast to 23% of those with the shortest duration of employment. These results appear directly linked to the varying average length of the employment cycle in various professions; hence, the dissection of statistical distribution in various occupational categories also provides important insights.

Table 4-3. Sources of information about the current job (currently employed persons) in different occupational categories

Hiring mechanism	Occupational category				
	Entrepreneurs	Farmers	Laborers	Service employees and office workers	Specialists and management personnel
Institutional labor market	0.9%	0.0%	14.8%	25.7%	26.9%
Labor network	11.0%	17.7%	64.9%	50.0%	37.4%
Direct	2.8%	16.2%	9.8%	15.6%	20.7%
Endogenous	85.3%	63.2%	3.9%	1.8%	7.1%
Other	0%	2.9%	6.6%	6.9%	7.9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	109	68	305	276	227

Social networks are the main route to employment in two-thirds of cases for machine operators and manual laborers (grouped together in the category "laborers"). The analogous fraction is one-half in the case of service employees and office workers, and slightly over one-third in the case of specialists and management personnel. This pattern is shaped by the rules regarding formal qualifications and is reflected (although not fully) in the statistics for different education categories (e.g., 50% of respondents with only high school education had found their job through labor networks, as compared to 40% of those who had undertaken university studies). The diminishing significance of labor networks and the growing significance of institutional mechanisms are both associated with the fact that in many white-collar professions, vacancies are filled

by competition. The mechanisms for finding employment are undoubtedly more similar to the narrowly defined labor market in the case of specialist jobs, where direct contact and advertising are responsible for almost half the existing employment relationships. In this case, the demand side has the initiative.

Table 4-4. Sources of information about the current job (currently vocationally active respondents) depending on workplace type.

Hiring mechanism	Type of workplace						
	Private farm	State-owned	Partially state-owned	Privately owned	Own enterprise	Self-employment	Other (e.g. cooperative)
Institutional labor market	0.0%	22.3%	24.2%	21.4%	3.2%	1.5%	27.8%
Labor network	18.7%	50.8%	56.7%	53.7%	9.7%	14.5%	44.4%
Direct	16.0%	17.4%	12.4%	13.5%	3.2%	8.7%	22.2%
Endogenous	60.0%	1.2%	2.2%	3.8%	82.3%	75.4%	17.2%
Other	5.3%	8.3%	4.5%	7.6%	1.6%	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
N	75	242	178	341	62	69	18

Among laborers and mid-level employees, impersonal mechanisms prove less important than personalized networks. In this case, the relation between supply and demand is not the same. Work is of more importance to persons in search of it than for the person offering it, because there is more competition among the former (employees are more equivalent). Here, selection mechanisms are not based on formalized criteria that depend on certification and the possession of specific competences, but on others, such as scrupulousness or loyalty. In this situation, there is also a substantive explanation of why it is better to choose a personalized way of matching the employee with the job. Recruitment is different, because it follows a different logic of selection. Perhaps more surprisingly, the role of depersonalized hiring mechanisms in the case of expert professions and management-level positions is not greater:

in this context, 48% (the sum of direct hirings and hirings taking place according to the rules of the institutional labor market) does not seem a high percentage. If we assume that open contests should play a key role in this segment, it should be expected that persons capable of undertaking such a job would be able to access information about the contests without the help of their environment. However, this is often not the case, and the lack of transparency in contest procedures may undermine the principles of meritocracy (Kwiatkowski 2013).

The picture would not be complete without a comparison taking into account the nature of the workplace. The most surprising result is the similarity of information channels regarding employment in the case of employees working in (currently) state-owned and (currently) privately owned workplaces (at the time of hiring, the ownership structure may have been different). The proportions of labor market mechanisms and labor networks are relatively similar here, just as in the case of mixed-ownership workplaces, as well as other workplaces, mainly cooperatives. In the state sector, which is supposedly governed by classic bureaucratic rules, especially formalism and impartiality, a clear predominance of institutionalized recruitment procedures could be expected. However, this is not the case. Thus, differences in the range only pertain to persons who independently started a business, and the ownership structure appears of secondary importance from this perspective. In the case of farmers, entrepreneurs, and self-employed persons, the distinction between the direct and endogenous mode is of little importance, and together these two channels account for around four-fifths of jobs on private farms and owner-run businesses.

Other Symptoms and Consequences of the Relational Character of Employment

The previous chapters have already shown us that the micro-networks of ego and alters are similar in terms of status attributes, but a comparison of employment experiences proves interesting as well. This question fits into a broad range of issues associated with the social contingency of opportunities. The chance that acquaintances will find good jobs is correlated, for example, by the fact that they often live in the same location, and thus are

dealing with a uniform demand for human resources. However, people can function within enclaves of structure that improve or diminish the chances of obtaining an attractive job, for instance, because the social networks within those enclaves regulate the flow of information about offers. It is therefore worth looking at the similarity of experiences of ego and alter respondents in our study (calculations will be carried out on an appropriate subsample).

The table below shows a clear similarity between the ways in which acquaintances find employment. In the subsample with alters, 20.7% of ego respondents found their jobs via formal channels (in the entire sample, this percentage was 18.1%). However, among their alters this percentage was almost two times higher (37.9%). A clear similarity can be observed in the remaining categories as well. It is relatively most pronounced in the case of direct hirings. Is this correlation associated with having the same place of residence and/or belonging to the same professional category? In the first case, the answer is “no”; in the second case, “yes.” Additional variance tests show that the preferred method of obtaining information differs only slightly between Polish municipalities (*gmina*): the F statistic for each category of employment source is statistically insignificant. On the other hand, it differs very significantly depending on the professional class to which the respondent belongs. However, controlling for this factor in the regression model shows that it does not eliminate the phenomenon of contingency in job finding between ego and alter respondents. In other words, convergence of employment experiences largely results from sharing the same sector and work environment, but this is not the complete picture.

We can also study the problem through the lens of its “reverse form,” that is, the “epidemiology” of vocational passivity. Do the unemployed tend to associate with other unemployed persons, and housewives with other housewives? We will be intuitively tempted to answer “yes,” but the actual scale of these effects is worth studying more closely. Among people who only perform household tasks, that is, those who have no job, no retirement pension, and no disability benefits, and are not actively seeking work, the percentage of close friends in the same situation approached 31%. Both in the entire ego sample and in the subsample of ego respondents with alters, the overall percentage of housewives and stay-at-home male partners was less than 4%, meaning that the probability of a

vocationally passive person being present in a close social network of people with the same status was almost 10 times greater. This is an extremely high ratio. Similarly, 20% of the friends of unemployed persons were also unemployed, whereas in the entire sample this percentage was much smaller: 6.5%. Both differences are, of course, statistically significant (in the ego+alters subsample, $n = 770$, $p < 0.01$). This is confirmed by an observation based on the results of the P-K study: “unemployed persons more often utilize individual strategies in job searching and are excluded from social networks created in the context of work” (2016: 187).

Table 4-5. Similarity between the source of information that helped the ego find his/her current job and the analogous source in the case of his/her alters (only currently employed respondents with currently employed alters, $N=338$)

Source of information about ego's current job							
		Labor market	Labor network	Direct	Endogenous	Other	Total percentage of alters
Source of information about alter's current job	Total percentage of ego	20.7%	44.7%	10.7%	18.1%	5.9%	
	Institutional labor Market	37.9%	17.8%	11.1%	17.6%	21.4%	21.5%
	Labor network	39.8%	59.0%	51.4%	44.9%	48.7%	51.0%
	Direct	5.2%	12.9%	27.8%	7.8%	15.7%	12.1%
	Endogenous	8.6%	6.2%	5.6%	25.8%	5.7%	10.1%
	Other (e.g., administrative)	8.6%	4.1%	4.2%	3.8%	6.7%	5.1%
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100

The above regularities show that not only the direct but also the indirect relationship between individuals and the segment of vocational activity is very diverse. The network of mediating contacts appears different in the case of those who often interact with vocationally active people; this is a cliché statement, but also one with important implications for in-depth understanding of the mechanisms of the work sector. If we conceptualized the notion

of network distance in regard to this sector, then in explaining vocational activity the construct would mean as much as education or past professional experience. In practice, it is a component of structural unemployment and constitutes another illustration of the fact that in the process of mutual adjustment of labor demand and supply, there is an “intermediary membrane” in the form of social networks. This clearly confirms that the premises of the Calvó-Armengol and Jackson model (2004) are valid.

The question about the relationship between the source of employment and the further fate of this employment can also be reversed. The route of matching an employee with a job is not merely a derivative of a workplace’s specific character; it can also be treated as a factor influencing the course of employment. Granovetter (1995) argued that this is precisely the case. In his study, people who found employment through personal contacts were clearly more satisfied with their jobs. Granovetter argued that information about a job obtained through informal channels is more complete than information obtained from impersonal sources. The employer usually knows more about the potential subordinate, and the employee also learned from a relative or friend whether, for instance, the future boss is neurotic and what the real chances for getting promoted are in a given company. Previous analyses using data from Poland also suggested such relations (see Sadowski 2012). Now for the first time, we can precisely confirm certain regularities on such a large, nationwide sample of the entire Polish population.

The table below contains coefficients from a linear regression model where the employment duration of a person’s current job was dissected according to the main characteristics of this duration. Unlike the cross table presented earlier, which showed the gross relationship between length of work experience and the method of finding work, this table depicts the influence of different characteristics (with mutual effects being controlled for) on employment duration. The constant presented in the first column, 13.9, is the average number of years of remaining in an employment relationship for people from the reference category, that is, middle-aged laborers hired through institutional channels by a state-owned company. Coefficients presented in subsequent rows indicate how, on average, the given characteristic affected the employment duration. Age and gender, used chiefly for control purposes, show

obvious tendencies: older people and men work relatively longer. It is worth emphasizing that age is simultaneously a proxy marker of total length of work experience: these variables are significantly collinear. The significance of work in the farming sector (collinear with working on a private farm) and in state-owned companies is also clear; in both cases the respondents' vocational situation is very stable, at least in comparison with the remaining categories. A considerably longer duration of employment in the present workplace as compared to the reference category was also typical for mid-level and senior employees. In this context, laborers in private businesses or self-employed workers (e.g., artisans) prove the least stable group in terms of their vocational situation.

It might be assumed in this context that the circumstances of starting work will prove of secondary importance, and without statistical significance. However, this is not the case. On average, persons hired directly and through "labor market" channels have the lowest employment stability. Regardless of age, gender, occupational class, and economic sector, people employed via "labor networks" retained their jobs, on average, for more than a year and a half longer than people employed through ads or labor offices. An even longer attachment to the workplace characterizes people whose employment was "endogenous" or obtained in yet another way (which, as we already know, is correlated with age). Thus, it turns out that the hiring mechanism has no less impact on the course of employment, where the main characteristic is length, than the type of work performed. It is worth noting that attachment to one's position may result both from relative satisfaction and from a lack of other perspectives, that is, chances of improving one's professional situation. Upward mobility is often associated with a transition between workplaces. Here, however, we are interested in a slightly different aspect than the objective improvement of one's occupational position. Rather, the point is that the source of employment is a component of one's vocational situation precisely because it binds one with the job more strongly regardless of one's satisfaction or the human capital one represents. Importantly, extending the model to include a variable representing high job satisfaction correlated positively with the length of work experience but did not significantly change the strength or significance of the relationship with the "labor network." If,

in turn, we try to explain the degree of satisfaction in an analogous model, then the labor network has a certain advantage over the labor market, but this difference is not statistically significant.

Table 4-6. Determinants of employment duration in all current employment relationships in a linear regression model (without entrepreneurs)

		Vocationally active (n=866)		Only persons who started their first job after 2000 (n=357)	
<i>Variable</i>	<i>Variable values</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i> ^a	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i> ^a
Constant (zero of the function)		13.9	14.4	10.3	12.6
Age	In years, centered (above the 44th year of age)	0.5	23.7	0.4	12.2
Gender	Men		(ref.)		(ref.)
	Women	-1.0	-1.8	-0.1	-0.4
Hiring mechanism	Institutional labor market	(ref.)		(ref.)	
	Labor network	1.6	2.2	1.1	2.6
	Direct	1.1	1.2	0.2	0.3
	Endogenous	2.7	2.1	-0.1	-0.1
	Other	2.8	2.3	1.5	2.1
Profession	Entrepreneurs	1.1	0.9	0.6	0.6
	Farmers	5.1	1.8	0.4	0.2
	Laborers	(ref.)		(ref.)	
	Service employees and office workers	1.3	1.8	0.4	0.9
	Specialists and management personnel	1.8	2.3	0.4	0.9
Workplace	Private farm	-0.5	-0.2	-1.3	-0.7
	State-owned businesses and institutions	(ref.)		(ref.)	
	Company with both state-owned and privately owned shares	-4.1	-5.0	-1.3	-2.5
	Privately owned business	-4.7	-6.5	-0.6	-1.3
	Own enterprise or self-employment	-5.8	-4.5	-1.1	-1.1
	Other workplaces	-4.0	-2.1	0.0	0.0

^a Value of the *t* statistic: the basis for evaluating the significance level of coefficient

^b Coefficients exhibiting statistical significance of $p < 0.1$ ($|t| > 1.65$) are marked in bold.

It might be assumed in this context that the circumstances of starting work will prove of secondary importance, and without statistical significance. However, this is not the case. On average, persons hired directly and through “labor market” channels have the lowest employment stability. Regardless of age, gender, occupational class, and economic sector, people employed via “labor networks” retained their jobs, on average, for more than a year and a half longer than people employed through ads or labor offices. An even longer attachment to the workplace characterizes people whose employment was “endogenous” or obtained in yet another way (which, as we already know, is correlated with age). Thus, it turns out that the hiring mechanism has no less impact on the course of employment, where the main characteristic is length, than the type of work performed. It is worth noting that attachment to one’s position may result both from relative satisfaction and from a lack of other perspectives, that is, chances of improving one’s professional situation. Upward mobility is often associated with a transition between workplaces. Here, however, we are interested in a slightly different aspect than the objective improvement of one’s occupational position. Rather, the point is that the source of employment is a component of one’s vocational situation precisely because it binds one with the job more strongly regardless of one’s satisfaction or the human capital one represents. Importantly, extending the model to include a variable representing high job satisfaction correlated positively with the length of work experience but did not significantly change the strength or significance of the relationship with the “labor network.” If, in turn, we try to explain the degree of satisfaction in an analogous model, then the labor network has a certain advantage over the labor market, but this difference is not statistically significant.

The above analysis can be criticized for being based on left-censored data. We only discuss existing jobs, completely omitting those already terminated. Possibly, however, the observed link between the route to finding employment and employment duration results, for example, from the fact that in the past it was much more usual to find work “through friends and family” (more employees still retain such jobs because these jobs were more numerous at the start, not because of their greater “longevity”). Admittedly, the table showing the differences between the category of currently

employed respondents and retirees shows that this is not the case; however, the residual category is clearly more strongly represented among older people. This can be variously interpreted (there are many indications that this category mostly includes cases matching the definition of administrative mechanisms; however, this argument is too weak to be decisive).

To make sure that the relationship between the route to finding employment and employment duration is not a derivative of the employment sector's evolution in an extended temporal perspective, that is, hiring mechanisms changing on a global scale, we can conduct the same analysis on a subsample of people with a shorter total work experience. Here, we will take into account only respondents who started their first paid job after 2000. Choosing this cut-off point is a compromise between the technical requirements of analysis (sample size) and objective need (continuity of hiring mechanisms). It seems that people who began their professional careers during the 15 years before the start of the study experienced fairly similar conditions of finding employment.⁵ The results of this additional analysis are presented in the second column of Table 4-6.

When we consider those who experienced a shorter exposure to the "risk" of changing jobs—mostly younger people—we see that many factors no longer have an obvious effect. The average period of employment in the current workplace drops to ten years; the importance of age, gender, profession, and workplace diminish; most of them lose significance, although the direction of relationships generally remains unchanged. It turns out that in these circumstances, the hypothesis about the importance of employment sources is relatively strongly confirmed. The duration of employment obtained by utilizing the labor network effect was, on average, 1.1 times longer, and thus attachment to the position can be estimated as more than 10% stronger than in the narrowly defined institutional labor market. Importantly, after filtering out people whose current job is still their first one, the effect remains almost unchanged and significant, which shows that it is not limited

⁵ Making this dissection more detailed by taking into account Poland's EU accession and the global economic crisis would cause the subsamples to be reduced in number below a threshold that allows the statistical significance of even substantially clear effects.

to first jobs. Analogous results will be obtained when the cut-off point depends on age, not on the moment of starting employment; the effect is positive in all age groups, and usually also statistically significant (in the case of larger groups). All this indicates that among the terminated jobs (censored cases) there were relatively more jobs found using formal and universal information channels. This thesis is in line with the theoretical premise that subsequently undertaken jobs are mutually contingent (i.e., that a person who once found a job thanks to social networks has a better chance of finding another one in the same way). Evaluating this premise would be the final step toward concluding that the obtained result is not an artifact.

Conclusions

In this chapter, I have operationalized the terms “labor market” and “labor networks” to find out to what extent they apply to the overall experience of finding employment in Polish society. As in the case of many other studies on this topic (see Ioannides and Loury 2004, Pawlak and Kotnarowski 2016) I found that a significant percentage of hirings take place as a result of the activity of informal and personalized information channels, while a much smaller number of hirings occur as a result of impartial, formalized institutional channels. This pattern is relatively stable and true both for hirings taking place in recent years and ones that took place much earlier. Significant differences concern specific positions and the particulars of the given job, but in each of five broad occupational classes, the “labor network” turned out to be a source of information that dominated in terms of frequency over the narrowly defined “labor market.” Furthermore, employment gained via personalized channels proves statistically more long-lasting, even if a range of other factors are controlled for. Finally, job-seeking methods are characterized by contingency in the micro-networks of close acquaintances: people who remain in close contact find employment via similar channels. The fact that vocationally passive people tend to surround themselves with others who remain outside the work sector completes the “networked” image of work. Here, supply and demand do not meet thanks to common access to impersonalized information, but because of particularized connections, especially through closer and more

distant acquaintances (e.g., from school and from occupational contexts), and secondly, through family ties (which, by the way, is another indication that so-called weak ties hold a significant “job-creating” weight, see Granovetter 1973, 1995).

In light of the above, Mikołaj Pawlak appears to be correct that “labor network” seems a more appropriate term to describe the entire scope of the phenomenon of employment than “labor market.” Developing this style of thought further, one could say that informal mechanisms do not “complement” the gaps left by formal employment channels; on the contrary, ads, employment agencies, and labor offices all compensate for the insufficiency of social networks. Where jobs and employees can become matched directly or through several steps of network mediation, the seeker and the prospective employer can find each other without bringing this relationship “onto the market.” Only the lack of such a possibility requires the use of a compensation mechanism, that is, the formalization and depersonalization of job searching. This is a unique illustration of the mutual embedding of various sectors and social fields (see Polanyi [1944] 2001). From a practical point of view, the issue may have important practical implications, particularly as regards institutional solutions for combating unemployment (directing assistance not only toward individuals but also increasingly toward entire communities).

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Chapter 5

Cultural Practices and Social Relations

Aleksander Manterys

Abstract

In this chapter the author examines how the term “cultural capital” can be used in analysis and reflects upon possible methods of operationalizing the concept. The first step involves defining cultural capital and its dimensions. The concept is then applied to the class system and status groups. Subsequently, the author addresses the performative aspect of cultural capital, that is, cultural practices. The main objective is to clarify a conceptual “foreground” and define the meaning and potential of key analytical categories to help construct a “map” of cultural practices, with the simultaneous indication of their rank, importance, and applicability to classes and status groups.

Keywords: cultural capital, cultural practice, distinction, taste, status group, social class, social networks, omnivorism, univorism, highbrow culture, popular culture

Initial Remarks

The term “cultural practices,” which denotes forms of human activity and ways to become part of social circles and networks, makes it possible to refer directly to the regularity of human behaviors. This does not mean ignoring causal mechanisms or the logic of systemic interdependencies. Such a step, in fact, would be pointless: most of these regularities constitute the “substance” of determination and interdependency. Using the term “practice” is intentional in the sense that this term draws attention to the circumstances or opportunities in which culturally defined forms of human activity are initiated. Social reality exists, to quote Simmel (1971) or Cooley (1902), both outside individuals and inside them. More precisely, it happens “in between,” so to speak, constituting a set of social relations ordered into structures, networks, or other aggregates, or specific patterns of coincidence. These patterns shape the actions of individuals in ways as simple as determining what is possible and sensible in a given situation and simultaneously

indicating what is “better” or “worse” in that situation in one respect or another. Thus, entering particular orbits creates institutionalized and legitimized paths of access to highly valued positions, making it possible to better strategize action. The dynamics of relations are simultaneously extant and constructed; the point is to determine how individuals in a given environment can exploit the assets inherent in the positions they occupy, and whether and to what extent they can take advantage of the structural opportunities—especially interpersonal and network associations—to be included in what they consider beneficial, appropriate, or desirable. The normative overtones of human action—the references to values—are obvious in the sense that every culture is internalized. However, shaping relations with what constitutes a common, class, or status culture—what refers to a palette of unique choices and valuations—is a social fact in the Durkheimian sense. The ritualization of human behaviors, both festive and everyday ones, is indispensable. It economizes choice and allows us to better channel energy that enables us to achieve intended goals or (if one will) to maintain a favorable and consistent image in the eyes of significant others. It makes sense to speak of a culture of common values insofar as there are opportunities to put those values into practice within different types of relations, from the routines of everyday life to disinterested communing with objects of high culture.

To understand this mystery, analysis in the categories of cultural capital must be undertaken. A key task is to determine how this capital should be defined. It is not one-dimensional, and even if we perceived it thus, a high level of such capital would be a static attribute, unrelated to other attributes of individuals. Cultural competence is something other than simple familiarity with what is considered privileged, highbrow, or better. It is the ability or art, confirmed in individual scenarios, of using “fragments” of culture to achieve and maintain positions that ensure the conversion of those fragments into other types of capital, and thus also a greater facility of transforming primary relations, that is, the power to shape their form and determine what is legitimized. In the broader perspective, it is the key component of social order understood as systems of superior and subordinate relations, vectors of human orientation toward oneself and others, one’s group and network milieu, a

source of regularity and simultaneously an analytic key that makes it possible to reconstruct patterns of human behavior.

Thus, the possible meanings of the term “cultural capital” for analysis should be carefully examined, along with possible scenarios for operationalizing the concept. This analysis is conducted in several steps. The first involves defining cultural capital and its dimensions. Then the concept is applied to the class system and status groups. Finally, the performative aspects of cultural capital, that is, cultural practices, are addressed. These stages of analysis lead us toward questions that will become the seeds of hypotheses. The first objective, however, is to clarify a conceptual “foreground”: to define the meaning and potential of key analytical categories in order to help construct a “map” of cultural practices, with the simultaneous indication of their rank, importance, and applicability to classes and status groups.

Cultural Capital

In the most general terms possible, cultural capital is a set of competences originally associated with participation in high culture, and thus allowing a clear distinction between those who are “above” and those who are “lower” and “unequal” in their knowledge of cultural achievements. Knowledge or competence in this regard translates into distinctive practices: visiting museums, galleries, and theaters, reading literature, and listening to classical music or jazz. All these practices signify competent participation in the consumption of high culture. Such participation is not only marked by pleasant feelings of cultural superiority but is above all a component of strategic advantage in the competition for better position in the social structure. Analyses conducted by Bourdieu ([1979] 1984, [1983] 1986; Bourdieu and Passeron [1970] 1990), as well as works by Bernstein ([1971] 2003), contain a convincing description of the advantages associated with the components of cultural capital and their strategic importance in the education system, which favors forms and practices of high culture learned at home. And this image, despite attempts to differentiate it according to the logic of conditions in different countries, and the authors’ insistence upon the special power of the French educational system (with its emphasis on art, the humanities, and social sciences),

is not showing any signs of fading. The “charismatic” character of high culture, which is associated with perfecting cultural *savoir faire* along with disinterestedness and detachment, is above all a component, so to speak, of the primary cultural equipment of people who grow up in an environment that makes the forms and practices of high culture seem natural, and simultaneously ascribes a value of legitimate “superiority” or “dominance” to that which is expressed in abstract terms—transcendent and detached—over all that is mundane and associated with entertainment or with the basic realities of everyday life.

It is, in a way, absolutely necessary to insist upon defining cultural capital in terms of competent consumption of high culture. Such a stance constitutes a good starting point from which to analyze how cultural capital changes in terms of content, meaning, and relationships with other forms of capital. In slightly old-fashioned terms, these changes concern processes of social adaptation to normative expectations contained in cultural patterns. The processes can be treated as actual practices, which show the dynamics of assigning and achieving, acceptance and rejection, or reproduction and transformation (see, e.g., Anheier *et al.* 1995, Bennett and Savage 2004, Bennett 2005, 2006, Goldthorpe 2007, Jæger and Breen 2016, Lareau and Weininger 2003, Lizardo 2016, Ostrower 1998, Silva 2015, Tramonte and Willms 2010).

As Bourdieu explains ([1983] 1986: 46–47), it makes sense to use the term “capital” if we perceive the social world in terms of historical accumulation and continuity. Capital is the strength inherent in objective and subjective structures, the potential for mobilizing social energy made concrete in the activities of acting subjects, and the principle that determines the rules of the social game. Capital can be accumulated, and used to gain advantages; it is distributed throughout different segments of society and, in a way, reflects that society’s condition. It creates a network of coercion and opportunities, determines the orbits and trajectories of social practices, and defines the chances of carrying out ventures. It is not given once and for all, although it exhibits relative permanence, which is a function of its accumulation and reproduction, as well as of its possibilities of transformation, and thus the creation of new scenarios of social practices. Furthermore, although capital is significant in determining the possibilities of functioning

in regard to material objects, including those that constitute valuable resources in economic exchange, it also exhibits trans-substantial characteristics. It can be transformed or transposed into immaterial forms, gaining the value of disinterestedness or non-instrumentality. The domain of pure disinterestedness is, so to speak, functionally indispensable for the practices of instrumental or economic actions, whether temporarily profit-oriented or expressed as the economics of mercantile practices. The totality of practices includes something which, although it may be expressed in money and have its price, is defined as existing beyond the boundaries of the economy, although it constitutes a real strength and principle of human activity, not reducible to the right to own and use private property.

As Bourdieu writes ([1983] 1986: 47–50), cultural capital is an institutionalized form of educational qualifications, and its different varieties or concrete embodiments can be transformed into economic capital, for example, in the form of payment for an artwork or the high income of a professional. This capital exists in three forms. The first, embodied or actual cultural capital, relates to long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body. Accumulating this variety of cultural capital implies effort, work, or training in order to acquire the competences of legitimate participation in culture: the inculcation and assimilation of what is accessible as cultural objects. This effort has to be undertaken by subjects as their personal investment or cost, a concretization, as Bourdieu writes, of a socially constituted form of libido that channels the endeavors of individuals who strive, often laboriously and with dedication, to achieve set cultural standards. The momentum of this process reinforces positive valuation of the process of inculcating and assimilating culture—of toil, effort, and dedication—as long as the objective is to fulfill imposed criteria. This form of capital is internalized as a significant component of a person (of his or her *habitus*). The palette of possible influences is a broad one: from education at home to everything the educational system has to offer; from one's family heritage to everything one achieves and adds to one's legacy; from things acquired without particular effort to everything that requires acts of sacrifice. This capital often also functions as symbolic capital, a marker of competence, authority, or other attractive characteristics. The profits are fairly obvious, although they come in a material and symbolic form, providing the owners

of high cultural capital with gains in the form of prestige. Uneven distribution of the levels of this capital reflects the logic of rivalry, a struggle (according to the rules of the given field) for reproduction and for higher positions in the hierarchy. Under these circumstances it is obvious that transmission of such capital is easiest in families or environments with high or strong cultural capital. This translates into differences in the age when such transmission takes place, as well as the length and effectiveness of fulfilling specific cultural requirements; an important factor in this regard is the possibility of spending one's free time on improving cultural skills rather than on meeting economic necessities.

The second form of cultural capital, objectivized or objectified cultural capital, includes cultural goods, material objects, and media. Their association with actual capital is obvious. The possession or appropriation of these goods and media may be economic or material in character, in the sense of owning them, or symbolic, which requires that given persons or groups of persons possess cultural competences, in terms, for instance, of handling complicated technical instruments, managing human resources, or reviewing an artwork. Generally speaking, an ability to exploit "means of production" exists and is employed according to its own laws, obligatory for all participants. These participants are rewarded in terms of domination, according to their degree of actual cultural competence (Bourdieu [1983] 1986: 50).

The third form is institutionalized capital in the form of academic qualifications. This form ensures the abolition of biological limitations and mitigates the aspirations of self-taught individuals; competences become formally or legally guaranteed qualifications, independent from their carriers, formally recognized and ensuring the possibility of selecting "the best candidates," who create a universe of institutionalized expectations as to material reward and prestige, that is, conversion of the basic forms of capital (Bourdieu [1983] 1986: 50–51).

Cultural capital is largely generated by transformations of economic capital (which is also social, in the sense of ties within a network of institutionalized relations based on familiarity and recognition, as well as reciprocal obligations). In this sense, economic capital is the "original source" or "root" of all other capital. "Trans-capital" conversions require the power of transformation in processes of social

exchange, which can neither be reduced to a purely economic transaction nor to the domain of communication phenomena. Conversions mean expending social energy: Energy which must first be accumulated, and “profit” in one domain equals “cost” in others. Thus, an adequate measure of cultural capital is the time and energy necessary to acquire or win it, as well as economic capital, which is the material or “fuel” for such conversions. “Time” means not only free time, which can be devoted, for example, to educating one’s children, but also the time and competences that may be bought from other agents of conversion. Transmission of cultural capital means its confirmation in terms of qualifications legitimized by the educational and academic system. These qualifications give access to valued, often dominant positions. Such conversion hinders the simple inheritance of monopolistic power and the privileges of classes and dominant factions. The educational system, as one of the instruments of reproduction, aided by the institution of a unified qualifications market, increases the importance of cultural capital in social reproduction, creating barriers to direct or simple conversion of economic and social assets into cultural ones (Bourdieu [1983] 1986: 51–55).

Culture and the Class System

Referring to Bourdieu’s findings, Lamont and Lareau (1988: 154–156; see also Lamont 2012, Lareau and Weininger 2003) note, not without reason, that the concept of cultural capital serves primarily to show the impact of culture on the class system. This impact shapes the relationships between action and social structure, creating the structural conditions under which the educational system reproduces inter-class power relations and symbolic ties precisely by transmitting the components of culture. The institutionalization of cultural patterns is not inherently discriminatory, although it often proves so for particular individuals; its primary purpose is to implement routines of everyday life. Cultural capital is no monolith: it needs to be described in several significant dimensions and aspects. Even if we insist on the generalization that it mostly consists of informal academic standards, it may (and actually does) denote the multitude of attitudes, preferences, behaviors, and cultural goods that are considered attributes of the dominant class. The focus

is not only on such attributes as informal knowledge about educational and academic institutions; language skills; and a style of behavior characterized by naturalness, creativity, brilliance, and a so-called distinguished manner; but on whether these characteristics are a part of cultural capital, or rather (like taste, manners, and personal style) a component of class ethos. In another definition, tastes viewed as a conglomerate of attitudes, preferences, and behaviors are more of an indicator and basis of class position, and their mobilization is intended to promote social selection. Finally, cultural capital can be pictured as a source of power in the technical, scientific, economic, or political dimension; power that guarantees or at least facilitates access to organizational positions and constitutes an indicator of class positions. Lamont and Lareau aptly conclude (1988: 156) that “[...] in Bourdieu’s global theoretical framework, cultural capital is alternatively an informal academic standard, a class attribute, a basis for social selection, and a resource of power which is salient as an indicator/basis of class position.” However, these five functions cannot “be at work” simultaneously, for example, the hitherto existing non-formal academic culture is neither (or does not have to be) a significant class characteristic, nor does it guarantee access to positions in organizations, nor yet can it be applied as a continuous variable to all segments of class structure.

This terminological polysemy is accompanied by methodological problems, as aptly noted by Lamont and Lareau (1988: 157–158). It is impossible to qualify this or that cultural practice—the “performance” of a person who emits cultural “signals”—without taking into account that person’s general cultural capital, which in turn should be framed in terms of the standards of the person’s environment. This also entails the necessity to discover the rank or value of individual systems, their “encodement” in the cultural resources of the individual’s environment, and to determine which of them indicate exclusivity and which are in common use, without signifying a status distinction. Although identification of lifestyles and preferences is a relatively simple task, the explanatory power of such identification is usually limited to defining the components of cultural consumption, of life necessities in the sense of clothing, food and equipment, entertainment, valued personal qualities, and ethical preferences. However, the marker of cultural legitimacy is not embedded in separate components of lifestyle, but rather

stated and confirmed in structural binary oppositions that, taken together, constitute a network of relations: high/low, elegant/vulgar, aesthetic/ useful. It is, as Bourdieu himself wrote ([1979] 1984: 244–256), a social space of symbolic struggles or skirmishes, in which the opponents strive both to appropriate distinctive tokens of superiority or supremacy, and to mark their opponents as “popular,” “low,” “vulgar,” or “common.” Lamont and Lareau (1988: 157–158) note, not without reason, that an answer focused on relations gives rise to further problems, starting with an existentially utterly improbable vision of a quasi-market where cultural practices are constantly being compared or collated due to the internal differences between those belonging to the upper class—for example, differences in how intellectuals and businesspeople rank the goods of high culture (not to mention further differences within each category)—with the implicit assumption that the lower classes are not autonomous in defining their own standards, and the necessary conclusion that some intra-class standards and norms exhibit relative autonomy.

The definition of cultural capital formulated by Lamont and Lareau (1988: 156–157) emphasizes high-status cultural signals: attitudes, preferences, formal knowledge, behaviors, and goods which are institutionalized and thus widely shared, and which can serve as instruments of exclusion from certain activities and resources, and preclude participation in high-status groups. Such self-limitation alleviates terminological confusion or polysemy, but retains a structuralist orientation of analysis. Naturally, human individuals do not disappear from view; they are characterized in the frames of a structured process of signaling or self-presentation as the owners or carriers of a high level of cultural capital. The key issues are knowledge about what is important (attitudes), how it should be consumed and evaluated (formal knowledge), how to select what is better and why it is better (preferences and attitudes), how to maintain the canons of good taste while consuming (behavior and attitude), and the value associated with possessing a specific type of goods. All this is true for the oft-cited analyses of wine consumption, but also pertains to possession of luxury goods, to a healthy lifestyle and staying fit, conversational competence and appropriate behavior manifested in different situations, academic or expert knowledge, thorough education, or tasteful aesthetic sensitivity.

These or other signals, although relating to individuals, are status markers inasmuch as they are institutionalized and constitute a common reference point for a broader group whose members rank specific signals relatively unequivocally as components of a legitimized culture, for example, in terms of what is important, prestigious, and worthy of respect. The important point is that everything considered “prestigious” defines the level of status expectations and controls access to high-status positions, just as everything considered “respectable” excludes lower-class persons from participating in middle-class practices (Lamont and Lareau 1988: 157). Putting it differently, the dominant group’s cultural capital is not only an instrument of classification, but also an identifier of status or rank in some superindividual dimension (interpersonal, intergroup, or interclass). In this sense, it defines places in the space of social positions—closeness and distance, privilege—but also the possibility of “jumping” into the orbit that frames the possible trajectories of higher status holders. Exclusion affects not only those who are “lower” in status but also those who occupy equivalent positions. Moreover, the problem is not only Veblen’s conspicuous consumption but the many signals that are learned, embodied as habitus dispositions, and function like automatic motor behaviors.

According to Lamont and Lareau (1988: 158–159), in Bourdieu’s works exclusion takes four main forms. The first is autoelimination—that is, deciding that one lacks the competences necessary to join particular groups or milieus, usually because of insufficient familiarity with certain cultural norms—meaning that the level of one’s aspirations is adjusted to one’s perception of the chances of success. The second is excessively strict selection, that is, a situation where individuals who lack valued cultural resources are required to fulfill the same criteria as culturally privileged individuals. This forces the culturally “weaker” individuals to expend more energy. The third form, relegation, is a situation where culturally disadvantaged individuals do not achieve expected positions despite efforts to do so, and end up with a feeling of loss associated with a failed investment in education. These three previously characterized forms of exclusion are indirect, whereas the fourth form is direct and stems “[...] from ‘elective affinities’

based on similarities in taste (with which Weber was mostly concerned)" (Lamont and Lareau 1988: 159).

The above distinctions are important because they allow us to discuss the power associated with cultural capital. Exclusion, along with symbolic imposition, shapes human activities, legitimizing the recognition of specific cultural forms and practices as superior, and simultaneously establishing institutional regulations regarding behavior and access to resources. This type of control is considered natural, "objective" or neutral, and constitutes a source of symbolic violence. Other aspects of power pertain to the possibility of utilizing cultural capital in the process of conversion to other forms of capital. This is where another of Bourdieu's presuppositions appears. Although the metaphor of an ideal market is an obvious one, complete with maximizing resources and treating different types of capital as generalized exchange media, the issue cannot be simplified to economic narratives or material "payoffs." The strength of Bourdieu's thought lies in focusing on the conversion of cultural capital into symbolic capital, that is, resources associated with legitimization and prestige. This gives rise to further complications when one is dealing with societies in which cultural consensus is weak or diffuse and fragmented.

If we assume that cultural capital can still serve as an instrument of distinction, then deciding what it consists of, in the sense of privileged and legitimized bundles of cultural practices, becomes necessary. The initial operation is to determine how often practices "traditionally" seen as belonging within the sphere of high culture are chosen. It is necessary to ascertain what constitutes the "signals" of high cultural status, which can be transformed into successes or profits on the organizational level: from schools to organizations that give access to highly valued positions. The first task is to determine the number of choices from a range of binary oppositions between options classified as "high" and "low," in order to compare them with analogous choices made in other countries and in a temporal perspective. This is a fairly rough—but also heuristically useful—way to track differences, predict trends, and determine whether changes are occurring in the same direction and with the same speed. The next step is an attempt to sort these choices into bundles, with the same intention as before, that is, to compare them and identify the basic vectors of change. The objective is to identify class profiles

or styles and the practices that accompany them, and to decide whether any of them indicated exclusivity in the past, and/or do so now. This reconstruction of styles means it is necessary to take other attributes into account as well, especially education and wealth, and to ascertain the character of contacts with others in order to identify reference groups and membership groups. In a sense, the question about the strength of conversion of cultural capital is being rephrased, both in the aspect of the “here and now” and in a comparative perspective. In a word, what do the canons of good taste consist of specifically today, and does education translate into inclusion in the groupings of the upper class? Or is such inclusion guaranteed only by certain types of education, along with strong family transmission of capital, reinforced or rewarded by the education system?

Yet another group of issues is associated with the question whether, and to what extent, the styles of the lower classes can still be perceived as dependent—defined as a negation or deviation from the style of the upper class. In other words, can we still speak (despite processes of inclusion and exclusion that change over time) of a dichotomous division between the consumers of high culture and popular culture, coupled with a fairly unequivocal image or profile of the upper class as possessing valuable resources and the lower classes as passive consumers of capital distributed through channels of legitimate and privileged transmission and conversion. Or perhaps, to paraphrase Hechter (2004), separate circuits of class cultures shape themselves, with impenetrable boundaries and distinct, relatively autonomously defined standards of taste. Or maybe class distinctions become blurred, diminishing the role of cultural capital, whose possession is a component, as Veblen would say ([1889] 1918), of conspicuous consumption, a certain pretense rooted not in cultural competence but in the “hard” markers of wealth and membership in the elite. Regardless of all this, it is necessary to determine an individual’s “place” in social networks, his or her membership (or aspirations to membership) in the ones considered exclusive, and (analogously) whether, today, a lack of membership (or lack of aspirations to membership) in such networks indicates lower cultural competences and a weak position, or rather testifies to the development of alternative scenarios of fighting for position, the potential multitude of exclusive cultures,

or a certain cultural anomie, and also whether and to what extent the “networking” of individuals in general, along with homophily expressed by their social milieu, is shaped by the practical logic of exclusive cultural choices or non-exclusive ones.

Capital and Status Groups

DiMaggio’s analyses (1982, 1987, 1997, 2000, 2007, DiMaggio and Mohr 1985, DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004) draw upon Weber’s concept of status groups and the American tradition of research on status achievement; their starting point is to view cultural capital as an element of participation in status culture. Consistent with Weber’s intuition, such a view is accompanied by the belief that the development of a market distorts the simple mechanism of the domination of elite status groups: collectivities held together by personal ties, a sense of honor, common conventions, and a typical distinctiveness of taste and style. A common status culture (the content of which is necessarily arbitrary) consolidates existing social networks and monopolizes access to rare social, economic, and cultural resources. By creating a status sense of honor, the status culture indicates possible routes of participation in a status group, as well as ascribes respect and affect to that group, enabling it to respond to potentially any and all manifestations of social life. In Bourdieu’s terms, a common status culture enables reproduction; however, in modern societies, where symbolic boundaries are blurred, in the presence of multiple diverse significant status groups and status cultures, such reproduction does not occur via a simple reconstruction of the dominant structure and culture by the institutions of the education system. Membership in a status group is determined in terms of the shared status culture; it is shared by other members, who define one’s group affiliation in terms of a group cultural code. Furthermore, striving to achieve a status requires selection from a repertoire of status cultures and takes place through conscious choices or deliberations, but also becomes a routine of everyday life. Thus—and this is perhaps the most significant problematic shift—we should speak of participation, not of membership, in status groups, and view status as a cultural process. Individuals can demonstrate their participation in a prestigious status group by showing themselves in multiple interactional scenes as competent “users”

of prestigious cultural resources: from participation in a classical music concert, through raising children, to culinary preferences, to small talk at a bus stop. Processes of cultural mobility also play a part: lower-status individuals interested in climbing the social ladder have a practical interest in participating in a prestigious status culture, whereas both low-status and high-status individuals can become members of subcultures when, for instance, they seek specific experiences related to participation in a sporting event, or exhibit affective bonding (contingent, though not accidental) during participation in a “multi-format” musical event or cultural festival.

In other words, cultural capital is the ability to obtain the components of a prestigious class culture, both in the dimension of reproduction and in the dimension of cultural mobility. This means a necessity to determine what, in fact, constitutes prestigious cultural practices, as well as whether (and to what extent) we can speak of a common cultural “currency,” an attribute of elites or prestigious status groups. From the technical perspective, individuals’ attitudes to prestigious forms of activity (including the self-esteem of being a cultured person), types and frequency of activities, and the scope of information (knowledge about forms and practices considered prestigious, and familiarity with them) need to be identified. DiMaggio (1987) writes that participation in these forms and practices occurs according to patterns of artistic consumption and production. Each of these patterns co-creates the cultural profile of society. It is a diversification into institutionally related genres, reflects the prestige hierarchy of particular genres, determines the scope of universality or differentiation among the segments of individual groups, and tells whether and to what extent the boundaries between particular genres are ritualized. Each of these dimensions contains a cognitive element and an organizational one. A high level of differentiation means a multitude of clearly defined genres and strong segmentation between the respective sections of the social world. Strong hierarchization is reflected in prestige ranking and in inequality of resources. Universality means homogeneity of the modes of recognition and classification, as well as homogeneity of distribution on the national level. Strong ritualization means a multitude of separate tastes that create barriers to “inter-genre” cultural mobility. Taste as a form of ritual identification simultaneously

makes it possible to determine which types of social relations can be based on trust, and thus facilitate mobilization and the achievement of prestigious “awards,” that is, the advantageous conversion of cultural capital. However, ritualization processes take place in an environment that encompasses several systems of classification: commercial, professional, and administrative. These systems provide coordinates for individual practices, from increasing demand to the policy of public agencies. There is thus an entire conglomeration of changes occurring in parallel: uniformization that leads to the development of a national elite, expansion of the popular art industry, the emergence of relatively autonomous and strongly competitive art worlds, and finally the impact of state policies and the growing popularity of higher education.

The combination of these processes does not necessarily lead to the equivalence of cultural narratives in terms of a melting pot or populist omnivorism. However, it gives rise to significant changes in cultural capital. These phenomena are not unique to America or Europe. Generally speaking, they involve the decline or significantly diminished rank of highbrow art, along with the diminished effectiveness of academic and non-profit institutions in competition for time and tastes in the face of the commercial expansion of popular art and easier access to art via the Internet and cable or satellite television. When the boundaries between highbrow art and popular art become blurred, institutional changes occur, for example, in the form of new university majors and courses, or a new formula of concerts, exhibitions, and galleries. Certain subgenres of popular culture are thus increasingly perceived as equal in value to works of highbrow art. And finally, all this constitutes the phenomenon of omnivorism: the need and competence to participate in almost the entire gamut of culture: in high culture, popular culture, and everything in between. Such omnivorism causes increased participation in heterogeneous social networks (DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004).

DiMaggio’s scientific research program (2007) is something more than merely the operationalization of cultural capital in the rigorous frames of the “Wisconsin model.” Above all, it is a certain problematic shift in the direction of status groups and status cultures, which constitute (roughly speaking) an equivalent of class fractions or factions in Bourdieu’s model. The aim of this shift

is to show the “fine-grained” logic of social reproduction. Culture is no longer treated as a mysterious residuum (an equivalent of equally vague human capital). It is a resource coveted not so much by classes as by groups, who want to define certain cultural resources as particularly valuable, and simultaneously strive to impose their own definitions upon other groups, essentially securing a monopoly on legitimate cultural forms and practices. Quantification of the cultural capital possessed by individuals is not limited to the forms and practices of so-called high culture; it generally takes into account goods considered particularly valuable in a given society, and legitimized as such. The phenomenon of cultural capital is not reduced to the level of individuals; it rather enables their actions to be characterized in the existing institutional configuration, which can be historically variable or contingent, but determines the method of transmission and conversion associated with achieving a prestigious status. Moreover, DiMaggio goes beyond the frequently dominant optics in which reproduction of cultural capital is strongly shaped by the educational system (in the sense of intergenerational reproduction of family status, and consequently, systems of social inequalities and systems of cultural hierarchy). He demonstrates how tastes are created in society and how habitus, along with the expectations contained in it, relates to available mobility strategies and the possibilities for utilizing them in heterogeneous class environments. The process of achieving status plays a key role; it means not only “filling” a specific position and acquiring prestige, but also functioning in a status group, the culture of which is a source of solidarity and legitimate claims.

Essentially, if social reproduction ceases to be perceived solely through the optics of the “scholastic viewpoint,” it must be acknowledged that skills, competences, and qualifications transmitted by family and school agendas do not eliminate tensions between prestige markers and signals that indicate skills. It is absolutely necessary to link acquired skills with prestigious associations related to positions; this assumes that individuals have the power to convert cultural capital and that their actions are strategized, rather than being mere mechanical replication of cultural forms and practices and the methods of converting them into other types of capital (Lizardo 2004, 2006, 2008). Precisely this ability to consume cultural objects in the proper way (i.e., in accordance

with legitimate expectations) is, in a sense, a medium or common currency used in conversions and exchanges. Strategization means a focus on advantages or profits, access to prized resources; however, it is neither reduced to the selfish calculations of an actor, nor does it come down to viewing the actor as a puppet devoid of agency, controlled by an overwhelming blend of structural and cultural forces. The logic of an actor's conduct is practical, set in context; it is, so to speak, filtered through the predispositions and dispositions of habitus. The actor is "real"; he or she acts equipped with habitus, but is also able to strategize, to exploit the attributes of his or her position in this or that field, as explained by Lizardo (2005). The actor's "reality" (i.e., the scope of his or her agency and ability to strategize) is constructed and confirmed in the institutional world; historically, a special expression of this is the link drawn between the culture of individualism and agency—legitimate action carried out by individual people. Consequently, the contemporary stratification order is defined in terms of establishing legitimate agency, from the "lowest" form of selfish agency, to the highest, "selfless" action in accordance with universal and impersonal principles. This selflessness is imposed, already established in a way, and arbitrarily shapes individual judgments. As a result of symbolic violence, it is not an ever-present characteristic of human nature; it may be, and often is inauthentic, indicative of hypocrisy. It may conceal "selfishness": the drive to gain advantage in other fields of activity (Lizardo 2005, 2013).

Every action in the social world, even if it is performed in categories of selflessness (or any of its equivalents), is practical. It cannot be brought down to meeting predefined objectives; rather, it consists of participation in a certain game, defined by a set of rules. It can take place in many modes, from rational calculation to automatically, routinely, following the game's rules. In institutionalist terms, all the components of a "performance," from the practical ability to perform a given action to the game's rules and the participants themselves, are culturally established. The question whether and to what extent selflessness and acting in accordance with abstract rules can be considered arbitrary, imposed, and mistakenly recognized as natural is separate from the way in which actors place these components in their own scenarios of pursuing their own practical interests. In other words,

it is necessary analytically to separate the ontological aspects of culture (in the sense of its constitutive function) from its significative aspects (Lizardo 2005). The patterns of cultural immersion or engagement, of the appropriation and assimilation of cultural forms and practices are created “[...] as a *sign* of distinction or as a communicative act of ritual exclusion and boundary marking” (Lizardo 2005: 86). In this depiction, culture not only determines the boundaries and divisions between real actors, but also constitutes them in a sense, when they develop their identities, interests, and motives, and work out what it means to be a specific type of individual in the legitimate reality of the social world. Modernity imposes two modes of presenting oneself as an actor: in terms of the impersonal ideas of truth, righteousness, and beauty, and in terms of one’s own interests. Both modes, although differently ranked, are associated with the principles that define individual agency, equipping actors with motives and expectations that are recognizable and recognized by others as the causative concretizations of one’s ability to undertake a specific action.

Shifting the analysis toward depicting the mutual interplay of cultural forms and practices on the one hand and network relations on the other means recognizing the relative autonomy of tastes; cultural practices are depicted not only as content shaped by network environments, but also as resources that help create and transform network relations. In this sense, these cultural resources are a component of situated interaction rituals taking place on the micro level. In accordance with the so-called constructural model and the premise about homophily, cultural similarity increases the chance that social ties will be created, while the interactional positive feedback loop increases, in turn, the cultural similarity between individuals who use similar cultural resources. In other words, cultural knowledge becomes converted into social relationships, and this is simultaneously a step toward determining which types of cultural knowledge can be converted into specific types of social relationships, which of those types of knowledge serve as “bridges” and which as “barriers,” and most importantly, which ones not only preserve existing ties, but also function as a “platform” that facilitates social interactions, permitting the development and consolidation of new ties (Lizardo 2006: 780–782).

Linking two types of cultural consumption (highbrow and popular) with two types of networks (strong and weak), and assuming that tastes are shaped by participation in social networks, but also help maintain them, Lizardo (2006: 783 et seq.) claims that the tastes of high culture favor a denser network of strong ties, whereas the tastes of popular culture favor a denser network of weak ties. Two strategies of conversion are at play here, one particularized, the other generalized, and they have specific social effects in the form of networks of individual egos. In the case of high culture, these networks are strong—practically limited to exclusive local ties, in which cognitive and emotional closeness is particularized—whereas consumption of popular culture increases the density of weak networks, in which ties transcend local limitations. Furthermore, the social value of popular culture proves “safer”; such culture “bridges” distant social positions, creating a world of complementary cultural resources, potentially accessible to people and groups that differ in cultural competence and possess different levels of economic, social, and symbolic capital.

The next analytic step is to refine a conceptual grid which will better show the relationship between culture and action in the analytical and empirical dimension. It is necessary comprehensively to characterize enculturation, described by Lizardo (2017: 90 et seq.) “[...] as a process of internalization of experiential patterns encountered in the world via developmental learning processes.” Processes of memory consolidation make it possible to code and store cultural knowledge, which constitutes a relatively durable component of the repertoire of personal knowledge. This process refers to various ways of coding the forms of culture—their potential and actual dissociativity; one consequence is the possibility of activating certain components of knowledge without the need to activate others. In other words, certain formats of participation in cultural practices are superior to others, in accordance with their position in the individual’s cultural repertoire. The components of this personal repertoire can be assimilated in two ways, and thus assume two distinct forms: declarative and non-declarative. Culture is coded in so-called declarative memory systems through relatively scarce exposures to explicit, symbolically transmitted cultural content (speech and writing, as well as audiovisual codes, iconic symbols, and ritual performances). The transmission

and internalization of declarative culture, that is, values, attitudes, orientations, worldviews, and ideologies, leads to the development of a personal equivalent of the social resource of knowledge. The individual components of this resource, which are more or less abstract, describe and explain the world in impersonal terms, not directly related to the specificity of a person's experiences. Such a culture is distinctive, because it retains to a high degree a nearly exact compatibility with the material of the original experience of coding. It is an intentional culture, based upon typifications involving people, events, objects, or other components of the subuniverses of human experience. In its applications, it is "slow" or "deliberative" (though not necessarily "purely reflective"), subordinated to the linearity of narratives and sequences of motivation; it allows for consideration, evaluation, judgments, and categorization according to clearly defined criteria or rules. The actions of individuals are explained, or justified and rationalized, especially in the public sphere: from determining what is going on and why, through justifications and rationalizations, to the presentation of normative exposures and aspirations consistent with a dictionary of declarative motives (Lizardo 2017: 91–92).

Nondeclarative culture, understood as skills, dispositions, schemas, prototypes, and associations, shapes itself in a slow "learning" process, "[...] in the form of implicit, durable, cognitive-emotive associations, and perceptual and motor skills from repeated long-term exposure to consistent patterns of experience" (Lizardo 2017: 92). The difference between these two types of cultures is fundamental. Non-declarative culture with episodes of exposure is usually limited to a joint experiential structure that connects those separate episodes. The process of enculturation occurs on the subsymbolic level; non-declarative systems of memory store the patterns of physical and perceptual similarity. Learning is "slow," spread over time; it consists of creating habits and improving skills in subsequent, relatively numerous situations of exposure, and internalization does not require symbolic mediation. Moreover, "[...] nondeclarative culture is stored in the form of a complex multimodal and multidimensional network of associations between a large number of subsymbolic elements, each of which has a close link to experience" (Lizardo 2017: 92–93). This means it can be

applied immediately and in any situation, that is, activated in terms of acquired associations.

Both forms of personal culture shape themselves in relations with public culture, which is “[...] externalized in the form of public symbols, discourses, and institutions” (Lizardo 2017: 93), or more precisely: codes, frames, dictionaries, classifications, narratives, and models. Distinguishing these three forms of culture, that is, declarative, nondeclarative, and public, requires the analysis and study of three types of bilateral relations between them. The relations between declarative and nondeclarative culture should not be brought down to a war or constant tension between the cognitive (cool) and the emotional (warm). Both forms of culture are the result of double enculturation, and the relationship between them does not have to be strong. Their relative autonomy means that both are equally “cultural” and “cognitive” as regards their relations with public culture. Differences result from the mode of exposure and coding: “[...] culture becomes personal in a format that matches how it is encountered in the world without having to be transduced into a common code” (Lizardo 2017: 93–94). In accord with this principle of correspondence, coding is usually redundant, and both forms of coding are usually not bound closely together, although they overlap, and the coding method itself determines which one will be activated. The context determines whether this will be declarative discourse (know-that) or rather an acquired disposition or skill (know-how). Human action contains components of declarative and nondeclarative culture, of knowledge and skills, declarations and involvement, along with a reference to institutionalized declarative culture. This “space” for action encompasses everything calculated, controlled, and intentional, as well as everything that takes place automatically, routinely, and as a matter of habit. Linking cultural and cognitive processes allows us to distinguish four phases in the cycle of enculturation: learning, memorizing, thinking, and action (Lizardo *et al.* 2016). This approach is based on the conviction that two types of cognition exist, and cannot be brought down to a simple distinction expressed in terms of “cognition” and “emotion.” Cognition involves different types of processes: conscious and unconscious, sequential and parallel, symbolic and distributed. Two types of cognition have been described: “[...] Type I cognition is characterized by slow

learning, associative structure, and rapid, automatic, and effortless deployment in thinking and action. Type II cognition, in contrast, is characterized by fast learning, propositional structure, and slow, deliberate, and effortful deployment” (Lizardo *et al.* 2016: 292–293). This means that culture can be associated with practical action in two key ways: “[...] either via a reflective process in which action is monitored and controlled through a deliberative channel, or via an ‘impulsive’ process in which action occurs independently of an agent’s will and intention” (Lizardo *et al.* 2016: 293).

Transferring the emphasis to participation in status groups means, above all, a need to ascertain what goes into different group culture codes; in other words, what constitutes the core of status cultures. It is important to determine whether individuals demonstrate familiarity with a specific code through their various activities, and whether they can follow that code in various spheres of their activity. The main focus of analysis is transferred to the process of undertaking and shaping relations with one’s environment; not only the ability to be included in a given status group, but also efforts to win recognition of one’s position in the eyes of significant others and confirm this status in the routines of everyday life. High cultural competences involve putting knowledge into practice, with “smooth” transitions between various spheres of activity, while maintaining the distinction suitable for a specific position. It is not enough to multiply one’s profits or converse smoothly about a recently viewed theatrical performance; these competences also include participation in non-exclusive practices, in large festivals, folk festivities, supporting a football team, or other forms of participation in popular culture. They mean a certain openness toward the heterogeneity of network ties, and competence in initiating them, for example, in the sense of participating in subcultures. Competent participation in a multitude of practices requires familiarity with a common cultural “currency,” shaping the logic of one’s choices from a cultural menu, organizing these choices so as to maximize “sensations,” and simultaneously emphasizing “inter-genre” barriers. Such activities are countable and differentiate individuals according to their potential for participation in heterogeneous social networks. To use a very banal example: an academic’s exclusivity does not depend solely on his or her intellectual competence, but also on the ability to use this

capital when organizing his or her free time—not in the sense, for instance, of a simple boycott of television, but selecting programs and possessing the ability to rank them. An important question is whether elements considered especially valuable may be imposed upon other status groups, becoming part of institutionalized cultural forms and practices. It is necessary to ascertain what is considered particularly valuable in different segments of society and to what extent such an element becomes a component of the definition of the situation in other status groups. Empirically, this means there is a need to determine whether and to what extent taste is actually created in heterogeneous environments. And finally, it must be asked what are the markers of a given person's cultural competence in various status groups, which of these markers are considered "highbrow," and whether they "translate" into ranks expressed in a common cultural "currency."

In other words, it is necessary to determine what actually constitutes ritual exclusion and the creation of barriers between status groups, that is, different types of participation in social life. What is shaped by network environments and can function as a resource in creating and transforming network relations? Does cultural similarity increase the chance of creating permanent social ties based on trust? How is cultural capital converted into specific types of relationships? What "bridges" and what "separates"? Under the conditions of after-modernity, is popular culture really functionally indispensable because it creates opportunities to "demonstrate" one's cultural capital, emphasize one's (higher) distinctive status in relations with others? Which formats of participation in cultural practices are superior to others? How do network contexts predetermine the modality of action in terms of discourse or in terms of abilities?

Cultural Politics

The basic adaptation mechanism, often implemented by the authorities as an element of the state's cultural policy, consists of eliminating the barriers to accessing high culture, and creating equal opportunities through cultural development or programs of cultural animation. The latter can, roughly speaking, take two forms. The first consists, so to speak, of raising the level of practices

related to spending free time and channeling them toward high culture, whose image and typical practices are thus enhanced in the minds and feelings of a wider audience, turning high culture into a universal object and elevating its consumption above the level of the ordinary and common. This is, in essence, a tendency to universalize a certain snobbery, which is supposed to become a component of lifestyle, of a civic *savoir faire*, regardless of one's class and status affiliation, age, education, income, gender, race, ethnicity, and so forth. The most important point here is perhaps not whether this actually equalizes the chances of participation in high culture and increases the demand for its goods. The key is that one appreciates the charisma of high culture, one "knows" that this culture is "better," even when participation in it is limited to avoiding the shelves with classical music in a supermarket, or when people say they don't go to the opera because they don't own the appropriate attire.

Either way, by analogy with religious practices, a key component of cultural competence is respect for high culture. And just as in the case of religiosity, this respect can take many different forms: from a profound experience of viewing art to attending cultural events "because one ought to," or the shame caused by a lack of participation in active highbrow cultural consumption. Significantly, all this usually takes place in the buffer zone of cultural policy and business practices, which create demand for high-culture goods, and occasionally make them, somewhat paradoxically, "readily available," for instance, in the form of CDs with classical music stacked near the shelves with exotic food, scented candles, and California wine sold at a discount. The paradox in question is only ostensible. Producing and cultivating snobbery or a demand for culture does not automatically translate into internalization in terms of a true disposition toward action. Shallow pretense or feigned participation in leisure activities perceived as "elegant" or "elevating" becomes obvious when, after returning with relief from a classical concert, we watch an episode of our favorite soap opera or dance to the rhythm of disco music. In other words, the demand for high-culture goods is shaped by the realities of a world populated by Great Gatsbys, with the difference that most of them (as opposed to the literary prototype) do not engage in extensive self-deception (Bennett and Silva 2006, DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004).

It is not easy to study this “snobbery,” especially in conditions where goods are widely available while the criteria for choosing them appear blurred. However, it is possible, for example, to determine whether economic, organizational, or educational advancement really translates into increased participation in “snobbish” cultural practices: visits to the opera or theater, reading “important” books, interest in golf or tennis, choosing a better liquor, visits to fashionable restaurants, and the diffusion of components of such tastes into the routines of daily life, network ties, and transmission in subsequent generations. Furthermore, and just as importantly, will infrastructure changes in the cultural environment—for instance, in the form of funding to transform libraries into modern culture centers, or a state-supported cultural policy to build concert halls—lead to a “restoration” of high culture?

The second form of equalizing opportunities for cultural development involves the “appreciation” of certain practices from outside the conventional circle of high culture. Such actions diversify the palette of forms and practices considered equivalent in terms of legitimate participation in culture. Furthermore, they may be included in the categories of cultural animation, because (among other things) they mitigate the oppression associated with the reproduction of social inequalities—a kind of racism or cultural exclusion in conditions of an orthodox divide between high culture and mass (popular) culture. This is how, for example, the ennoblement of jazz music has taken place, despite strong reluctance on the part of representatives of critical theory, not just cultural “traditionalists.” This “entrance into salons” has also encompassed other music genres: from blues, through pop music, to rap and its variations. More generally, the same mechanism is also true for other forms of culture, such as film, comics, or fantasy literature. This is a radically different situation, which establishes a unique logic of cultural activity. To paraphrase Giddens, imposed and politically legitimized coercion is replaced by the compulsion to choose from a broad palette of cultural offers, or at least offers regarded as such. The result is a structural necessity to “compose” one’s own cultural menu.

An extreme form of this transformation can be “cultural anomie,” a state where the equivalence of various forms of cultural activity blurs the boundary between what is sublime and what

is commonplace. Such a somewhat ominous vision of cultural populism is conceivable, but it would be difficult to find any exemplifications for it. This vision assumes perfect egalitarianism and a vision of human nature in the categories of Musil's "man without qualities," or a world inhabited by Lenin's "cooks," able not only to govern a state, but also to create culture and shape lifestyles. However, the idea that cultural forms and practices should be diversified contains other presuppositions. The first relates, to a greater extent, to the elevation of certain forms and practices in the name of the cultural ennoblement of those who occupy inferior positions in the social structure. Participation in mainstream culture not only alleviates oppression, but also serves as a channel for articulating one's own interests and drawing attention to the dysfunctional exclusivity of high culture. The second presupposition pertains to the transformation of modern society, the departure from traditional canons of beauty and good taste, their transformation and revaluation, and the replacement of large narratives by the plurality of equivalent discourses.

Pointing out these presuppositions enables us to understand the nature of changes in cultural capital without getting bogged down in grumbling about "crappy contemporary art." The conventional components of cultural forms and practices either turn into one of many offers available within the system of legitimate participation in culture, or come to be included in emerging new hierarchies. They serve as a token of distinction, and in this sense their functionality remains unchanged, even though their content and the nature of their links with other lifestyle components are, so to speak, arranged anew. Participation in high culture, as such, becomes less significant, or rather takes place among other legitimate and distinctive forms and practices, which increase the significance of other domains of human action, especially those associated with business and science, guaranteeing educational success and the possibility of inclusion into the elite. In other words, in the conditions of late modernity a high level of conventional cultural capital does not necessarily equate to distinction; on the contrary, it can often become a token of backwardness when one is unable to use digital cultural records or persists in using archaic forms of cultural animation.

Defining the dynamics of changes affecting cultural capital is an attempt to create a map of discourses, to characterize their

codes and vehicles, and the rules of their coexistence and mutual interpenetration. As this map becomes more detailed, questions about cultural activities will make it increasingly possible to determine whether and to what extent this or that segment of activity is ranked higher, or conversely, is considered “more vulgar”; not, however, as a component of a binary dichotomy, but as a phase in the sequence of an individual’s actions within this or that social network.

Another widely discussed modification of the notion of cultural capital is associated with the thesis of omnivorism (Peterson 1983, 1992, 2005, 2007, Peterson and Kern 1996; see also Battani and Hall 2000, DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004, Grodny *et al.* 2013, Lizardo and Skiles 2012, Tampubolon 2008, 2010, Warde and Gayo-Cal 2009). A token of one’s store of cultural capital is not so much familiarity with the relatively narrow domain of high culture as the ability to navigate between various “pastures” of culture: both “conventionally” high culture and low or popular culture. Besides cultural “ascetics,” refined and disinterested opera and poetry gourmets, there are efficient multivores whose cultural digestive systems digest all forms of culture, while their civic competence enables them freely to choose the elements of their “cultural diet” and order them into distinctive sequences of legitimized consumption. Naturally, as in other cases, these preferences or tastes are primarily a characteristic of the middle class, or more broadly of the working class; however, in return, they influence the forms and practices of other classes and factions, and shape the requirements of contemporary education systems. In this sense, disinterested univorism and cultural omnivorism can be described as two separate aesthetic attitudes or lifestyles, at the basis of which lie distinct principles that constitute the tastes of social elites. Despite obvious differences, both unite the habitus of their carriers, delineating separate orbits and trajectories of cultural practices. Their aesthetic ethos is upheld in opposition to a lack of taste, while their permanency manifests itself in all significant situational contexts; it is an attribute of the lifestyle or habitus of individuals.

However, the phenomenon of omnivorism can be defined more radically, not so much as a component of a separate lifestyle, a functional alternative to the forms and practices of high culture, but as a marker of the—in a sense—ubiquitous practices of joining together components taken from various stylistic pools.

The difference is substantial. When styles based either on univorism or on omnivorism coexist, there is a certain harmony or consonance of the different chords of cultural forms and practices. In the second instance, however, it is better to speak of a multitude of stylistic offers, grouped into bundles that elicit stylistic shifts between what is high and what is low or popular. This means—if we refrain from explaining the phenomenon using the simple logic of bipolar psychosis—that it is necessary to develop the ability to control the putative dissonance of choices between univorism and omnivorism. They are not so much styles as taste profiles, the cultural equivalent of fusion cuisine. On the one hand, this is an effect of the “democratization” of culture, a flattening of aesthetic hierarchies, their diffusion; on the other hand, it may elicit unease, since a lack of aesthetic engagement is a fertile ground for cultivating propaganda or marketing, for influencing or profiling individuals. In the background functions a society governed through taste profiles assigned to different social positions. The social distribution of these bundles of tastes becomes indispensable as a component of political control, usually under the guise of cultural policies. Under such circumstances, aesthetic mastery is not proof of a stable identity but rather of the art of avoiding dissonance in sequences of trajectories of cultural practices.

The “democratization” of cultural forms and practices will inevitably lead toward the consolidation of social divisions, rather than toward the creation of equal opportunities for access to culture. Extensive accumulation of cultural capital will cause the appearance of capital leaders, trendsetters, and monopolists: expert omnivores whose advantage over others will consist in ready access to highly valued stylistic mixes—the ability to reconcile incompatible practices, knowing what is to be consumed, when and where, how intensely (and whether) to get involved, with whom to compare oneself, and how to evaluate oneself and others.

The logic of the above narrative is consistent with the logic of modern concepts of an inclusive society. On the level of political journalism, stylistic flattening or recognition of the equivalence of various cultural forms and practices appears to be the basic mechanism of including cultural outsiders in the main circulation of social life, and simultaneously of demonopolizing institutions of high culture and restraining the snobbery of social elites. This

is accompanied by a transformation of culture itself, and not just in the sense of trends, fashions, or artistic styles, but in creating alternatives or functional substitutes for previously existing (conventional) cultural forms and practices. Legitimization of these alternatives or substitutes alleviates oppression and creates new structural opportunities for participating in prosperity or viewing oneself in categories of well-being. I am not referring to proposals—simultaneously idyllic and ominous—to glorify workers' culture or folk culture through propaganda, or to prison song contests or galleries of paintings and sculptures created by the inmates of juvenile correctional facilities, but rather to the inclusion of those who are victims of "class racism" in the mainstream of social life. The so-called "ethnic deficit" is probably the most visible form of oppression affecting people unable to identify themselves with existing high culture. A person's share in prosperity is of less significance here than a feeling of being at home, of citizenship, and the significance of different values, which should be present on a par with other components of civic cultural capital.

Univorism and omnivorism, or rather the concepts that characterize these phenomena, do not go beyond the conventional logic of the dichotomy between high culture and popular culture. A negative reference point is the univorism of the lower class, since it ascribes power of agency to the upper class. Determining whether someone exhibits univorism or omnivorism only makes sense if we can distinguish different forms of omnivorism and show which ones mean greater heterogeneity and facilitate social integration, and which ones fit into the logic of utilitarian individualism. Is there a combined effect of two or more schemes, or "broadening" one's taste?

There is yet another set of issues worth mentioning in association with national cultural capital. The first aspect is fairly obvious and concerns the possibility of identifying with a country/state under conditions of pluralistic after-modernity: the feeling that such capital is shared by all citizens and represents the pluralism of society itself. The second aspect is less obvious, although closely linked with discussion surrounding the divide between high and popular culture. The canon of national culture must not enforce the domination of the privileged classes, or exacerbate divisions and inequalities; it must also contain components not associated with high culture

in the conventional sense. The goal is not only to replace stylistically archaic elements with ones that are readily comprehensible in contemporary times, but to carry out deconstruction in order to eliminate oppression or humiliation, and create conditions for undisturbed communication, as Habermas would say. The scale of such operations can be large or small, from correcting literary and film narratives in the spirit of political correctness, to deeper deconstruction, for example, when an author's gender (as in the case of Maria Konopnicka) does not evoke merely the image of a matronly writer of children's books, but is shown on a broader backdrop of patriotic activity and struggles with sexual orientation.

What, then, is modern national cultural capital actually composed of? How is it shaped? How does it bring together elements of high culture and popular culture, and how is it reflected in specific practices, from familiarity with its components, to including one's own choices (both festive and everyday) within its optics? Is it possible to detect the functioning of so-called civic capital, a conglomerate of references to various local patriotisms and the enculturation of the goods of national culture?

Cultural Practices

A direct reference to the notion of practice (and indirectly to a theory of practice) makes it possible to identify the origins of the regularity of human actions. Generally speaking, practices are what individuals do, exhibiting a disposition to act in a specific way and simultaneously indicating the meaning, context, or background of their activity. The significant element is engagement, a kind of immersion—not necessarily deliberative—usually routinely expressed in regard to oneself and others, sometimes in the form of sophisticated action, sometimes as a habit. Of course, there is no uniform opinion regarding the definition of the term “practice”: rather, the goal should be to identify rules and (consistently) reflect upon their genesis, impact, transformations, and how they are ordered into bundles of associations, sometimes forming hierarchies. Simultaneously, of course, this is an attempt to define the nature of the social order, as well as the relations between culture and other segments of social life (see especially Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and von Savigny 2001).

Literature usually mentions certain repertoires of rules that function in social space as categorizations of know-how, habitus, presuppositions, systems of reference, frames, habits, customs, skills, or conceptual schemas. Applied to culture, such repertoires are simultaneously a map and guide describing what is being dealt with, and what are the possible and legitimate orbits of meaningful action (Alexander 2004, Biernacki 2000, Kane 2000, Lau 2004, Lizardo and Strand 2010, Pickering 1993, Reckwitz 2002, Schatzki 1996, Sewell 1992, 1996, Swidler 2001, Turner 1994, Warde 2014). Among these “ways” are both abilities that define everyday activity (coping skills) and those that function, in a way, in the background, defining the profile or nature of being in the world, a practical horizon setting a general orientation, transcending the frames of the current context or situation of action. This means, essentially, that it is necessary to analyze whether, and to what extent, the background or basis is rooted in something non-normative and non-intentional, which can be characterized in terms of causes and mechanisms, or, alternatively, whether the basis relates to what is normative and intentional, needs justification, and requires naming the reasons that lie at the roots of this or that practice. The term “rule,” or rather its usage, makes it possible to analyze the actual circumstances of human action, especially if the concept of habitus is applied to practical understanding and skills that enable a person to conform with rules. This conformance with rules implies that “life forms” are standardized to some extent, and that members of a given group or community have an agreed-upon common reference system, a set of rules which can be equally well applied to the organization of a social meeting, a legal system, science, or highbrow art. And even if one insists on strategization, which accompanies the actions of individuals who utilize their own cultural resources in an effort to maintain and attain favorable positions (statuses), this does not mean some sort of “subjective freedom,” but greater competence and efficiency in complying with the rules that legitimize success and failure, inclusion and exclusion, in the rigors of an intersubjective practice or set of practices.

Defining practices as a set of routine activities embodied in the form of “habits”—from clothing, diet, and manner of speech, to artistic tastes—means bringing them down to the level of physical or bodily things. It is not mere mechanical reproduction of cultural

forms; it creates a basis for potential improvisation “around a given cultural theme,” without unnecessary deliberation. However, it also has a transpersonal dimension, based in organizational routines that make it possible to categorize people and their actions as either belonging in a specific field or not. Both take place in the impersonal arena of discourse, a system of meanings which is fundamentally necessary for meaningful activity in any institutional field and for particularized references of interaction participants. Discourses and practices are publicly accessible as symbols and rituals, not so much present in the heads of individuals as a product of the internalization of norms and values or existing in a space of supra-empirical ideas, but observable and defining the space of meaningful action in a specific cultural system. A set of practices constitutes the practical logic of action. This logic organizes any action as a sort of exemplification of this or that practice, which defines what individuals “have to say” when they are “doing” something. Thus, it can be said after Sewell (1992) that culture should be defined as a form of structured practice. Structure in this sense is a set of virtual schemas, which cannot be reduced to any of their particular exemplifications, “templates,” or “procedures,” filled with the actual content of resources. The relationship between structure and culture is a dual one: the components of an individual’s environment become resources as exemplifications or concretizations of schemas, which are instilled and confirmed in this way. Different resources are viewed as cultural “texts,” components of virtual cultural schemas. Schemas are “transposable”; their multitude and overlapping nature “reflects” the complexity of structure but simultaneously constitutes a seed of new generalizations and applications of various resources.

According to Swidler (2001), the multitude or polysemy of practices, along with the contradictory expectations associated with them, simultaneously highlights the “unevenness” of structures, both in terms of depth and of superficiality, as well as “power” in the sense of generating and utilizing resources. Practices themselves, just like the structures that “reflect” them, are ordered into hierarchies of importance, and some are more important than others in the sense that they help build and enforce those hierarchies, anchoring them, and controlling and organizing their functioning. This is true as regards choosing the standard material for forming

and using a given resource, the special skills required to coordinate the “preparation” of standard objects and materials, functional and interpersonal ties, and finally, references to the overarching or dominant frame of social organization. The last reference determines the range of the possible replication of practices, their transposition between situations, and specific “rankings” of the importance of individual practices in particular types of situations. Rules of this sort are not explicit, even though they themselves are part of the process of reproduction: the strategization of human endeavors takes place in a world where the possible ways of acting in a given situation—the particular practices—are defined by constitutive rules. “Reproductive success” is, to a greater extent, a derivative of the strength of public ritual than of internalized or embodied habitus, an arena for the activation of practices that show one’s bond with the community and the willingness of individuals to reenact the proper schema, which in turn is not explicitly perceived as a rule. In a sense, constitutive rules anchor practices in the realm of discourse, of possible activity patterns, designating the “nature” of agents and basic objects. For example, opera is defined as belonging to the realm of high culture, in contrast to agents and objects from the domain of popular culture. As Swidler claims (2001: 98 et seq.), these rules can either constitute the central axes of social organization, serving as anchors for broader domains of practice and discourse, or be an expression of antagonistic tendencies in the very center, or depend on the public ritual’s strength, which is clear to everyone in the confirmation and change of social relations.

Final Remarks

The above catalogue of topics associated with research on cultural practices is reflected in our empirical studies. It is important to work further on the issues that gave rise to the questions posed in the section “Participation in Social and Cultural Life” of the research questionnaire. The objective is, above all, to determine who participates in various forms of activity—from festive ones through actions intended to benefit the social environment, to more “everyday” forms of spending free time. Subsequent questions pertain directly to specific cultural practices

from a broad pool of activities ranging from what is considered high culture (e.g., opera, theater) to what is considered popular culture. It is also important to register activities related to other elements of cultural capital, for instance, links with tradition and patriotism. A significant number of questions concern television (both the length of time spent watching it and the types of programs). The question about the films known to the respondents also fits in this scenario, where the objective is to distinguish styles and ask whether (and to what degree) they are a component of various cultural tastes. Questions about book ownership and readership are equally important in this regard, as is the question that attempts to determine from what sources the respondent draws knowledge about current events. Answers obtained using this set of questions will provide preliminary information about whether the respondents' cultural activity conforms to the divide between high culture and popular culture, and whether participation in high culture is associated with other forms of civic activity. The subsequent analytic step is to compare ego profiles with the profiles of the alters indicated by the egos, and to determine the degree to which social circles are homogeneous.

Subsequent stages of analysis will include the relationships between different types of participation in cultural practices and the respondents' social positions. This will show whether and to what extent cultural capital can undergo transmission and conversion into other types of capital. The previously created "map" of relational references of cultural practices will be extended to include other elements of characterization, creating the possibility of a more detailed and multidimensional (or comprehensive) overview of the relations between individuals and their environment, both within social circles and social networks.

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Chapter 6

Common or Not?

The Cultural Practices of Friends

Jakub Wysmulek

Abstract

The aim of this chapter is to study the relationship between the respondents' participation in specific types of cultural practices and the cultural preferences of their closest acquaintances. This topic is important for understanding the relationship between individual cultural capital and social capital, as well as other forms of capital, which have been analyzed on the theoretical level by, among others, Pierre Bourdieu, his critics, and successors. The study allowed us to distinguish four basic types of cultural practices, which are conventionally denoted "high culture," "sports culture," "entertainment culture," and "community culture." The concepts thus defined were subsequently used to analyze the similarities and differences in their popularity among pairs and groups of friends. The results suggest that the most popular practices in the groups "entertainment culture" and "sports culture" have a "bridging" function. On the other hand, milieus that participate in "high culture," and also in "community culture," are more elite in nature, and the groups themselves are characterized by greater cohesion of shared cultural preferences.

Keywords: cultural practices, friendship ties, cultural capital, omnivorism, univorism, highbrow culture, popular culture, "high culture," "entertainment culture," "sports culture," "community culture"

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the relationship between Poles' participation in cultural practices and the nature of their ties with their group of closest friends. Both factors are strongly interrelated and constitute the basis of both cultural capital and social capital. These forms of capital, in turn, influence each other and largely determine an individual's position in society. Previous studies on the form and meaning of social practices have tended to omit the network aspect of cultural practices, either because of theoretical premises or owing to methodological limitations (Drozdowski et al.

2014). This chapter is based on data from the survey-based study of 2015 and focuses mostly on showing the relationships between networks and culture.

The belief that we choose friends or close acquaintances due to similar interests, attitudes, lifestyles, and values is strongly rooted in social consciousness and reflected in the saying that “friends are the family we choose for ourselves.” Close contact with persons whose life is ruled by other values is, of course, neither impossible nor rare. We are often connected by a common past as childhood playmates or schoolmates, by studying or working together. Work, in particular, provides opportunities for frequent contact and helps people become connected by facing similar challenges and gathering similar experiences. However, building trust and cordial relations in connection with persons whose preferences and lifestyles differ from ours is associated with certain emotional costs. It requires a degree of emotional work, the overcoming of visible differences, and a constant “investment” in specific relations. We can also expect that as time passes, the influence of common experiences during childhood, university studies, or work will diminish in favor of ties based on mutual understanding and similar tastes.

The preferences reflected in cultural practices constitute an important aspect of the self-understanding (auto-identification) of individuals in terms of group, class, and national affiliation. Personal identity, whether independently constructed and directly expressed or built upon routine and opposition toward the “other,” finds confirmation and reinforcement in everyday practices. It is, therefore, extremely important to study not only the declarative beliefs of respondents, but also their “everyday” and “holiday” activities, since questions about such practices can tell us much about those preferences and aspirations which, for various reasons, are difficult to express discursively.

This chapter, which is composed of several sections, is an attempt empirically to research certain theoretical problems associated with the concept of cultural capital, as previously mentioned in the chapter written by Aleksander Manterys. The first section contains six research questions pertaining to the possibility of studying the impact of cultural practices and cultural capital on the structure of Polish society, as well as on the nature and strength of social relations and networks that conjoin individuals into pairs (dyads) and groups.

In the second section, I briefly describe the nature of the data that served as the basis for analyses, as well as the analytic steps that were undertaken. The third section, which describes the analysis of research material, contains (1) an analysis of the types of cultural groups, and (2) an analysis of relations between the “ego” and “alter.” The first step involved selecting those cultural practices in which respondents declared their participation. Subsequently, we analyzed participation in the same type of practices among primary respondents (the “egos”) and their close friends (the “alters”). The chapter ends with a summary of the findings and with remarks on the issues raised in our research questions.

Research Questions

Contemporary social theory lets us assume that the simple classic division into the culture of the upper and lower classes currently has no empirical justification (DiMaggio 1982). Nevertheless, both individual experience and previous empirical studies indicate the presence of various cultural practices in different segments of Polish society (Drozdowski *et al.* 2014). The reasons are undoubtedly complex, and are both individual (determined, for instance, by the personal experience and interests of individuals) and structural (dependent, for example, on the availability of broad or limited cultural offerings near one’s place of residence). However, preferences and cultural practices also depend on social factors, from family and peer socialization to the conscious choice of friends. Therefore, it is assumed that individual cultural capital is influenced by the complex contemporary class system, which defines individual expectations, but also structurally limits the availability of the pool of cultural practices (Lamont 2012, Lareau and Weininger 2003). Furthermore, individual cultural capital is also strongly affected by the sphere of popular culture, which dominates in the public space and the media world, while on the other hand, society is experiencing subcultural fragmentation into a growing number of cultural niches, increasingly based on contacts maintained via online social networks (Bennett and Silva 2006, DiMaggio and Mukhtar 2004).

Theoretical analysis of the problem of cultural practices as a component of cultural capital allows us to formulate several

important research questions. We have attempted to answer them using the collected survey data.

First of all, are we justified in asking about the possibility of distinguishing contemporary types of cultural practices (Schatzki, Knorr-Cetina, and von Savigny 2001), and thus also types of cultural capital? What currently constitutes the canon of good taste in Poland? What do the privileged and legitimate types of cultural practices consist of?

The second issue concerns the influence of individual position on one's own cultural preferences. Are higher earners with higher social status more often involved in a particular type of practices, or do other factors perhaps affect their different preferences? Can we speak of a dichotomous division into consumers of high culture and popular culture, or are class distinctions becoming blurred instead, diminishing the role of cultural capital? (Bourdieu [1979] 1984, [1983] 1986).

Third, are we dealing with cultural univormism, that is, the isolation of certain segments of society from a given type of cultural practices, or do particular cultural preferences permeate various social groups, whose members are ready to take advantage of broad cultural offerings (Peterson 1983, 1992, 2005, 2007; Peterson and Kern 1996)?

Fourth, an additional question comes to mind in connection with the previous point: do people representing a higher cultural level (however defined) exhibit greater cultural "omnivorousness" than less "cultured" people? Can the practices of univormism and omnivormism, or rather the concepts that characterize these phenomena, be used to analyze the dichotomy between high and popular culture under the conditions of modernity (Grodny, Gruszka, and Łuczaj 2013)?

Fifth, if we are dealing with two types of culture consumption, that is, with high and popular culture, does the former correspond to a dense network of strong local social ties and the latter to a dense network of weak superlocal ties (Lizardo 2006: 783 et seq.)?

Sixth, does cultural similarity increase the chance of creating permanent social ties based on trust? In other words, do shared cultural tastes contribute to strong and long-lasting relationships? Or are those relationships made more valuable by a certain degree of variety, providing a broader palette of sensory and intellectual experiences?

Data and Methodology

The analyses presented here were conducted on the basis of data gathered in 2015 during the “People in Networks” study. Interviews were gathered in several stages (for more information see the introduction to this book). In total, 2,913 questionnaires were collected. 1,712 of the questionnaires were gathered as a representative sample of the Polish society, the “ego” group. From 770 of the respondents we subsequently obtained contact information that allowed us to reach one or more of their close acquaintances and interview them using our questionnaire. Interviewers from the Public Opinion Research Center (*Centrum Badania Opinii Publicznej*, CBOS) interviewed a total of 1,201 acquaintances indicated by the first group. These 1,201 interviewees formed the “alter” group. In the first stage of our study (“analysis of the types of cultural groups”) a representative group of 1,712 respondents was analyzed. In the second stage (“analysis of the relations between egos and alters”), the sample size was limited to 770 people: the ego group which had indicated their alters. As shown by the comparison in the section below, this group has similar characteristics to the representative group. In our opinion, this is a sufficient basis for drawing more general conclusions.

During the survey study, respondents were asked to answer sixteen questions regarding their participation in various forms of sociocultural practices. They had to quantify the frequency of their participation in each type of practice on a five-item scale ranging from “I haven’t done this even once in the past 12 months” (1), through “once” (2) and “several times” (3) in the past 12 months, to “at least once a month, but not every week” (4) and “every week or more often” (5). The full list of questions and their coded names is shown in Table 6-1.

This table shows that significant diversity exists among the types of practices described, from competing in sports, through participation in cultural and entertainment events such as concerts, cinema visits or museum visits, to participation in mass or other religious services. Such an extensive variety of types of activities makes it difficult to compare them with each other in order to discover possible mutual relationships. In the first stage of analysis, activities were combined into groups of variables with similar characteristics.

Table 6-1. A list of sixteen questions from the questionnaire about participation in socio-cultural practices, along with coded names

Coded as	Questions from table D1 in the questionnaire
Foundation	A) You have participated in the activities of some formal organization, e.g. an association, union or foundation
Hobby	B) You have participated in the meeting of a club of interests or hobby organization
Game	C) You have participated as a spectator or fan in some mass sports event, e.g. a game
Sport	D) You have participated in the activities of a sports club or in some other form of collective, organized sports activity, e.g. a run or race
Course	E) You have participated in training or a course
Mass	F) You have participated in Mass or another religious service
Parish	G) You have participated in other forms of religious life, either in your parish or outside it
Cinema	H) You have been to the cinema
Festival	I) You have attended a festival, fair or parade
Theater	J) You have been to the theater
Restaurant	K) You have visited a restaurant with your family or friends
Celebration	L) You have attended public celebrations of a public holiday or visited a memorial site
Opera	M) You have attended a classical concert or an opera performance
Concert	N) You have attended some other kind of concert
Museum	O) You have been to a museum or to an art gallery
Library	P) You have used a public library

In the second stage of analysis, which focused on relations between ego respondents and their alters, the method of logistical regression was employed, along with other analytical tools. Basic structural variables relating to the respondents' gender, age, place of residence, education, and income were used as control variables. The remaining four variables relate to the cultural preferences of the alters. All variables were coded in a binary manner.

Independent Variables

To code for gender, the value “one” was given to women and “zero” to men.

Because of the great impact of age on the form and content of the cultural practices in which Poles participate, the respondents’ age was only coded in two categories. The first one represented respondents described as young people, that is, those aged between 18 and 39, and was coded “one.” The second, containing people aged 40 and older, was coded “zero.”

Because of the significance of educational capital in regard to respondents’ cultural preferences, the study only took into account the difference between higher education (complete and incomplete, i.e., “unfinished university studies,” “completed bachelor studies or engineering studies,” “completed master’s studies,” “unfinished doctoral studies,” “doctorate”), which was coded “one,” whereas all other levels of education were coded “zero.”

The place of residence, that is, the size of the locality where the respondent lives, strongly influences the available cultural offerings. It was assumed that the offering is much broader in large and very large cities. For this reason, the code “one” denotes cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, whereas “zero” denotes all smaller cities, towns, and villages.

The independent variable “income” was also simplified to a binary dimension. We assumed that to take frequent advantage of cultural offerings requires an income that guarantees a more or less stable life. Hence, respondents earning a net monthly income above 2,500 PLN were coded “one,” whereas persons earning less were coded “zero.”

Analysis of the Types of Cultural Groups

Table 6-2 shows the percentage distribution of the respondents’ responses to the questionnaire. The activities also exhibit significant variation in terms of their popularity. Over half (60%-86%) the respondents had not participated in most of them even once in the past 12 months. The exceptions were “mass” (14%), “restaurant” (29%), “festival” (32%) and “cinema” (43%). The cultural practices behind these categories are among the most

popular in Polish society. An impressive 40% of Poles state that they attend mass every week, which makes this religious practice unique among other items on the list of questions. In the case of artistic and entertainment activities, 44% and 41% respectively of the representative group of Poles declared that they had visited the cinema or participated in various kinds of festivals several times or more in the past year.

Table 6-2. Percentage distribution of respondents' responses regarding the frequency of participation in cultural practices

	Not once in 12 months	Once in 12 months	Several times in 12 months	At least once a month	Every week or more often	Total
Foundation	80	5	8	4	3	1,712 (100)
Hobby	82	3	8	3	4	1,711 (100)
Game	66	11	17	4	2	1,712 (100)
Sports	86	4	5	2	3	1,712 (100)
Course	61	16	20	2	1	1,712 (100)
Mass	14	4	22	20	40	1,708 (100)
Parish	84	3	7	3	3	1,710 (100)
Cinema	43	12	38	6	0	1,712 (100)
Festival	32	27	40	1	0	1,712 (100)
Theater	74	13	12	1	0	1,712 (100)
Restaurant	29	10	51	9	1	1,712 (100)
Celebration	67	17	15	0	0	1,711 (100)
Opera	85	8	7	1	0	1,712 (100)
Concert	60	19	20	1	0	1,712 (100)
Museum	66	17	17	1	0	1,712 (100)
Library	69	4	16	10	2	1,711 (100)

Tentatively, on the basis of questions from the study questionnaire, we can distinguish the following groups of practices:

- 1) associated largely with *community action*, such as participation in a pro-social, hobbyist, or religious organization (variables: foundation, hobby, parish);
- 2) individual *participation in artistic and/or entertainment events*, such as attending the cinema or a concert (cinema, concert);
- 3) *taking advantage of a cultural offering that requires more knowledge and a broader background*, such as attending

- the opera, the theater, a classical music concert, a museum, or art gallery (variables: opera, theater, museum);
- 4) *participation in sports events, either as a spectator or as a participant* (variables: game, sports);
 - 5) *participation in commemorative and entertainment programs* organized by the state or local authorities, such as national holidays, parades, local fairs, or festivals (variables: celebration, festival)
 - 6) *other types of cultural, professional, or religious activity*, such as participation in courses and training events, restaurant visits, participation in mass and other religious services, or using the resources of the local public library (variables: course, mass, restaurant, library).

Because the practices in question were so varied, both in terms of their nature and in terms of their popularity, we decided to limit their set to those that would serve as the basis for further analysis. We chose not to use four variables (course, mass, restaurant, library), because the meanings contained in them were difficult to assign to one of the five categories. The reason was different in each case. We assumed that participation in courses or training events tends to be associated with an employer's requirement that employees raise their professional qualifications, rather than being an individually chosen way of spending free time. Participation in mass or another religious service is voluntary, but also of a purely religious nature. The huge popularity of this practice in Polish society makes it difficult to match it to any of the other characteristic types of cultural activity. The question about restaurant visits poses a relatively similar difficulty. Because, on the one hand, over 60% of Poles say they visit restaurants several times a year or more, but on the other hand, it is difficult to associate eating out with any other form of cultural activity, we decided to forgo analyzing this variable in our study. We chose to discard the question about using public libraries from the study questionnaire as well—not because of the popularity of the practice, but because of its lack of association with other practices (as shown by preliminary analyses).

Next, an exploratory factor analysis (principal component analysis, PCA) was performed in order to reduce the set of the remaining twelve variables to a smaller number of interdependent variables. The analysis revealed the presence of five factors with different

factor loadings. The strength of the fifth factor's associations turned out to be negligible (see Table 6-3).

Table 6-3. Results of a factor analysis carried out on twelve selected variables pertaining to the cultural practices of Poles

Factors	Eigenvalue	Difference	Proportion	Total value
Factor 1	2.77	2.11	0.88	0.88
Factor 2	0.66	0.26	0.21	1.09
Factor 3	0.40	0.08	0.13	1.21
Factor 4	0.32	0.31	0.10	1.31
Factor 5	0.01	0.30	0.00	1.32

Rotation of the results in order to identify the strongest factors allowed us to better define those factors. To obtain a clearer picture, only factor loadings stronger than 0.25 have been included in Table 6-4. The fifth factor did not exhibit sufficiently strong loadings for any variable. As the data presented in this table shows, although four clearly distinct factors can be distinguished, some of the variables are strongly associated with two different factors. For example, the variable "foundation" is associated with factors 1 and 4, whereas the variables "cinema" and "concert" are associated with variables 1 and 3. These results are not surprising if we take into account the broad semantic field behind "foundation" as a concept, that is, "a formal organization...an association, union, or foundation." On the other hand, the variables "cinema" and "concert" relate to a broad array of events: from popular blockbuster movies and disco-polo concerts to art films offered only in independent cinemas in large cities and music intended for smaller audiences, such as jazz concerts, sung poetry concerts, or progressive music.

To obtain groups as typical of the given social segment as possible, we decided to distinguish four factors, taking into account only the three strongest variables. The resulting four factors were named as follows: "high culture," "sports culture," "entertainment culture," and "community culture." On this basis, we constructed new variables composed of three cumulated variables (see Table 6-5). Thus, factor analysis allowed us to redefine our initial premises, based on arbitrary categorization of variables depending on the type of the given activity.

Table 6-4. Rotation of factor loadings of the four identified factors

	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4
Foundation	0.27			0.44
Hobby		0.50		0.29
Game		0.45	0.36	
Sports		0.60		
Parish				0.38
Cinema	0.47		0.32	
Festival			0.42	
Theater	0.70			
Celebration			0.30	0.35
Opera	0.63			
Concert	0.38		0.41	
Museum	0.59			

Table 6-5. Characteristics of four new variables constructed on the basis of factor analysis

New cumulated variables of cultural practices	Component variables			Total (out of 1,712 respondents)
High	Theater	Opera	Museum	427 (25%)
Sports	Hobby	Game	Sports	579 (34%)
Entertainment	Cinema	Festival	Concert	1102 (64%)
Community	Foundation	Parish	Celebration	408 (24%)

To continue the analysis, we decided to re-code the variables obtained as binary values, where “1” would represent participating several times a year or more in a given type of cultural activity. This procedure enabled us, on the one hand, to filter out persons who participated in a given activity once a year, possibly at random. On the other hand, we did not focus solely on very frequent participation in the given type of practices, because this would limit the analysis to a small part of Polish society. The data shows that 25% of respondents declare participation (in at least one practice several times a year) in “high culture,” 34% in “sports culture,” 64% in “entertainment culture,” and 24% in “community culture” (see Table 6-5).

Analysis of the Relations between Ego and Alter

In the next step of analysis, we attempted to determine the homogeneity of social ties in terms of participation in cultural practices as part of the links between ego respondents and their alters. At this stage, the sample was limited to persons who had indicated an alter. This reduced the sample size to 770 participants. As shown in Table 6-6, despite the reduced sample size, the results are very close to the results obtained by studying the representative group (Tables 6-5 and 6-6). Further analysis of this smaller group of respondents is thus justified.

The aim of the study was to determine the extent to which the close acquaintances indicated by the respondents share specific cultural preferences and participate in a similar segment of cultural practices, as opposed to practices from the other groups.

Table 6-6. Degree of participation in the given type of cultural practices among respondents (egos) who indicated their alters, and among the alters themselves (in %)

Variables	Ego	Alter
High	24	30
Sports	34	48
Entertainment	66	71
Community	26	34

It is important to note that in this table and in the further analyses presented in this chapter, “alter” is a binary variable in which 1 means that at least one out of five or less friends mentioned by the respondent indicated the given type of cultural practice, whereas 0 means that no friend declared such participation. The table contains only those answers that confirm participation in the given practice. $N = 770$.

Data regarding the extent of the alters’ participation in various types of practices indicates that alters participate to a higher degree than the egos themselves (Table 6-6). These differences were most significant in the sports culture group (14%), but are also clearly visible in the other groups. Perhaps a greater degree of alter participation in sociocultural practices somehow translates

to the greater popularity of these individuals in friend groups. If these observations are confirmed, it would be a clear example of the transformation of cultural capital into social capital.

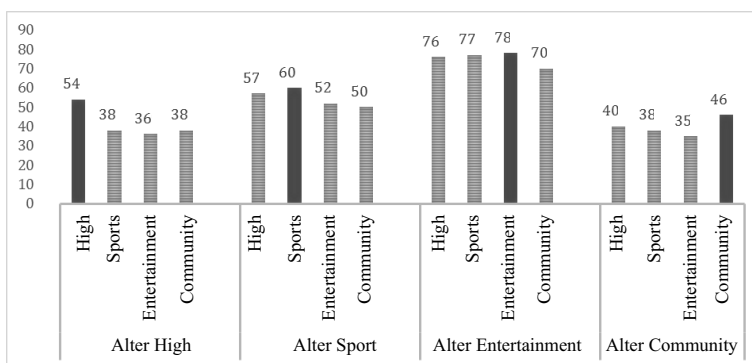
Table 6-7. The relation between respondents who participate in cultural practices several times a year or more, and participation of their alters in the same type of practices

Ego	Alter	No	Yes
High	High	86 (46%)	101 (54%)
	Sports	80 (43%)	107 (57%)
	Entertainment	45 (24%)	142 (76%)
	Community	112 (60%)	75 (40%)
Sports	High	164 (62%)	100 (38%)
	Sports	106 (40%)	158 (60%)
	Entertainment	60 (23%)	204 (77%)
	Community	164 (62%)	100 (38%)
Entertainment	High	325 (64%)	185 (36%)
	Sports	244 (48%)	266 (52%)
	Entertainment	111 (22%)	399 (78%)
	Community	332 (65%)	178 (35%)
Community	High	122 (62%)	75 (38%)
	Sports	98 (50%)	99 (50%)
	Entertainment	59 (30%)	138 (70%)
	Community	107 (54%)	90 (46%)

In further analyses, we present the degree of alter participation in different types of cultural practices, taking ego preferences into account. The analyses presented in Table 6-7 show that in every block, there is an increased correlation between the cultural preferences of ego respondents and those of their alters, but these differences can be more or less significant. The strongest associations are apparent in the high-culture ego group, where 54% of alters also participate in activities of the same kind, whereas in other groups, the number of alters who participate in highbrow culture is lower by as much as 16-18%. The community-culture group, where 46% of alters also participate, appears fairly strongly bound together too, but the number of participating alters of respondents from other groups is lower by 6-11%. Alter preferences in the case of ego respondents

from the sports-culture and entertainment-culture groups appear to reflect specific individual preferences to a lesser extent, owing, among other things, to the relatively greater popularity of these types of practices in Polish society. For greater clarity, the data is presented in visual form in Figure 6-1 below.

Figure 6-1. Alters participating in each group of cultural practices depending on the ego's cultural preferences (in %)



In the last stage of analysis, four models of logistical regression were constructed, one for each of these four groups, in order to better understand the extent to which the preferences of ego respondents depend on the preferences of their alters, and to better characterize these groups in terms of basic structural variables such as gender, age, place of residence, education and income.

Table 6-8. Four logistic regression models showing the probability of participation in each of four groups with structurally definite cultural preferences and the cultural preferences of their alters

		High culture participants		Sports culture participants		Entertainment culture participants		Community culture participants	
		Obs. No. 681 PseudoR2 = 0.13		Obs. No. 681 PseudoR2 = 0.07		Obs. No. 681 PseudoR2 = 0.13		Obs. No. 681 PseudoR2 = 0.03	
	<i>Values</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>O.R.</i>	<i>Z</i>
Constant (zero point)		0.14	-7.84	0.35***	-4.86	0.53	-3.04	0.35	-4.84
Gender	<i>Women</i>	0.99	-0.04	0.41***	-4.75	1.04	0.22	0.82	-1.01
Age	<i>18-39</i>	0.73	-1.49	1.27	1.34	3.11***	5.72	0.66**	-2.12
Place of residence	<i>City with more than 100,000 inhabitants</i>	1.80***	2.77	1.36	1.57	1.19	0.82	0.96	-0.20
Education	<i>Higher</i>	2.40***	3.70	1.66**	2.31	1.43	1.44	1.98***	2.96
Income	<i>Above 2500 PLN</i>	1.63**	2.01	1.22	0.90	2.96***	3.89	0.86	-0.63
Participation of close acquaintances in cultural practices	<i>Alter from high-culture group</i>	3.23***	5.20	1.34	1.44	1.73**	2.44	1.35	1.41
	<i>Alter from sports-culture group</i>	0.79	-0.93	1.14	0.60	1.75***	2.74	0.80	-0.99
	<i>Alter from entertainment-culture group</i>	1.24	0.98	1.51**	2.18	1.12	0.56	0.96	-0.20
	<i>Alter from community-culture group</i>	0.97	-0.11	1.15	0.74	0.87	-0.68	1.68**	2.52

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

The four models described in Table 6-8 pertain to four groups of respondents with specific preferences regarding art and entertainment. They provide some interesting information. The first model pertains to the most characteristic and cohesive group: high culture. It reveals that middle-aged and older people, those aged above 40 years, participate in this group more often. They are nearly two times more likely to live in large cities (more than 100,000 inhabitants). Moreover, persons with higher education

are nearly two and a half times more numerous in this group. A significant number of its members earn more than most adult Poles (i.e., a net income of more than 2,500 PLN)¹ (GUS 2016a). However, the strongest characteristic of this group is the presence of people with similar cultural preferences in its circles. Such persons are found in this group over three times more often than in the rest of the population. Within this group, close acquaintances who participate in a different type of cultural offering are much less numerous (sports culture) or similar in number (entertainment culture and community culture).

The second model, used to characterize the sports-culture group, showed that there are two and a half times more men than women in this group. Its members tend to be younger and more often live in large cities. In this case, too, compared to the rest of society, they are much more likely to have higher education. They are also slightly more likely to have a net monthly income of more than 2,500 PLN. Interestingly, however, this group is difficult to characterize in terms of the homogeneity of cultural preferences between its members and their close acquaintances. The alters of this group's members appear to participate in other groups of cultural practices to a similar extent as well.

The third model describes the largest group: entertainment culture. The most important characteristics of this group are a large percentage of younger participants (aged less than forty) and those earning more than the national average (in both cases, over three times more often). In this case, too, group members more often have higher education. However, the close acquaintances of persons belonging to this group relatively more often participate in cultural practices from the high-culture and sports-culture groups than from the entertainment-culture group; at the same time, they less often participate in activities typical for the community-culture group.

The last model characterizes people who engage in practices that are typical of the community-culture group. It shows that more men than women participate in this group. Its members are over two times more likely to be middle-aged or older. They are also two times more likely to have a higher education, but unlike members

¹ Towards the end of 2014, the median gross income in Poland was 3,292 PLN, which means a net income of ca. 2,360 PLN.

of the other three groups listed above, they are more likely to have a lower income. The close acquaintances of these individuals are also significantly more likely to participate in similar group practices and relatively likely to participate in high-culture-group practices, but less likely to participate in activities typical for the sports-culture and entertainment-culture groups.

Conclusions

The aim of this study was to pre-characterize the question of the homogeneity of social networks in terms of cultural preferences. The networks studied consist of trust-based friendship ties that conjoin individuals into pairs and groups. The study focused on one question from a survey asking about the respondents' participation in sixteen selected types of cultural practices, such as participation in associations, sports competitions, parish life, or visits to the cinema, theater, or art gallery. Due to the wide variety of these practices, which clearly belong to different fields of preferences and lifestyles, they have been divided into categories. The initial division into six categories was made arbitrarily, based on the similarity of the forms of particular types of activity. It was subsequently verified using exploratory factor analysis. Factor analysis limited the number of categories to four internally related factors. Using this information, four new variables were constructed, each of which consisted of three specific, similar activity types.

To characterize the people who clearly identify with a given type of cultural practices, we only took into consideration respondents who participated in those practices several times a year or more. Given the nature of the practices combined into four groups, these groups were arbitrarily named as follows: high culture, sports culture, entertainment culture, and community culture. The degree to which the representative group of respondents participated in each segment of practices proved quite varied. While about one-fourth of Polish society participates in high culture and community culture, as much as one-third and up to two-thirds of the adult population participate in sports culture and entertainment culture, respectively.

The research material prepared conceptually in this fashion was used to test the hypothesis that groups of friends tend to be relatively homogeneous in terms of their cultural preferences. To

this end, we investigated how often the close acquaintances indicated in the survey (the alters) declared participation in the same type of practices as the respondents who had indicated them (the egos). The analysis, presented in the form of a cross table and illustrated using a graph, showed that, first of all, regardless of the type of group to which the ego belonged, his or her alters tended to participate in the most popular forms of practices, that is, those from the entertainment and sports culture groups. Nevertheless, in each group the alters most often participated in the same type of practices as their egos. However, the difference between alters from the same group and from the remaining groups could verge on statistical error, as in the case of the entertainment-culture group, and to some extent, the sports-culture group, or they could clearly differ, as in the community-culture and, above all, high-culture group. This study shows that both relatively less popular groups show a greater tendency to be closed or elite in character compared with the other two, which represent more popular forms of activity. Thus, although the greatest absolute homogeneity exists among ego respondents and their alters from the entertainment-culture group, a certain greater distinctiveness is visible, above all, in the segment of society participating in practices from the field of high culture.

The logistic regression analyses carried out for each of these four groups yielded further interesting findings. In terms of structural specifics, the study showed that, on average, participants in the high-culture and community-culture groups tend to be older. Moreover, compared to members of the other groups, members of the high-culture group more frequently come from large cities and have a higher education. On the other hand, a unique characteristic of the community-culture group is that compared to the other groups, it contains more men and low-income persons. However, men are even more likely to participate in the sports-culture group (two and a half times more often!). Cultural practices typical for the entertainment-culture group are three times more popular among young and high-income persons, but gender and place of residence do not play a major role in this case. However, individuals with higher education predominate in all four groups (although to different degrees).

As regards the influence of friends' preferences on individual participation in a given type of sociocultural activity, logistic

regression analysis once again confirmed that they have the most significance for the high-culture group. In a situation where acquaintances take advantage of the cultural offerings of museums, theaters, operas, and art galleries, the chance that the individual also participates is more than three times higher than if they do not. In the community-culture group this chance is also significant and greater by fifty percent. However, in the sports-culture and entertainment-culture groups this relationship is almost invisible.

The preliminary conclusions that can be drawn from the analyses are that society is visibly culturally diverse, which is also reflected in the nature of the networks that join individuals. The issue discussed here undoubtedly requires more comprehensive research to yield more robust observations. However, we may cautiously conclude that, while participants in broadly defined popular culture constitute the majority, participation in this culture has less power to define the nature of ties between individuals. The situation is different in the case of social circles participating in practices belonging to traditionally defined highbrow culture and, to some extent, in the case of groups involved in formal secular or religious organizations. It can also be assumed that the more exclusive nature of these networks is influenced by the statistically older age of their participants. We can expect that as the respondents grow older, the homogeneity of their social ties in terms of cultural and ideological preferences will increase.

The study allowed us to formulate only partial answers to some of the research questions posed earlier. It seems that under the present conditions, cultural practices linked with highbrow culture in terms of meaning are not strongly associated with economic capital, and thus with social position. Sporadic visits to the theater or opera, to museums or art galleries, reflect a certain higher-than-standard level of cultural needs and aspirations, but are unconnected with income. Today, it is apparently the more exclusive products from the broad palette of popular culture and entertainment media that are selected more often by persons with at least a stable material situation.

The data obtained in the study shows that we are currently dealing with widespread univormism, although this univormism is mostly one-sided: from niche content to popular culture. From

this perspective, the world of popular culture does, indeed, provide a kind of “bridging” capital between different segments of Polish society, since opera-goers, sports fans, members of hobbyist associations, and active parishioners all participate in its offerings to a similar extent. On the other hand, the rich offerings of popular culture probably enable the functioning of distinct cultural niches within this category.

The thesis that highbrow culture is associated with strong networks and popular culture with weak networks also found some confirmation. As discussed above, people who participate in highbrow culture appear to have more exclusive ties—ones based on shared cultural preferences—than people who limit their interest to popular culture. Interestingly, the same observation is partially true for the category defined in this study as community culture. There is thus a need to verify the theoretical premises or the definition of “highbrow culture” and the range of practices classified in this category.

Finally, let us return to the question of whether cultural similarity increases the chances of creating permanent social ties based on trust. We can tentatively answer that this largely depends on the essence of such cultural similarity. I hope that future studies will help illuminate this issue, which is one of key importance in sociology.

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Chapter 7

The Significance of the Past in the Context of Social Relations and Networks

Andrzej Szpociński

Abstract

This chapter consists of three sections. In the first, the author presents the mechanisms that facilitate community integration by referring to the past. In the second, he describes how selected events from recent Polish history have functioned in the social consciousness, citing the responses from our study and other surveys conducted over the last twenty years. In the third, he discusses the results of the “People in Networks” study in more detail, presenting interpretations, hypotheses, arguments, and counterarguments pertaining to the links between networks as a prevalent feature of social life and the shaping of shared references to the past.

Keywords: social memory, past, social relations, social networks, Polish history, social consciousness

Introduction

Theories of social (collective) memory contain the premise that one of the basic functions of such memory is to integrate communities that relate to the past. Another important function of social memory—one I will not discuss here—is the legitimation of social orders (see Halbwachs 2008, Szacka 2006, Szpociński 2007). Integration helps create a feeling of closeness and community ties. One of the mechanisms of creating and maintaining this feeling is “networking” in social life: the fact that an individual’s functioning in a network of contacts with others significantly—and independently from other personal attributes—influences that individual’s acquired attitudes and competences, and these subsequently determine his or her preferences, choices, and behavior (cf. White 1992). Such an influence occurs independently of other individual attributes. As we frequently emphasize in this book, it is difficult, both from a methodological and a theoretical point of view, to prove that we are dealing with the actual influence of “being part of a specific

network” and not a configuration of other influences. The task is particularly difficult when it concerns the role of networking in regard to elements of social memory. Namely, the views, attitudes, and stances in question are not necessarily of central importance for the formation of individual and social identities. As a result, “being part of a network” might not be of central importance for their formation and persistence. Grounded in concepts of social memory, and extending beyond the scope of empirical material, the interpretation of identified relationships is particularly important in this context as an analytical tool. In the present chapter, too, interpretation plays a similar part. Here, I will try to answer the following question: if the past plays such a significant role in integrative processes on the macro level, is it also important on the micro level? Do references to the past arise in networks and persist in them, and is networking an effective mechanism for forming attitudes and stances in the case of social memory? For heuristic reasons, we should modify the question slightly, asking not only “whether” but also in what situations references to the past are important. Such a seemingly minor rewording means that more clarification is necessary at this point, especially regarding the above-mentioned importance of past experiences. The problem is not how to define this concept precisely, but how to make it operational: how to determine in any given case that we are dealing with the significance (or insignificance) of past experiences. On the theoretical level, the problem is relatively easy to solve. It is assumed that past experiences (social memory) are important for the individual when they constitute a significant component of his or her existential choices, rather than merely knowledge (information) about certain events. Difficulties arise when we want to move from the theoretical level to the level of empirical studies—when we attempt to operationalize the category of existential importance. In standard survey studies, in such a situation the key question is usually asked outright: “Do you consider the past a source of important life experiences?” Without raising doubts about the value of such questions, the new possibilities offered by *studying people in networks* must also be taken into account; presumably, these past events constitute a source of existentially important choices, and the way in which people close to us interpret them is not without consequence for our relations with these people. Events that

do not significantly affect our everyday existential choices also have little power to shape our relations with others.

This chapter consists of three sections. In the first, I present the mechanisms that facilitate community integration by referring to the past. In the second, citing the responses from our studies and other surveys conducted over the last twenty years, I describe how selected events from recent Polish history have functioned in the social consciousness. In the third, I discuss the results of the study "People in Networks" in more detail, presenting interpretations, hypotheses, arguments, and counterarguments pertaining to the links between networks as a prevalent feature in social life and the shaping of shared references to the past.

The Past as a Factor in Integration

Until now, the integrative functions of social memory have never constituted a research problem; they were simply accepted as an axiom. The integrative function of memory was (and still is) treated as an explanatory variable, rather than an explained one. Another characteristic feature of these studies is that they focus on integration on the macro level, primarily on the level of the national community, although the fact is usually not stated outright. Certain nearly ubiquitous survey questions pertain to the level of this community, such as: "In your opinion, what anniversaries should be especially solemnly celebrated in our country?"; "Do you think the history of our country contains personages we should be proud of?"; and "Do you think the history of our country contains events we should be proud of?" These questions undoubtedly refer to the opinions, judgments, and attitudes of a respondent who defines him or herself as a member of a national community. Consequently, the social reality to which empirical data gathered in such a manner relates is a reality viewed by the individual from a macro perspective. It is not, however, the only social reality experienced by individuals. Below, I will attempt to describe the macro-scale, integrative-disintegrative mechanism that appears in traditional studies on memory of the past; in this context, I will subsequently show the specific character of memory of the past on a micro scale.

One of the most important issues in traditional research is reconstructing the important events, personages, and artifacts

that are recognized or rejected (valued, considered a source of pride or shame) by a given social group (most often a national community). These are usually called the cultural (historical) canon (cf. Szpociński and Markowski 2014). The elements of a canon have a dual function: they constitute a set of symbols of collective identification and are carriers of values, ideas, and behavior patterns that are considered particularly valuable for the community precisely because they are canonical. Integration around a cultural canon can take place on two levels: the level of the carriers and the level of the values ascribed to it.

Modern nations are communities characterized by a high degree of internal diversity in many aspects: cultural, ideological, political, and so forth. Why, then, does social memory usually act as an integrating factor in such pluralistic societies? It is because the cultural canon (more or less what is studied using questions about valued personages and events) functions in social consciousness as a pool of resources. Individuals choose from these resources, organizing them in a way which is unique to each individual. The canon's hierarchical order, described in study reports, is an artifact, the average result of many different individual orderings. More detailed studies show that we are usually dealing not with homogeneous linear ordering, but with syndromes of tradition. In her classic treatise on the Polish intelligentsia's attitudes toward the past, Barbara Szacka (1972) showed that four syndromes of tradition exist in Polish culture: the tradition of fighting for national and social freedom, the tradition of state organization (in two versions: armed struggle and peaceful construction), and the syndrome of cultural traditions. Integration (feeling a bond with others) does not result from the belief that others are making identical choices, but from the belief that they are making choices from the same pool. In other words, one might say that the integrating factor is a belief that some kind of national culture exists (cf. Kłoskowska 1996). Adopting such a stance, it must also be assumed that integrative functions are not fulfilled only by "strong" canons with a strictly defined composition and clearly defined values assigned to individual elements, but also by open canons, where the canon contents are defined though the values assigned to individual elements (i.e., their interpretations) are uncoded, and by the weakest form of a canon: one where nothing is clearly defined, neither the content nor the values.

The only thing given is the belief that some kind of canon exists and that its elements are carriers of some values; the nature of these values remains to be defined every time (Szpociński 1997). A canon of this type can integrate even very diverse, pluralist communities.

The above-mentioned mechanism of integration on the macro level does not necessarily imply networking on that level, but does not exclude it either; networking can simultaneously strengthen or weaken the processes stimulated by this mechanism. However, there is a lot of evidence in favor of the hypothesis that networking can be very important for processes on the micro level. The key question is: around which carriers of symbols and values does integration occur? Existing studies adopt the general premise that culture determines our individual choices. However, having noted the increasing role of networking in social processes, we must also take our individual networks into account as one of the fundamental determinants of individual choices relating to traditions. Important arguments exist in favor of such a stance: namely, assertions regarding the narrative of individual identities and the role of autobiographical memory in its construction. Paul Ricoeur (1985) writes that being oneself is refigured by the reflective application of narrative configurations. From the perspective of my interests, Ricoeur's focus on the changeability (refiguration) of (re)constructed identities is not as important as emphasizing the narrational character of this process. As noted both by philosophers of history (Ankersmit, White) and by authors of biographical studies (Schütze, Kaźmierska), narration is not the "natural" creation of an individual; on the contrary, it has a cultural character. When remembering, i.e., telling (oneself or others) about the past, an individual utilizes interpretative schemas that function in culture, either modifying them or not. Taking into account the networked character of social reality means we have to reflect on the role of individual networks in creating narratives, particularly in the case of individual autobiographical memories, and thus also the broader social memory of communities.

Opinions about Recent Events in Social Consciousness

In the surveys conducted under the project "People in Networks," we asked about important events from the recent past, namely:

the period of martial law in Poland, the Round Table talks, the Catholic Church's role in overthrowing communism, the benefits from Poland's EU accession, and evaluation of the privatization period in the 1990s. Before discussing the results, I would like to present a short review, based on the current state of research, of the opinions that function in colloquial consciousness regarding these issues.

Fifteen years after the introduction of martial law in Poland, 65% of respondents believed that this step had protected our country from a Soviet invasion, while one third held a contrary opinion (OBOP 1996). In 2016, persons who saw no justification for introducing martial law were still in the minority. Such an opinion was voiced by 28% of respondents, whereas 43% considered the decision a correct one, and another 29% found it difficult to give a definite answer (TNS OBOP 2016).

There is also a difference of opinion regarding the Polish Round Table Agreement. In 1989, the results of the Round Table talks were evaluated positively by 60% of Poles (OBOP 1989). In a study conducted by the Public Opinion Research Center (*Centrum Badania Opinii Publicznej*, CBOS) on the twenty-fifth anniversary of these talks, opinions about this event remained similar: it was positively evaluated by 42% of respondents, negatively by 10%, 11% stated that evaluation was difficult, while 37% declared a lack of interest (CBOS 2014).

Opinions about both events are divergent, so there is a high potential for conflict. Evaluation of the Church's role in the process of dismantling communism also generates conflicts. In a survey conducted in the autumn of 1994, 36% of respondents evaluated this role positively and 33% negatively (OBOP 1995). Opinions about the Church's role in social life are diverse because of the period to which they pertain.

Less varied, and thus potentially less conflictful, are evaluations of the benefits from Poland's EU accession. In this case, positive evaluations decidedly prevail. In a survey conducted in 2012 (TNS OBOP 2012) the question "In general, do you consider our country's EU membership a good or bad thing?" was met with a positive answer from 56% of respondents and a negative answer from 11%; 29% stated that Poland's EU accession was neither a good nor a bad thing, while 4% had no opinion about this issue.

It is difficult to find earlier study data corresponding with the question about privatization in the "People in Networks" study.

The results of our studies ("People in Networks") are largely consistent with the examples presented above. If we take into account the answers of ego respondents, a high degree of convergence becomes apparent in the case of questions about the period of martial law, the Church's role, and evaluation of the EU's contribution to progress in Poland. Asked whether the introduction of martial law was justified, 43% of respondents answered "yes," 19% answered "no," and 38% selected the answer "hard to say." Asked whether Poland's progress over the last 11 years was due mostly to our country's EU membership, 72% selected "yes," 12% answered "no," and 16% "hard to say." Asked about the positive role of the Catholic Church, 33% of respondents agreed with the statement in question, 33% disagreed, and 34% selected "hard to say."

Asked whether the Round Table talks constituted a betrayal of Solidarity's ideals, 20% of respondents answered "yes," 31% answered "no," and 49% selected "hard to say." Asked whether the privatization carried out in the early 1990s constituted "a plunder of national wealth," 55% answered "yes," 15% "no," and 30% "hard to say."

As this section clearly shows, the results of studies conducted within the framework of the "People in Networks" project are similar to results obtained in earlier surveys. Thus, we are dealing with permanent, well-established trends in social consciousness. Equally of note is the high diversity of opinions regarding some of the events we asked about. This is particularly true in regard to opinions about the Round Table talks. Large differences in opinion are also apparent as regards the Catholic Church's positive role in the process of dismantling communism. The opposite is true for opinions regarding the European Union and the privatization that took place in the 1990s. Polish society's opinions on these two issues are largely similar. In terms of differences of opinion, the introduction of martial law occupies an intermediate position between the cases of the Round Table or Catholic Church and the European Union or privatization, but comes closer to the latter two. I draw attention to this because the observation holds important implications for my further findings on the role of references to the past (i.e., social memory). Namely, if we associate networking with acquiring views

(beliefs) because of enmeshment in a specific network of human relations, the researcher will find it easier to analyze networking when there is a strong diversity of views in the community. In situations where the majority of society holds the same opinion (as in the case of evaluations of the EU's role, and, to a certain degree, also evaluations of privatization and the introduction of martial law), it is difficult to determine whether the similarity of beliefs is due to participation in a specific network or to the fact that all individual networks are influenced by one "standardizing" message. From this perspective, opinions about the Round Table talks and the Church's role hold the most interest for me.

Consistency of Opinions between the Alter and Ego: Results, Interpretations, Hypotheses, Arguments, and Counterarguments

Studies conducted within the "People in Networks" project employed a unique method allowing us to gather special data. This issue has already been discussed in the introduction; thus, I will only very briefly reiterate here that our research was conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the questionnaire was filled out by the primary respondent, whom we called the "ego" respondent. In the second stage, we posed the same questions to people indicated by the ego as belonging to the network of his or her close acquaintances (not family). We called these people "alters." This mode of data collection allowed us to determine to what extent people considered close by the ego resemble the ego in terms of age, education, income, beliefs, attitudes, behaviors, and other characteristics. I treat the results of such comparisons as a basis for interpretations, conjectures, and considerations of the legitimacy of arguments focusing on the importance of networks in building co-thinking and sympathy among individuals. Although my conclusions are based on percentage statistics, I do not conduct advanced quantitative analyses. Instead, I try to understand and (in the context of my knowledge about social memory) interpret the homophonic and heterophonic nature of social memory in individual systems where the ego is the central point. I believe that in studies of attitudes toward the past, using such a method makes it possible to reach a previously obscure level of phenomena; namely, opinions about past

events, formulated without the pressure of the collective context that constitutes a perspective from which respondents in standard studies must interpret that past. Here, I ask whether we can justifiably interpret opinions about the recent past in categories of co-thinking and sympathy born from networking in social life. The term “past” refers to the most recent past, which we asked about in our surveys. I have assumed that the degree of homogeneity in attitudes toward the past, that is, the consistency of opinions among ego and alter respondents, is directly proportional to the degree to which references to the past arise and persist in individual social networks.

Subsequent tables present information about the convergence and divergence of opinions among ego and alter respondents. Alter answers consistent with ego answers are bolded for emphasis.

Table 7-1. The question of whether Poland’s EU accession has been the chief driving force of the country’s progress (%)

	Answers of the ego respondent		
	I agree	I disagree	No opinion
Distribution of ego answers	71.8	11.8	16.4
Average percentage of alter respondents who agree with the statement	74.2	71.4	66.7
Average percentage of alter respondents who disagree with the statement	11.4	23.0	15.0
Average percentage of alter respondents who have no opinion	14.4	5.6	18.4
Total	100	100	100

Table 7-2. The question of whether privatization constituted a plunder of national wealth (in %)

	Answers of the ego respondent		
	I agree	I disagree	No opinion
Distribution of ego answers	54.8	14.9	30.3
Average percentage of alter respondents who agree with the statement	65.1	44.5	51.1
Average percentage of alter respondents who disagree with the statement	10.0	23.8	8.0
Average percentage of alter respondents who have no opinion	24.9	31.8	40.8
Total	100	100	100

Table 7-3. The question of whether introducing martial law in 1981 saved Poland from the Soviet Union's military intervention (in %)

	Answers of the ego respondent		
	I agree	I disagree	No opinion
Distribution of ego answers	43.3	18.8	37.9
Average percentage of alter respondents who agree with the statement	50.8	42.8	39.7
Average percentage of alter respondents who disagree with the statement	16.7	33.7	16.7
Average percentage of alter respondents who have no opinion	32.5	23.6	43.6
Total	100	100	100

Table 7-4. The question of whether the Catholic Church played a key role in overthrowing communism in Poland (in %)

	Answers of the ego respondent		
	I agree	I disagree	No opinion
Distribution of ego answers	32.6	33.4	34.0
Average percentage of alter respondents who agree with the statement	41.4	29.8	27.5
Average percentage of alter respondents who disagree with the statement	30.7	41.0	32.4
Average percentage of alter respondents who have no opinion	27.9	29.1	40.2
Total	100	100	100

Table 7-5. The question of whether the Round Table talks constituted a betrayal of Solidarity's ideals (in %)

	Answers of the ego respondent		
	I agree	I disagree	No opinion
Distribution of ego answers	20.3	31.1	48.5
Average percentage of alter respondents who agree with the statement	30.7	20.0	18.6
Average percentage of alter respondents who disagree with the statement	23.7	43.4	23.1
Average percentage of alter respondents who have no opinion	45.6	36.5	58.3
Total	100	100	100

In my opinion, the comparisons between ego and alter opinions about the EU's role, privatization, and (to a certain extent) responses regarding the rationale for introducing martial law do not justify stating that the mechanism by which references to the past arise and persist depends significantly on enmeshment in individual networks. Ego and alter opinions can be highly consistent, but only in situations where the ego is voicing views widely accepted in Polish

society. Thus, there is little evidence that the consistency results from being part of a network. In a situation where the ego voices unpopular views, the majority of alter respondents disagree with the ego. In the case of the European Union, the unpopular opinion voiced by 12% of ego respondents is not shared by (on average) 71% of their alter acquaintances. In the case of the negative evaluation of privatization, 15% of ego respondents say “no” (an unpopular opinion) and only 23% of their alter acquaintances agree. Finally, in the question of whether the introduction of martial law was justified, 18% of ego respondents say “no” (an unpopular opinion) and only 34% of their alter acquaintances agree. The small numbers of interviewees do not, perhaps, allow us to formulate conclusions with absolute certainty, but to me, the direction in which interpretations should proceed appears quite clear.

The divergence between ego and alter opinions can also be hypothetically explained in another way: respondents may simply consider the past not particularly significant as a field of life experiences. Contrary to popular opinion, Poles as a society are not particularly interested in the past. In a study from 2003, only 19% of Poles declared a large or very large interest in the past, 38% declared a moderate interest, and 42% declared little or no interest. Similar results have been obtained in many other studies, including studies performed in 2016 (TNS/NCK 2016). One could take these hypotheses further, and assume that since questions about the most recent past carry a certain political load, the political sphere apparently has no impact on network functioning, or (in a more cautious interpretation, toward which I am leaning) the most recent past has no impact on the shaping of the political sphere. Putting it more simply, people are interested in present-day programs, not in the positions occupied by the activists of specific political options twenty or thirty years ago (or the past activities of those activists). Certain circumstances, however, indicate that counterarguments can be formulated against this hypothesis. I discuss them below.

We have become used to treating the past as something homogeneous. In studies, however, depending on the way questions are formulated, we may be dealing with various forms of a remembered past. The past described in standard surveys is usually a past which has undergone semantization, that is, it fits into culturally respected narrative structures. A semantized past is no longer a

simple report of what happened, but rather a report that has gained additional meanings, and in some cases these meanings become more important than the report's original content. The expression "additional meanings" may, above all, refer to the fact that past events (personages, cultural products) are usually perceived as the property (heritage) of certain social groups, and symbolize some values which are important for the given group/community. In some cases, those important values symbolized by events may fade, and only remain important because they are "ours." However, the above-mentioned additional meanings can be understood more broadly, as metaphorization. In such a light, semantization is much more than just political or community connotations. Drawing upon the works of Paul Ricoeur (1985) and an eminent Polish anthropologist of culture, Marcin Czerwiński (1997), I would like to contrast statements (thinking) in metaphorical language with statements (thinking) in discursive (protocolar) language. The rationale for using metaphorical language is that such language conveys more information. To explain, I will use an example. Snow has fallen. To tell someone what I'm seeing out of my window, I can use many different expressions. The expression "snow cover" is a "protocolar" definition, nearly devoid of connotations, free from valuation and emotional overtones, whereas the words "carpeted in snow" form a metaphor and evoke meanings not contained in the first phrase. A carpet is both a luxury item and a decoration, something not only comfortable but elegant as well. I could also say "snow cover that resembles a carpet because it looks like expensive fabric" (cf. (Czerwiński 1997: 13 et seq). The last expression, which, like the first one, is couched in protocolar language, best shows the difference between protocolar and metaphoric expressions. In protocolar language, something quite typical of metaphors vanishes: a feeling of the world's richness, shown, so to speak, in one snapshot. Something more is lost than directness and the strength of suggestion; metaphors change not only the image of the experienced entity, but also its quality. The difference between analytical and metaphorical expressions lies in the fact that not only do we speak differently of the entity, we are also speaking about something else, experiencing it differently. The difference is ontological.

Metaphoric expressions differ both from simple depiction using images and from simple verbal description. Metaphors and symbols utilize simple (primary) languages. They are built upon either images or words, and arise as a result of the incorrect use of words, their overuse, so to speak (e.g., the word “carpet” in the metaphor mentioned earlier). By analogy, one might say that social memory utilizes history, arising as a result of overusing it, and that history constitutes a primary “language” in respect to this kind of memory. In the case of social memory, the essence of metaphORIZATION is placing single events within the entirety of an individual’s existential experiences. This is tantamount to giving them meaning.¹ Thus one might explain why events that have undergone secondary semantization are important for network relations.

This theoretical digression now brings me back to interpreting the empirical data from our studies. In the case of the events we asked about, one possible marker of the degree of semantization might be a positive correlation between evaluations of the event and political sympathies (which party the respondent voted for). If we adopt this premise, the only semantized event would be the Round Table talks (and perhaps the Church’s role as well, but I lack sufficient data to formulate such a hypothesis). The remaining events have no such character; they are, above all, reports about the past with no clear references to the “here and now.”

Data shown in the table indicates that evaluations of the period of martial law have no obvious links with political sympathies. The same is true for opinions about the European Union’s contribution to progress in Poland and for evaluations of privatization, both of which are nearly unanimous. However, in the case of the Round Table talks, opinions about that event clearly depend on political sympathies.

¹ According to Gilbert Durand (1964), symbolic imagination is the human power that creates sense and meaning.

Table 7-6. Opinions of the supporters of different political parties about the period of martial law (low degree of semantization) in percentages

		Vote cast in 2015 parliamentary elections						
Opinion		Did not participate	PiS	PO	Kukiz	.N	ZL + Razem*	Total**
Introducing martial law in 1981 saved Poland from the Soviet Union's military intervention	Agrees	44.0	43.8	53.8	30.3	43.6	55.4	45.4
	Disagrees	13.7	25.3	16.2	26.3	24.3	14.6	19.8
	No opinion	42.3	30.9	30.1	43.4	32.1	30.0	34.8
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Taken together, due to small numbers.

** Including voters who voted for the remaining parties.

Table 7-7. Opinions of the supporters of different political parties about the Round Table talks (a high degree of semantization) in %

		Vote cast in 2015 parliamentary elections						
Opinion		Did not participate	PiS	PO	Kukiz	.N	ZL + Razem*	Total**
The Round Table talks constituted a betrayal of Solidarity's ideals	Agrees	18.8	35.4	11.8	20.0	10.4	9.5	22.2
	Disagrees	22.1	18.4	50.5	20.0	56.3	55.6	30.4
	No opinion	59.2	46.2	37.7	60.0	33.3	34.9	47.4
	Total	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

* Taken together, due to small numbers.

** Including voters who voted for the remaining parties.

Does a high degree of semantization affect consistency versus inconsistency of opinions between ego and alter respondents? Do the Round Table talks differ somehow in this respect from the other cases? Let us compare the greatest differences in opinion between ego and alter respondents in our studies (Tables 7: 1-5). These differences are smallest in the case of the Round Table

talks. In the question about martial law, 42.8% of alters of those ego respondents who disagree with the statement that introducing martial law saved us from Soviet aggression considered martial law such an act of salvation. In the question about privatization, 44.5% of alters of ego respondents who answered "no" responded "yes," and in the question about the European Union a striking 71% of alters of ego respondents who answered "no" responded "yes." In the case of the Round Table talks, the highest divergence is 23.7% of alter respondents answering "no" when their ego responded "yes." When ego respondents answered "no," only 20.0% of alters gave the opposite answer.

I would like to interpret these results as follows (solely as a hypothesis). In the case of the Round Table talks, voicing this or that opinion is more strongly associated with enmeshment in a network than in the other cases. If we generalized this observation, we would have to assume that in the case of strongly semantized events, opinions about them result from being in networks. If we accept this thesis, the hypothesis formulated above that the past has no significance in defining politics would have to be limited to those cases where past events do not undergo secondary semantization. However, a counterargument can be voiced against this hypothesis.

If we take into account the degree of consistency between ego and alter opinions, they are no more consistent in the case of the Round Table talks than when other events were evaluated (EU accession, privatization, martial law). To defend my hypothesis, I would point out the high percentage values in the "hard to say" category. Presumably, in the case of questions formulated in such a way that very unequivocal answers were required, allowing for no hesitation, many of the alter respondents from the "hard to say" group actually harbored views that differed only slightly from the unequivocal answers of the ego respondents.

To summarize, in my opinion, network participation has a negligible effect on opinions about events from the recent past. To me, this effect appears much weaker than expected. We must remember, however, that these conclusions pertain only to the most recent past, which is largely unsemantized (i.e., weakly infused with secondary meanings). As a generator of beliefs and cultural competences, networks can hold plenty of significance for the past's functioning as an integrating factor on the macro level. First of all,

networks can be a source of interest in the past. Studies demonstrate quite clearly that school is not such a source. Furthermore, the same studies on social memory show that eyewitnesses and amateur historians are considered the most reliable sources of information about the past. To some degree, this confirms the hypothesis that in modern times, network systems influence choices of tradition, and thus also the forms that a transformation of traditions takes on the macro level.

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Chapter 8

Sentiments in Networks: Attitudes toward Refugees in Poland

Jakub Wysmulek

Abstract

The aim of this study was to broaden our knowledge on the factors that cause Poles to have a negative attitude toward accepting refugees in Poland. To this end, we compared the attitudes toward refugees of the respondents and their friends. We were thus able to determine the degree to which specific attitudes are reflected in public opinion in Poland. Furthermore, by drawing on selected theoretical concepts, we investigated the influence of the structural, ideological, and political factors connected with exhibiting a specific attitude toward “foreigners.” Logistic regression analysis permitted us to evaluate the significance of specific factors in people’s attitudes toward refugees. The study points to political choices and the age of the respondents as the two most significant factors in this regard. As is the case in Western Europe, the conservative and nationalist worldviews of some of the respondents correlate with negative attitudes toward immigrants. However, while such attitudes are most common among the older generation of Europeans, in Poland the most severe animosity toward refugees is exhibited by the youngest respondents. The most negative attitudes toward refugees are simultaneously those that are most ingrained in Polish public opinion.

Keywords: refugees, friends, immigrants, foreigners

Introduction

The aim of our study was to evaluate the factors that influence the existence of objections or aversion to refugees among Poles, with a particular focus on how the respondents are influenced by the opinions of their close friends. Scientific discussion on prejudiced attitudes toward foreigners—immigrants and refugees alike—often focuses on whether these attitudes are decisively influenced by ideological beliefs (nationalism, xenophobia, or racism), or whether they are more dependent on structural and economic factors (lower socioeconomic status, unemployment, or financial problems). The third

factor recognized by researchers studying interethnic relations is the politicized nature of debates on national identity and the cultural traits of minority groups. Turning attitudes toward “foreigners” into a point of political concern causes political affiliation, participation in elections, and the consumption of particular media to become factors that strongly influence individual opinion.

This study has been conducted on the basis of data collected in 2016 during the “People in Networks” survey. The aim of the study was not solely to verify certain hypotheses in the contemporary Polish context, but also to supplement the questionnaire on people’s attitudes to immigration with an analysis of the influence of social networks on individual beliefs. Thus aside from considering ideological, economic, and political factors, we also looked at the influence of a respondent’s closest friends on his or her attitude toward refugees. This influence was measured as the convergence in opinions between the “ego” and his or her “alters.” The process of the homogenization of opinions within the circle of close friends was, on the one hand, contingent on the individual’s striving for the group’s acceptance, and, on the other, the need of the group to achieve internal cohesion and consensus. Due to the natural diversity of individuals, full uniformity of opinion is impossible. However, controversial topics that are part of an ongoing debate, dispute, or some form of cooperation, may force a kind of limited consensus. Inclusion of the relation between the respondents’ attitudes and their friends’ attitudes will allow us to determine to what degree opinions on the subject are constructed around environmental consensus and to what degree they remain independent.

Refugees in Europe—a Rise in Numbers, and Panic

With the outbreak of civil war in Syria in March 2011 and the increasing intensity of conflicts between multiple armed forces, Europe experienced a growing wave of refugees. The peak of the “refugee crisis” occurred between 2014 and 2016 in conjunction with an armed offensive in Syria and Iraq of jihadists from the so-called Islamic State (ISIS). In 2015 and 2016, aside from the Syrians—who formed the largest group of refugees and were fleeing to Greece through Turkey—a considerable number of asylum applications in Europe were submitted by refugees from Afghanistan

and Iraq, and, to a lesser degree, by refugees from Kosovo, Albania, and Pakistan. A second, smaller group of refugees, coming mainly from Nigeria, Eritrea, and other countries of the “global South,” took a route through the Maghreb countries and the Mediterranean to reach Italy. With each subsequent year, the population of refugees applying for asylum in EU countries doubled in size. In 2013 and 2014 their numbers totaled 431,000 and 627,000 respectively; in 2015 their numbers reached almost 1.3 million (Eurostat 2016a). In 2015, the largest numbers of applications were filed in Germany (442,000), Hungary, and Sweden (over 150,000 applications each). Hungary had the largest number of refugees per total population of citizens. In Poland, only 10,000 asylum applications were submitted in the same period.

Figure 8-1. The number of refugees seeking asylum in EU countries (2011–2016) on the basis of Eurostat data.

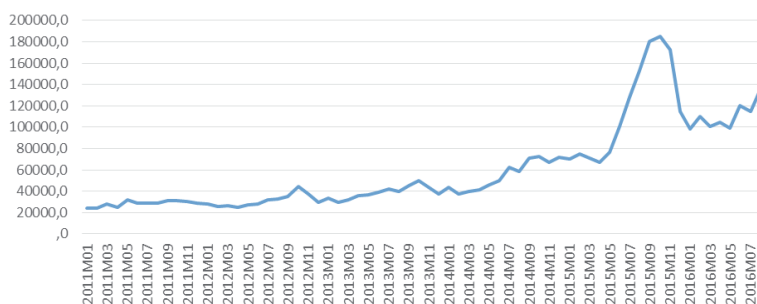


Figure on the basis of data obtained by Eurostat: <http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/submitViewTableAction.do>

The September 2015 plans of the European Commission in regard to a more uniform relocation of refugees (from areas affected by armed conflict and residing within the territory of the European Union) became a heated topic of media and political debates in EU countries. As a precautionary measure and as an expression of EU solidarity, the refugees residing in temporary refugee camps in countries on the EU border—that is, Greece, Italy, and Hungary—were to be relocated between the remaining EU countries by a system of assigned quotas. The specific quotas proposed by the Commission

were modified in the course of meetings of ministers of internal affairs and were dependent on a number of factors, such as the size of the country, its population, and its economic situation.

In 2015, the media in EU countries started to report extensively on the rapidly rising number of refugees entering the territories of EU countries. At the same time, social media was swamped with exotic images of groups of dark-skinned refugees and uncorroborated stories about their alleged crimes, and this became the most crucial factor behind the rise of a moral panic about “foreigners.” The feeling of loss of control, support, and coordination on the part of the highest EU institutions—as well as the objection of some EU members toward the relocation quota system—became political fuel for numerous right-wing political parties, which objected to helping refugees within EU countries and called for the creation of an actual or metaphorical wall to stop the growing “wave” of migrants. In 2015, despite numerous other problems affecting both particular EU countries and the entire union as a whole, the issue of helping refugees was framed as one of the largest problems facing the European Union.

Eurobarometer research on public opinion (conducted in EU member states under the auspices of the European Commission) points to a clear, stable trend of changing perceptions in European public opinion on the largest problems facing the European Union. At the turn of 2014 and 2015, the issue of immigration (which was marginal in 2013) had come to be seen as the most important issue, superseding the leading economic problems, the state of public finances, and the issue of unemployment. Since the beginning of 2016, immigration (48%) and the threat of terrorism (39%) have been considered the two largest problems facing the European Union, and both have been directly associated in the public mind with refugees and illegal immigrants (Eurobarometer 2016). The issue of the economic situation has dropped to third place (19%). Under the influence of the “refugee crisis” of 2015, and primarily due to its optics in the media and political discourse, the issue of “foreigners” and the threats they pose has effectively overshadowed economic problems, which until then were seen as the most important issue by the citizens of EU member states.

Figure 8-2. The distribution of answers of respondents from all EU countries to the question of the two most important problems facing the European Union (from May 2011 to May 2017)

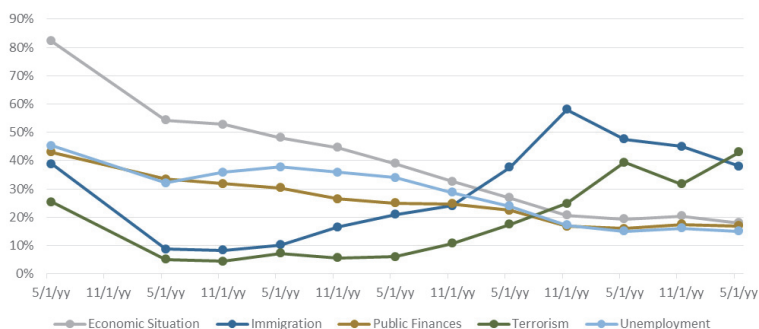


Figure on the basis of data obtained by the Eurobarometer: <http://ec.europa.eu/COMMFrontOffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/Chart/getChart/chartType/lineChart/themeKy/31/groupKy/188/savFile/5>

Discussions on Refugees in Poland

Studies on public opinion to date indicate that Polish attitudes to foreigners have changed significantly in the last several years. A growing number of Poles have had the experience of personal contact with citizens of other countries. As many as 28% of Poles declared in 2016 that they had had such contacts, while in the previous year the percentage was 19% (IPSOS 2016). This phenomenon is influenced both by the open borders between EU member states, which broadens international cooperation, student exchanges, and tourism, and by Polish citizens' access to the open common market in EU member states. It is estimated that by the end of 2015, 2.4 million Polish citizens were living abroad (GUS 2016), and of these, close to 2.1 million remained in the European Union. According to research by Work Service S.A. in October 2016, the possibility of "economic migration was considered by 3.1 million Poles, comprising 14.7% of active or potential members of the labor market in Poland (Work Service S.A. 2016). Among them, the largest group (52%) consisted of young people under 34 with vocational (28%) or secondary (44%) education." According

to the report, individuals considering economic migration usually lived in the countryside and smaller towns from the northwestern, central, southern, and western regions of Poland. The main reasons for leaving the country were the desire for career improvement and a better economic situation.

Contacts with members of other nationalities were also influenced by growing immigration to Poland. According to Eurostat data, in 2015 over 541,000 first residence permits were issued in Poland.¹ In that year, Poland came second after Great Britain in terms of the number of permits issued (Eurostat 2016b). According to data from the Office of Foreigners, in 2015 the number of applications for residence (both temporary and permanent) in Poland rose by as much as 63%. At the same time, the number of foreigners holding valid residence permits rose by 37,000, to almost 212,000 people by the end of 2015 (UDSC 2015a) (which nonetheless remains just 0.5% of the total population).

Most of the new migrants were citizens of Ukraine, whose eastern regions are embroiled in war and which remains in deep economic crisis. In 2015, permits to enter Poland in the form of visas or residence permits were given to as many as 430,000 Ukrainians, the majority of whom received work permits. In comparison with the previous year, the number of Polish work permits for Ukrainian citizens rose by as much as 88% (Eurostat 2016b). This data corresponds to the rising number of Ukrainian immigrants who in 2015 applied for the legalization of their stay in Poland. They comprised 63% of the total annual number of applicants (UDSC 2017). Of all the Poles who came in contact with foreigners in 2015 as many as 60% had met citizens of Ukraine. The next most commonly encountered foreigners were Germans (17%) and Vietnamese (12%). This period also witnessed a rise in sympathies and feelings of trust in regard to Ukrainians, Vietnamese, citizens of affluent Western European countries, Canada, and the United States (IPSOS 2016: 12).

¹ Apart from residence permits, this number included Polish visas, residence permits for family members of citizens of EU member states, permits granting refugee status, and assistance for individuals whose life might be threatened in their countries of origin.

Research to date suggests that the attitudes of Poles to refugees are primarily influenced by the ethnicity of the newcomers and the

Islamic faith of a large number of them. As noted by Małgorzata Omyła-Rudzka, feelings of sympathy for members of another nationality are closely tied to feelings of closeness with their culture: “the more a given nation is similar to us, the more sympathy we feel toward its members” (Omyła-Rudzka 2015a: 60). Nevertheless, opinions about Ukrainian citizens residing in Poland are strongly polarized (Omyła-Rudzka, 2015b: 50–51). As neighbors, they are usually treated as people who are close in terms of culture and who assimilate with ease. In comparison with these “close foreigners,” most Poles primarily see a potential threat to personal safety and social order in immigrants from the Middle East and North Africa. According to CBOS, in the last dozen or so years the opinion of Poles about these groups has deteriorated (while a clear rise in the images of all other ethnic and national groups included in the research is observable). In 2015, 40% of Poles had an unfavorable view of the presence of immigrants from Africa in Poland. 52% felt negatively about Turks settling, while as many as 62% of Poles were against immigration from Arab countries (Kowalczyk 2015: 95–96). Animosity toward the above-mentioned ethnic groups is undoubtedly tied to the negative attitude of Poles toward Islam, which in the public mind is tied to a number of undesirable phenomena. In another study from 2015, most of the respondents declared that they consider this religion to have a negative influence, leading to intolerance, problems with assimilation, violence, and terrorism, which are purportedly commonplace among its followers (CBOS 2015a: 7–8).

For most Poles, the so-called “refugee crisis” of 2014 and 2015 has remained a phenomenon confined to the realm of the media and politics. While Poland has become an important target for economic migration for citizens of Eastern Europe, its borders have virtually remained closed for refugees from outside the southern borders of the continent. In comparison with nearby Hungary, it has not become one of the transit countries on the paths taken by refugees from Southern Europe to (mainly) Great Britain, Germany, or Sweden. In 2015 the number of asylum applications doubled in comparison with the previous year. They were filed by over 12,000 individuals, the vast majority of whom were citizens

of the Russian Federation (mostly Chechnya—65%) and Ukraine (19%). As few as 300 asylum seekers were Syrian refugees. In 2015, refugee status was granted to just 348 foreigners (less than 3% of all applicants), most of whom were Syrians and Iraqis. Thus far, such status has not been granted to anyone from Ukraine (UDSC 2015b).

In response to the refugee crisis in Europe, in May of 2015 the European Commission proposed that Poland take in 2,600 refugees from Syria and Eritrea. In September, however, the number had grown by another 9,200 refugees (residing at that time in Italy, Greece, and Hungary). The plans had been tentatively accepted by the Polish government, but were rejected upfront by the then opposition, which objected to the obligatory quotas of the refugee relocation system, bringing up economic and “civilizational” arguments (wPolityce. pl 2015). Heated public debate significantly influenced the Poles’ attitudes toward the relocation plans. While in August of 2015 40% of respondents supported the Polish government’s tentative approval of the relocation system, by the end of September social approval for the decision had fallen to a mere 20% (Kowalczyk 2015: 112). On the one hand, the negative image of the refugees was predicated on ridding them of victim status by categorizing them as economic migrants, and on the other hand, refugees were seen as a threat (41% of the respondents) and as culturally distant (13%). A considerable number (44%) of the respondents also professed worry about the resources of the Polish administration that might be drawn on to accommodate the newcomers (Kowalczyk 2015: 107–110).

In May of 2016, most Poles considered the issues of immigration and terrorism to be the gravest challenges facing the European Union (51% and 50% respectively), weighting these challenges more even than most Europeans did. But the largest problems facing Poland, in public opinion, nonetheless remained the same: unemployment (34%), pensions (22%), and inflation (21%). The issues of immigration (16%) and terrorism (10%) ranked in fourth and fifth places, respectively. Only 5% of the Polish people considered the issues of immigration and terrorism to be connected to them directly. The moral panic built around the issue was seen and felt as an external phenomenon, so it was “external” EU institutions that were expected to solve the problem. For the vast majority of Poles, the issue of refugees crossing the southern borders

of the European Union and the threats of Islam and terrorist attacks remained very distant from their personal experience and the hurdles of everyday life. The media image of the “refugee crisis” cast a long shadow on Poles’ evaluation of the European Union as an institution and the problems facing the remaining EU countries, but it did not become a vital point of reference in regard to social and political life in the nation itself (Kowalczyk 2015: 113–114).

Theories

Studies on ethnic prejudice and other factors influencing social attitudes toward immigration and migrants have a long tradition.² Under the influence of studies in different fields and from different disciplinary perspectives, a set of theories was selected with a view to uncovering and explaining the mechanisms that condition our attitudes to “foreigners” (in the wider sense) and to immigrants/refugees (in the narrower sense). Such theories are dependent on the individual preferences of researchers, their research methods, the external context, and the available data. They differ from one another in terms of scope and precision in explaining social phenomena.

Studies on social aversion to “newcomers” are usually divided into those that concentrate on structural and economic causes, and those that focus more on ideological conditioning. In the first, the sources of aversion to “foreigners” are found in competition for limited resources between groups: for instance, competition on the labor market; in select, limited social and professional spaces; or competition for social security benefits. In the second type of study, the main reason for social aversion to foreigners is thought to be grounded in social and psychological phenomena. In this case, the main factors accounting for the aversion are in the sphere of social emotions, such as fear of a personal threat from the “foreigners,” or fear that the existing social normative system, cultural dominance, and social hierarchy will be overturned. These fears are rooted in the sphere of group identity, which Poles defend by resorting to such ideological systems as nationalism,

² An overview on studies from before the fifties has been included in Sherif (1953).

racism, or forms of religious fanaticism, with a view to justifying their feelings in rational and moral discourse.

The first group of theoretical approaches includes the use of a classic economic theory, the Factor Proportions Trade Theory, to analyze the influence of individuals' skills in the labor market on their attitudes toward immigrants. Anna Maria Mayda has argued that attitudes to immigrants are grounded in the relation between the competences of local workers in a given country and the competences of the arriving immigrants. Qualified local workers should support immigration when the arriving immigrants form an unqualified labor force, and be against said immigration when the immigrants might compete with them on the labor market (Mayda 2006). Kevin H. O'Rourke and Richard Sinnott, who verified Mayda's findings, used the GDP metric in order to measure the "abundance" of general competences on the labor market in a given country, presuming that wealthier countries would have a more qualified workforce. The consequence of such an assumption was the hypothesis that while in wealthier countries qualified workers have a positive attitude to immigrants, in poorer countries they are likely to react adversely (O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006). The assumption was that unqualified workers will be against immigration, provided that the incoming migrants are situated on the same level of life competences as themselves. Mayda also pointed to the influence of the specific model of national social security system on attitudes toward immigration on the basis of the respondents' income. In systems where, due to the influx of migrants, the higher level of national spending is balanced by raising progressive taxes (the tax adjustment model), people with higher incomes will be against immigration. In turn, in systems where higher expenses are balanced by decreased social benefits (the benefit adjustment model), they will be likely to support immigration (Facchini and Mayda 2006).

Among the theories focusing on the psycho-cultural roots of aversion to immigrants it is worth looking at the Threat-Benefit Theoretical Model, which reduces the scope of individual factors influencing the attitude of citizens of a given country to immigrants to four forms of feeling threatened and three forms of feeling the potential benefits of taking in immigrants. The fears include: economic fears for resources, health-related fears, fears in regard

to personal goods, and fears for modernity (being endangered by “backward” immigrants). The benefits include: economic benefits from the cheap labor of immigrants, benefits of the positive value of cultural diversity, and the ethical benefit of providing humanitarian help for those in need.³ According to this model, whether immigrants are viewed as a threat or a benefit to the individual and society is predicated on individual preferences in regard to universalist values, and on relations to power, safety, and tradition.

This theory is rooted in the psycho-sociological Integrative Threat Theory, which divides the feelings of threat from another social group into fears that are “realistic,” that is, pertaining to a given group’s loss of influence, resources, and general well-being, and fears that are “symbolic,” that is, connected with religion, a value system, morality, or general worldview (Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009). The creators of the theory assume that the feeling of group identity is a necessary component of individual consciousness, providing a feeling of acceptance, belonging, and support, and of being rooted in a system of norms, rules, values, and beliefs that help individuals navigate their lives and imbue them with meaning. In this way, the existence of a given group becomes even more significant than the existence of the individual, and any potential threat (real or symbolic) from another group has the tendency to be exaggerated in order to “avoid costly mistakes” (Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009).

In this regard, research into the influence of cultural capital and social environment on the respondents’ attitudes to immigrants is also significant. The first concept presumes that with improving education the level of tolerance toward people from other cultures grows and consequently so does a positive attitude toward immigrants. Studies performed by Jens Heinmueller and Michael Hiscox (based on analysis of data from the European Social Survey, the wave from 2003) attempt to prove that regardless of the respondents’ countries of origin, the decisive factor behind a positive attitude toward immigrants lies in higher education and a high level of professional

³ This article adopts a modified version of the model. It presumes the existence of a fourth category of benefit, that is, “personal benefit,” which is rooted in “perceiving immigrants as nice, interesting, and physically attractive.” However, in this study it has been ignored due to its too close ties with the category of “benefits from cultural diversity.” (Tartakovsky and Walsh, 2015).

skills. According to the researchers, the fear of having to compete on the labor market is insignificant in comparison; higher education promotes a worldview of openness and tolerance (Heinmueller and Hiscox 2007).

However, the concept of the decisive influence of the social environment stresses the importance of social ties, the nature of occupational work, and potential contact with various social groups through that work. This idea is related to the concept of social capital, which is comprised of the social standing of the respondents' closest family members, friends, acquaintances, and coworkers. The respondents' place within the social structure, which is described as their "networking," influences to a degree their worldview and their general ideological framework. Although measuring the direct influence of the social environment on the views of the individual is usually hard, the existence of such an influence itself seems undeniable.

In the case of Poland, the social environment (particularly in larger cities) and the direct experience of travel and temporary emigration may result in individuals' direct contact with members of other religions and cultures. According to Intergroup Contact Theory, establishing personal relations with "others" should lead to a reduction in the level of mutual prejudice, to mutual understanding between members of distinct groups, and reduction in the mutual feeling of insecurity and threat. The effectiveness of such relations is confirmed by both experimental psychological research (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006) and sociological statistical research (Facchini, Mayda, and Puglisi 2009).

Group Conflict Theory points to the risk of antagonization, with the associated negative attitudes, as the result of contacts with "foreigners." The theory supposes that anti-immigrant attitudes stem from the conviction that certain privileges, which individuals enjoy as part of their social group, could be threatened by the very presence of newcomers. The threat of conflict grows particularly when, on the one hand, there is a quantitatively significant presence of members of another ethnic group, and, on the other, the economic situation in the country is deteriorating, which in turn strengthens the cohesiveness of both groups and deepens mutual competition for limited resources (Olzak 1992).

In studies from recent years on immigration, researchers have increasingly focused on the media's influence on public opinion. Scholarship has been analyzing the significance—however hard to quantify—of traditional media for a long time (McCombs and Shaw 1972). Social networks, blogs, and, from a wider perspective, the dynamically changing sphere of the Internet, still seem—despite the efforts of researchers—to elude the research methods used to examine them. The idea of immigration as a European problem (Semyonow, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006) has become increasingly more prevalent in the last dozen or so years, and seems to result, among other things, from the way the subject is related and presented in both traditional (Jacomella 2010) and new media. New media, in particular, has a heightened presence of radical right-wing parties (Schemer 2012). Research conducted in October 2015 by CBOS in cooperation with Newspoint on attitudes to refugees reflected on the Polish-language Internet has shown that as many as 81% of all comments and posts objected to Poland's taking in refugees (CBOS, Newspoint 2015). The main fear expressed by Polish Internet users pertained to the Islamic religion and culture, which were (erroneously) associated with violence, hate, and crime. This tendency may be connected with the specific nature of information available on the Internet. The information supposedly reflects a preference in regard to so-called conspiracy theories, which are positioned at the top of search results by search-engine algorithms. In addition, studies by the French sociologist Gérard Bronner prove that after entering a specific search term into the search engine, 65% of French Internet users are content with browsing through the first page of the search results, while another 25% stops at the second page (Pech 2016).

The last theoretical assumption that should be included in this review is the influence of political preferences on the respondents' attitudes toward taking in refugees. This influence, which is explained in scholarship by the Theory of Political Values (Feldman 1988), is visible in most survey studies that take into account the political orientation of the respondents (Mayda 2006). While proponents of left-wing and liberal ideologies represent “pro-immigrant” environments, representatives of right-wing—conservative and nationalist—circles are likely to have a grudging attitude toward newcomers (Feldman 1988). Research indicates

that politically alienated individuals also have a negative attitude toward immigrants, who are seen as a convenient scapegoat for the formers' own personal and professional failures (Espenshade and Hempstead 1966). In effect, while the correlation between right-wing political views and aversion to "foreigners" is clearly visible, the cause-and-effect relationship between the two is not as clear-cut as it would appear. It seems, however, that it is possible to assume that right-wing parties are responsible for pointing to refugees as the source of a social threat (Berezin 2009) and that the parties then use the fear they have created to mobilize their supporters and increase their numbers (Hjerm 2007; Semyonow, Raijman, and Gorodzeisky 2006). In consequence of the mutual influence of the discourse of specific political parties and the electorate they attract, specific psychological and ideological attitudes are formed. Research on the psychological characteristics of party electorates conducted by CBOS in 2015 showed that adherents of Polish right-wing parties (KUKIZ '15 Committee and Law and Justice) are characterized by political paranoia, that is, the stronger-than-average conviction that there are "hidden forces in control of society and scheming against Poland" (CBOS 2015b). This attitude is also prevalent among the politically alienated Poles who do not take part in elections.

Hypotheses

Analysis of the relevant literature has allowed us to make a number of hypotheses in regard to the influence of specific factors of a structural and ideological nature on the individual attitudes of Poles toward refugees. On the basis of selected theoretical models, we have made the following assumptions with a view to verifying the applicability of the models for analyzing the present situation in Poland:

- "The theory of the abundance of resources"—The influence of competition in the labor market has been examined by dividing the work performed by the respondents into skilled labor and manual labor (requiring the most basic qualifications). Because economic migrants primarily find work in fields that require low qualifications, according to this theory fears associated with migrants should mostly be found among people

performing low-paid manual labor (Mayda 2006, O'Rourke and Sinnott 2006).

- "The theory of the welfare state"—The potential feeling of competition with the "new poor" for state subsidies should primarily be found among respondents earning a minimum or below-minimum wage (Facchini and Mayda 2006).
- "The threat theory"—The influence of the respondents' fears for their personal safety and the cultural cohesion of the state is reflected, among other things, in the degree of the respondents' general trust in, or distrust of, other people and national and international institutions (Stephan, Ybarra, and Morrison 2009). In effect, we expect that individuals who insist that people cannot be trusted and that European integration has already gone too far will exhibit higher levels of animosity toward refugees and immigrants. Furthermore, as the results of the Eurobarometer study demonstrate, the problem of the so-called refugee crisis is first and foremost perceived as a problem of the European Union. The refugee relocation plan, with imposed quotas for each European country, has been presented by Polish right-wing politicians as a brutal outside intervention in the internal affairs of the state. Therefore, the respondents' attitudes toward refugees should be closely tied to their level of trust in the European Union and its community policies. Support for further integration within the EU will also be tied to acceptance of the need to take in a specific quota of the refugees residing at the time in camps in Italy, Greece, and Hungary.
- "The cultural capital theory"—Previous studies agree that individuals with higher education will be more welcoming to the idea of taking in refugees in Poland. Higher education is tied to having broader knowledge of the world and other cultures, as well as to exercising critical-thinking skills, and in effect should reduce aversion to refugees (Heinmueller and Hiscox 2007).
- "The social network theory"—The opinions of friends are considered to be one of the most crucial factors influencing individuals' views. In a society with an escalating socio-political conflict we can also observe the ideological uniformity of informal social environments. The fierce political competition in Poland during the last few years should also influence the ideological

homogamy of groups of friends. In effect, aversion to refugees should have its source in the worldviews of the respondents' closest friends. Thanks to access to the answers of "alters" (that is, the friend or friends indicated by the respondent), it is possible to determine the degree to which close friends share views on refugees. The study assumed that the phenomenon of sharing views reflects the generalized influence of the circle of close friends on the views of the individual. However, it should be stressed that in evaluating the data it is impossible to determine empirically the direction and strength of this influence. Nevertheless, data collected in the course of the "People in Networks" project allows us to gain an approximate understanding of the phenomenon of certain views being shared in the circle of the respondents' close friends.

- "The contact theory"—The influence of the experience of immigration. Fear of a foreign culture is more prevalent among individuals who have not come into prolonged contact with people who speak a foreign language or have a different faith or skin tone. For Poles, the experience of living abroad is usually connected with daily life in multicultural Western societies. As an effect of this stereotype-breaking experience, we may expect that Poles who have lived abroad for a longer time should exhibit a more welcoming attitude toward refugees (Allport 1954; Facchini, Mayda, and Puglisi 2009).
- "The influence of the Internet"—The enormous role of the Internet, and in particular, the role of social media in the events and political changes of recent years is a topic of intensive ongoing research. Preliminary analyses indicate that it is first and foremost the Internet that allowed negative images of refugees from Syria to proliferate rapidly and connected the presence of refugees in Europe with the threat of Islamic terrorism. Though the ways of using the Internet are very diverse, culturally profiled political websites, news sites, and discussion forums enable individuals to close themselves in a monolithic "information bubble." It is thus expected that daily use of this medium may result in greater aversion to refugees (Schemer 2012).
- "The influence of political preferences"—First the aversion to refugees and then the "refugee crisis" became political fuel for

xenophobic, nationalist parties throughout Europe. In Poland, objection to taking in refugees, which has been associated with their cultural otherness and Poles' intolerance toward Islam, has been proclaimed by all the right-wing parties, starting with Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość), through KORWIN and the KUKIZ '15 Committee. The expectation is that anti-refugee rhetoric allowed the parties to gain a new electorate, and that persons who supported the parties for other reasons were also exposed to, and then contributed to, the rising intolerance toward refugees (Berezin 2009).

- Control variables—The study also made use of standard control variables, such as age, gender, and the region of Poland in which the respondents reside. On the basis of previous studies we may assume that these variables will also correlate with individuals' attitudes toward refugees. Due to their often more conservative outlook, older respondents should be more averse to refugees and immigrants than younger respondents, who usually display a more open attitude toward people (Hjerm and Nagayoshi 2011). Lately, these results have been confirmed once more in survey studies by Chatham House on a representative group of respondents from ten European countries (Chatham House 2017). The survey asked: "Should immigration from Muslim countries be stopped?" It was in the youngest age bracket that the most participants from all ten countries responded to the question in the negative.

Previous studies show that women also should display a somewhat larger degree of openness toward "foreigners" (Hello *et al.* 2004). Studies on the "political geography of Poland" (Zarycki 2008) lead us to expect the traditional political "east-west" division of Poland to be reflected in the respondents' attitudes toward refugees. Respondents from eastern Poland should be less welcoming toward refugees than those residing in western and central Poland.

Data and Methodology

In this study, we used data collected in the course of the 2015 "People in Networks" survey. The methodological aspects of data collection and the character of the data itself have been described in Chapter 1 of this book. In the course of the survey, respondents

were asked to evaluate the following statement: “Poland should agree to take in a larger number of refugees than to date.” The variable was measured on a five-point scale, where 1 means “strongly agree,” and 5 means “strongly disagree.” This was the only question regarding refugees in the survey.

In the first part of the chapter, I present a number of descriptive statistics and contingency tables about specific aspects of the issue. The second part consists of a thorough analysis of the factors influencing the attitudes of Poles toward refugees. To this end, three models of logistic regression containing the same group of independent variables were created, but in each case a different dependent variable was used. In the first instance, a dichotomous dependent variable titled “Strong and moderate opponents of taking in refugees versus everyone else” was created, in which the number 1 codes people who have declared themselves to be “strongly” or “moderately” against taking in refugees in Poland, and the number 0 codes individuals who have declared themselves to be “strongly” or “moderately” in favor thereof or had no opinion on the matter.

In the second instance, in the dependent variable “Strong opponents of taking in refugees versus moderate opponents,” the number 1 codes people who expressed strong opposition to refugees, whereas the number 0 codes moderate opponents of refugees.

In the third instance, “Strong opponents of taking in refugees versus people with no opinion in the matter and proponents of taking in refugees,” the number 1, as in the previous model, codes people who have expressed strong opposition to taking in refugees, whereas the number 0 codes individuals who either strongly or moderately support taking them in or have no opinion in the matter.

The aforementioned models were created with a view to determining as precisely as possible the social and ideological causes of aversion to taking in refugees. They were also meant to allow a better differentiation between individuals who have strong anti-refugee convictions and individuals who are “somewhat” opposed to refugees. This second aspect was all the more important given that in 2016, when the survey was held, the vast majority of Polish society expressed aversion and fears in regard to the arrival of refugees in Poland.

Due to the fact that the representative sample of respondents was close to the average of Polish society in terms of its characteristics, the sample was not weighted. In order to determine the influence of the worldviews expressed in a respondent's immediate social environment on the views of the given respondent, in the analyses which followed, the data was limited to respondents whose alters, that is, their closest friends, also provided information. After imposing such limits, the data consisted of 770 observations in the first model, 615 in the second, and 553 in the third.

Independent Variables

The study made use of the following socio-demographic variables: gender, education, age, region, occupation, and income. They were coded as dichotomous variables. After evaluation, the independent variable "Size of the city of residence" was removed from the model as inconsequential.

Gender was coded so that the number 1 refers to men and 0 to women.

The influence of the respondents' level of education on their attitudes was limited to whether they have a higher education or not (the number 1 codes the following answers: "Incomplete higher education," "Complete first-level studies or engineering studies," "Complete second-level studies," "Incomplete doctoral studies," "Doctoral degree."). The number 0 refers to all other, lower levels of education.

The age of the respondents was coded in two categories: from 18 to 39 and 40 and higher. In this case, the number 1 codes the younger generation of Poles, who in the period of political transformation of 1989 were not even born or were children. The majority of this group can be included in the "millennial generation" category, that is, the category of people born in the eighties and nineties.

The "region" variable was coded on the basis of the respondent's voivodeship of residence. Given prior analysis that demonstrated the significance of residence in regions of western and southern Poland on the views of the respondent, it was decided to code the Lublin, Lesser Poland, Subcarpathian, Podlaskie, Silesian, and Holy Cross voivodeships with the number 1. The number 0 codes

all the remaining voivodeships of central, western, and northern Poland.

As in the case of the above variable, in the case of the respondents' occupation the variable has been coded following prior analysis of the significance of particular occupations for the attitudes of the respondents toward refugees. The number 1 codes only manual labor in the countryside and in the city, whereas all other professions and occupations, as well as the lack thereof, were coded 0.

The independent variable "income" is also dichotomous in nature. In this case, the number 1 codes a lack of income or a monthly income below PLN 1500⁴ (GUS 2015), that is, below the mode salary—the most frequently occurring salary in Poland. Wages declared above this level were coded with the number 0.

The following two variables included in the model are connected with life practice and personal experience. The "Internet" variable pertains to the respondents' use of the medium as a source of knowledge. In this case, the number 1 codes declared daily use of the Internet for this purpose, whereas the number 0 codes either less frequent Internet use or no Internet use at all.

"Migration experience" is variable: in the case of such experience the number 1 codes a stay abroad exceeding six months, whereas the number 0 codes the lack of such an experience.

Another block of variables pertains to ideological attitudes. In the first case, the variable codes for declared participation in the 2015 parliamentary elections and the party of choice at that time. Due to the "anti-refugee" discourse of all right-wing parties (parties self-proclaimed as right wing) then, I considered it essential to research the correlation between aversion to refugees and voting for Law and Justice, KORWIN, or the KUKIZ '15 Committee, or not participating in the elections at all. To this end, I created four variables, in which the number 1 codes a declaration of having voted for a given party or not having voted at all, whereas 0 codes having voted for any other party (or not having voted at all).

"Attitude toward European integration" is a variable pertaining to the respondents' attitude to the statement that "Integration within

⁴ The mode salary in Poland at the end of 2014 was 2,469 PLN gross, which translated to about 1,800 PLN net.

the European Union has gone too far.” The number 1 codes answers that strongly or moderately agree with the above sentiment.

The variable “trust in people” has been created by coding the respondents’ answers to the statement “Most people can be trusted.” The number 1 codes answers that strongly or moderately agree with the above sentiment, whereas 0 refers to all other responses, that is, no opinion or a positive answer.

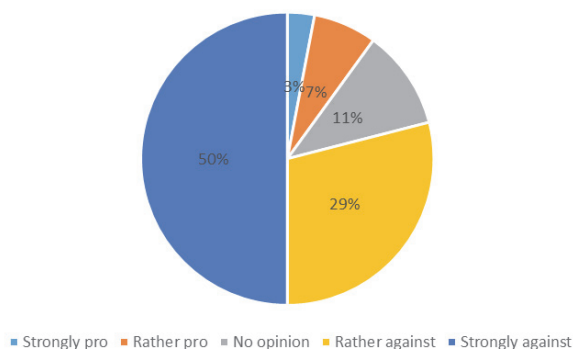
The last variable, “Attitude of one’s close friends toward refugees,” was created by calculating the fraction of alters sharing the same attitude toward refugees as the respondents themselves. In the first model the fraction consisted of people declaring strong or moderate aversion to taking in refugees, whereas in the case of the second and third model that fraction was limited to individuals declaring strong aversion.

Selected Descriptive Statistics

The distribution of answers to the question on Poles’ attitude toward refugees allows us to determine that less than 3% of Polish society strongly supported the idea of helping refugees in Poland, while 7% voiced moderate support for the idea. Another 10% had no set opinion on the matter. The vast majority of Poles declared their objection to accepting refugees in Poland. Almost 30% of the respondents declared moderate opposition, while as many as half the respondents were strongly opposed to the idea (Figure 8-1).

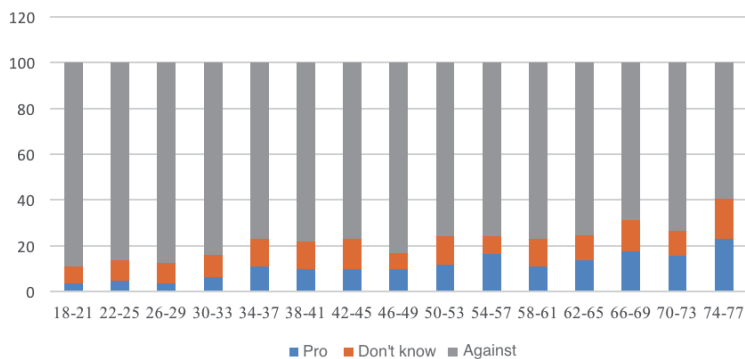
Preliminary analyses have determined that the age of the respondents has strong significance in terms of their different attitudes to refugees. Contrary to expectations resulting from both a review of the relevant literature and consideration of the latest European survey research, it is not the oldest respondents who display the most aversion to refugees but the youngest (Figure 8-4). Furthermore, *strong* aversion to culturally alien foreigners is also most prevalent in the youngest brackets (Figure 8-5).

Figure 8-3. The attitude of the respondents to accepting refugees in Poland



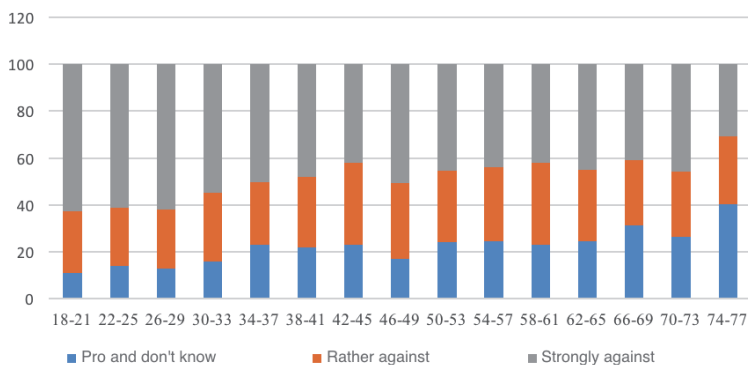
Data obtained in the course of the 2016 “People in Networks” project.

Figure 8-4. Division into three groups of respondents—proponents, people without an opinion in the matter, and opponents of accepting refugees in Poland—by age (age brackets each 4 years)



Data obtained in the course of the 2016 “People in Networks” project.

Figure 8-5. Division into three groups of respondents—proponents and people without an opinion in the matter, moderate opponents and strong opponents of accepting refugees in Poland—by age (age brackets each 4 years)



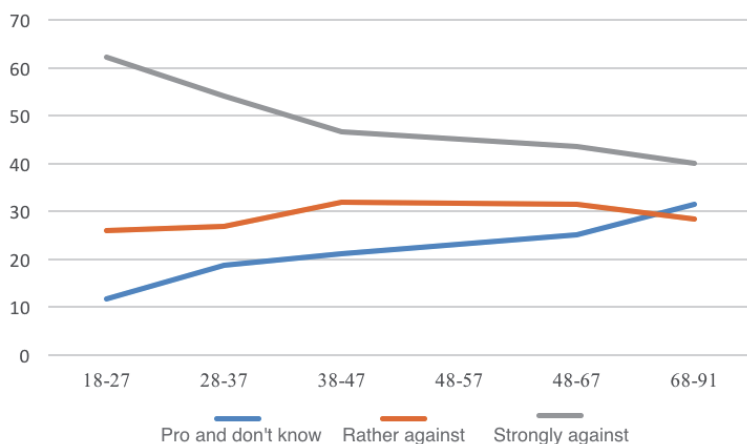
Data obtained in the course of the 2016 “People in Networks” project.

A change of opinion in regard to the refugees can also be observed in the case of the line diagram (Figure 8-6). In contrast to most European countries, in Poland tolerance and acceptance for housing refugees rises with age.

Analyses also pointed to the significance of the political affiliation of the respondents in regard to their opinion on refugees. Figure 8-7 shows that while none of the parties is characterized by having a completely monolithic electorate (in terms of its attitude toward refugees), there is a clear division among the supporters of specific political parties in Poland. On the one side are parties that are right-wing in terms of their worldview, that is, Law and Justice (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość—“PiS”), KORWIN, and the KUKIZ ’15 Committee, and on the other, liberal and left-wing parties, that is, Civic Platform (Platforma Obywatelska—“PO”), Modern (Nowoczesna—“N.”), United Left (Zjednoczona Lewica—“ZL”), and Together Party (Partia Razem—“PR”). The one party remaining outside this binary is the Polish People’s Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe—“PSL”), whose supporters occupy a space in between the two political camps. It can also be observed that individuals who did not participate in the last parliamentary elections in Poland

primarily display negative attitudes toward refugees—close to those represented by the three right-wing parties. Despite differences between specific parties, both of the largest political camps are characterized by an almost identical distribution of voter preferences in regard to refugees.

Figure 8-6. Division into three groups—1) proponents and individuals without an opinion in the matter, 2) moderate opponents, and 3) strong opponents of accepting refugees in Poland—by the age of the respondents



Data obtained in the course of the 2016 “People in Networks” project.

In order to analyze whether Poles’ attitudes toward refugees are based on the attitudes of their closest friends, the survey sample was reduced to 770 egos, whose alters provided additional information. On the basis of Table 8-1 we can observe a general convergence between the results pertaining to the attitude of Poles toward refugees in the first and second data group. In the case of each category, the difference in responses does not exceed 2%. In effect, this comparison allows us to treat the reduced sample of egos and alters as being very close to the representative group of Poles (see the introduction).

Figure 8-7. Distribution of Poles' political affiliations in regard to their attitude toward refugees (in %)

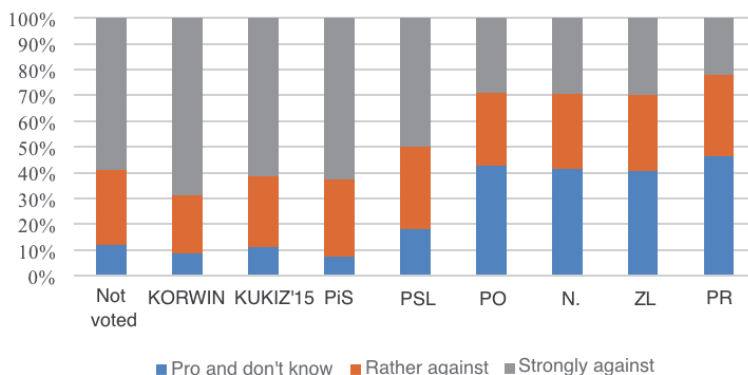


Figure on the basis of data obtained in the course of the 2016 “People in Networks” project.

Table 8-1. Comparison of the attitudes of Poles toward refugees in the representative sample and the alter and ego group

	Agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree	Total
Distribution of support in the Ego sample	177 (10%)	203 (12%)	50 (30%)	802 (48%)	1,687 (100%)
Distribution of support in the alter-ego sample	61 (8%)	94 (12%)	217 (28%)	385 (50%)	770 (100%)

In order to capture the actual convergence and divergence between the opinions of the respondents and their friends in regard to refugees, a contingency table has been prepared to compare the answers of the egos and their alters (Table 8-2). The data allows us to observe several phenomena. First, a larger percentage of convergence between the answers of the egos and their alters can be observed in three out of four cases, that is, the combined answers of strong and moderate proponents of accepting refugees into Poland, as well as moderate and strong opponents thereof. Alters with no set

opinion in the matter were most prevalent in groups of the ego's friends who were sympathetic toward refugees. In effect, it can be reasoned that in the specific socio-historical context of 2016, the lack of an opinion in regard to refugees can be viewed as a position that is to a degree sympathetic to refugees. In the case of this relatively small ego group, as many as 51% of the alters were agreeable to accepting refugees into Poland or had no opinion in the matter. At the same time, even among the respondents supporting the settlement of refugees in Poland, the majority of members of their group of alters (74%) were against taking in refugees. However, it should also be noted that in comparison with other groups, in this group the percentage of alters declaring strong opposition to refugees was the smallest.

Table 8-2. The percentage distribution of answers by egos and alters in regard to their attitudes to accepting refugees into Poland among all the close friends declared by the respondents (in %)

		Alter			
		Agree	No opinion	Somewhat disagree	Strongly disagree
Ego	Agree	23	28	41	33
	No opinion	17	17	34	46
	Somewhat disagree	13	15	44	52
	Strongly disagree	10	6	31	67

In the context of this study, the group of egos voicing strong opposition to refugees is of particular interest. As expected, in this group, friends with the same attitude as the ego are much more prevalent than in the case of the remaining groups (67%), and individuals with no opinion in the matter constitute just 6% of the total. In effect, it can be concluded that the group of strong opponents of taking in refugees in Poland constitutes, on the one hand, as much as half of Polish society, while, on the other, such viewpoints are strongly ingrained in the network of close social bonds. In the group of individuals sympathetic to refugees, such views are also often present among an individual's friends, though the views are represented by less than a quarter of his or her close friends. In this regard, it can hardly be claimed that "pro-refugee"

attitudes are the cause of the individuals functioning within a “social bubble” that is also generally sympathetic to the newcomers.

The above evaluation of the convergence in attitudes between respondents and their friends in regard to accepting refugees into Poland has been confirmed by an analogous analysis measured as an odds ratio (Table 8-3). The calculations controlled for basic structural-demographic variables, that is, gender, age, education, and place of residence. The analysis has demonstrated the clear quantitative and statistically significant existence of convergent attitudes toward refugees in groups of respondents declaring strong and moderate opposition to refugees. The odds of the alter having the same views as the ego were twice as high in the group declaring strong opposition to refugees and one-and-a-half times higher in the group of moderate opponents.

Table 8-3. Convergence of attitudes toward refugees between respondents and their friends, measured as the ratio of odds

Agree		No opinion		Somewhat disagree		Strongly disagree	
O.R.	z	O.R.	z	O.R.	z	O.R.	z
1.6	1.4	1.6	1.6	1.6*	2.7	2.0*	4.5

* $p < 0,01$

Data obtained in the course of the 2016 “People in Networks” project.

Please note: The odds included in Table 8-3 have been calculated controlling for gender, age, education (higher education versus all other levels thereof), and place of residence (large and very large cities versus small cities, towns, and villages).

The above analyses allowed us to notice certain structural and ideological conditions affecting the attitude of Poles toward refugees, but they did not help us to detect the interrelations. In order to gain a better understanding of the causes of such attitudes, statistical models were constructed with a view to explaining the attitudes by accounting for their underlying social, economic, and ideological factors.

Table 8-4. Three-line regression models pointing to the probability of belonging to the group of strong and moderate opponents of accepting refugees into Poland in terms of structural and ideological factors

		Strong and moderate opponents of taking in refugees vs. all other groups		Strong opponents of taking in refugees vs. moderate opponents		Strong opponents of taking in refugees vs. individuals with no opinion in the matter and proponents of taking in refugees	
		No. of obs. 568 PseudoR2 = 0,22		No. of obs. 457 PseudoR2 = 0,11		No. of obs. 398 PseudoR2 = 0,32	
	Values	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z	O.R.	Z
Constant		0.53	-1.56	0.17***	-4.61	0.12***	-4.25
Gender	Men	0.94	-0.23	1.39	1.38	1.26	0.75
Education	Higher	0.54*	-1.95	1.36	1.06	0.67	-1.06
Age	18–39	1.97**	2.39	1.56*	1.86	2.20**	2.41
Region	Eastern/Southern	1.33	1.1	2.64***	4.23	2.20**	2.3
Participation in 2015 elections	Did not vote	4.04***	4.38	1.43	1.26	4.40***	4.02
	Law and Justice	5.17***	4.94	1.53	1.5	6.84***	5.14
	KORWIN	3.26	1.46	5.95**	2.18	5.96**	2.07
	KUKIZ '15	11.76**	2.37	1.33	0.65	16.75**	2.64
Attitude toward further EU integration	EU integration has gone too far	3.39***	4.16	1.65**	2.29	4.53***	4.68
Trust in people	People should not be trusted	1.65*	1.92	1.86**	2.82	2.55***	3.11
Profession	Manual labor in the countryside and in the city	0.74	-0.92	1.81**	2.08	1.11	0.29
The Internet	Daily source of news	1.39	1.25	1.29	1.11	1.34	0.96
Income	Less than PLN 1500 or no income	0.93	-0.27	1.43	1.52	1.22	0.62
Migration experience	Yes	0.93	-0.20	0.80	-0.69	0.99	-0.03
Attitude of close friends toward refugees	Fraction of alters with the same attitude toward refugees	1.96**	2.42	1.86**	2.64	2.33**	2.67

*** $p < 0.01$, ** $p < 0.05$, * $p < 0.1$

Data obtained in the course of the 2016 “People in Networks” project.

Results of the Logistic Regression

Research performed with the use of logistic regression allows us, first and foremost, to discover the characteristic features of the entire group of respondents declaring opposition to taking in refugees in Poland. Second, it permits us to gain a better understanding of the differences between individuals declaring themselves to be radically opposed to refugees and those who are “somewhat” opposed to them. Third, it allows for better insight into the profile of the radical group by comparing it with individuals with a neutral or positive stance toward refugees (Table 8-4).

The first model, which correlated strong and moderate opponents of refugees with the remaining respondents, has demonstrated that while the gender of the respondents is not of significance in the case of this particular division, age and education have high significance. As expected, individuals with primary, vocational, and secondary education were almost twice as likely to declare their opposition to refugees as those who had experience of higher education (that is, those who at least began studies in an institution of higher education). This confirms the soundness of the theory of the influence of cultural capital on individuals’ attitudes toward “foreigners.” At the same time, contrary to expectations, the group of young respondents (18–39) was twice as likely as older respondents to voice aversion to refugees. This phenomenon is undeniably important and warrants further study.

In this model, the respondents’ region of residence had relatively little influence (with some significance ascribed to eastern Poland). By the same token, little influence is ascribed to such factors as the respondents’ occupation, the size of their income, daily Internet use, or migration experience. In contrast, the factors that indeed had a significant influence on the profile of the two groups in question were—in order of magnitude—general distrust in people, similar opinions in the circle of closest friends, and distrust of the European Union. The largest significance among factors correlating with aversion to refugees is ascribed to right-wing political preferences and political alienation (declared lack of participation in the elections) among a significant group of Polish citizens. The respondents who declared their opposition to refugees were mostly found among voters of right-wing parties, that is, Law

and Justice, KORWIN, and KUKIZ '15. In the case of the latter party, the voters were almost twelve times as likely to voice their opposition as voters of the remaining political parties in Poland. This model leads us to the conclusion that it is not fear of competition in the labor market or of diminishing social security that has led the public in Poland to form negative attitudes toward refugees, but, first and foremost, right-wing politicians' political propaganda, which resonated with citizens due to their low level of public and institutional trust, especially among the youngest and least educated. However, the large significance of the convergence of views between the respondents and their circles of closest friends should also be stressed.

The second model adopted in the course of this study allowed us to determine that the factors differentiating the group of radical opponents of taking in refugees from the group of moderate opponents are different than in the case of the model discussed above. The radical group is characterized by the statistically lower age of its members, an even greater distrust of people and the European Union, similar views in regard to refugees in the group of closest friends, and voting for right-wing parties. What clearly distinguishes both groups is that members of the radical group are much more likely to live in the southern and eastern regions of Poland and perform manual labor (in either the countryside or the city). They were more likely to have voted for KORWIN than most of the moderate opponents of refugees. The results obtained confirm the significance of cultural prejudice in regard to refugees. At the same time, the propensity of the youngest and most radically opposed group of Poles to vote for the economically liberal fringe party KORWIN points to the large significance of the argument that refugees supposedly aim to "leech off" the countries taking them in, and feel entitled to social security, which according to this group is unwarranted.

In the case of the third model, the group of radical opponents of taking in refugees was also contrasted with the group of people declaring a neutral or positive attitude toward such actions. Radical opponents are much more likely to be young and come from the eastern and southern regions of Poland. They are characterized by radical distrust of people and the European Union. They were much more likely than members of the second group to vote for right-wing parties (the KUKIZ '15 Committee in particular) or not

to participate in the 2015 parliamentary elections altogether. In this case as well, similar views in the group of closest friends had a statistically significant correlation with the respondents' declared aversion to refugees.

Conclusion

The findings of other studies on anti-immigrant attitudes offered valuable comparative material for the research conducted during this study. However, the rapidly changing sociopolitical global context and the specific situation in Poland—which houses no refugees, but where fear of refugees is ubiquitous—required us to adjust both our research assumptions and our tools in order to confront the new situation. In studies on attitudes toward refugees in Europe conducted by Elisa Rustenbach, the basic factors explaining attitudes toward immigrants were—first—trust, and then higher education, international investments, and interest in politics. A lower, though still clear influence, was ascribed to political preferences within the basic left/right binary, unemployment on the national level, and respondents' feelings of safety in their immediate neighborhood. At the same time, the studies have shown that “the number of immigrants has no considerable influence on anti-immigrant attitudes” (Rustenbach 2010: 71).

The current study indicates that in today's Poland, negative attitudes toward refugees are most strongly correlated with right-wing political affiliation and a “eurosceptic” attitude, which manifests itself in aversion to further integration within the European Union. Such attitudes are clearly dominant in the group of youngest adult respondents and are ingrained in the views of their groups of closest friends.

Fear of refugees in Poland is not rooted in level of income, or in the size of the town or city inhabited by the respondent. It is also not influenced by the respondent's migration experience or occupation; frequency of Internet use as a main source of world news has only a marginal influence. In turn, the study supported the expected grounding of aversion to foreigners in a general distrust of people and, to a certain degree, in a lower level of education.

After a closer look at the profile of the large group of respondents who voiced their strong opposition to accepting refugees into

Poland, a better characterization of the group was possible. To a larger degree than in the case of other groups, it is comprised of individuals residing in eastern and southern Poland: in the Lublin, Lesser Poland, Subcarpathian, Podlasie, Silesian, and Holy Cross voivodeships. Strong anti-refugee sentiment is mostly expressed by younger Poles of the generation born and raised in Poland after the political transformation. This group differs from the group of moderate opponents of refugees in terms of its larger number of people who voted for the party of Janusz Korwin-Miké, which, however, in the last elections managed to obtain a mere 4.8% of the votes. The individuals in this group often have low incomes and are employed in manual labor. In the radical group, the respondents were more likely to be men and more likely to use the Internet daily as their source of information about the world (however, these differences were not statistically significant).

In conclusion, the current study supports the following: the cultural capital theory, the integrative threat theory, and the assumption about the influence of social networks and political preferences on the attitudes of Poles toward refugees. In each of the models adopted, a respondent's having close friends who share similar attitudes toward refugees made the odds of the respondent having the same attitude twice as high. In this regard, the influence of the circle of close friends—the social network—on the worldview of the respondent seems to be a permanent phenomenon with great significance for the analysis of sociopolitical attitudes in society.

First and foremost, the study both highlights the significant influence of national politics on the development of anti-refugee attitudes and stresses the overwhelming political potential of further use of this rhetoric to mobilize the electorate and motivate voters who did not participate in the previous parliamentary elections.

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Chapter 9

Perspectives on Further Analyses

**Bogdan W. Mach, Aleksander Manterys,
and Ireneusz Sadowski**

Abstract

Our further publications will be based on the following types of analyses. First, in terms of empirical research we would like to take a more direct approach in analyzing dyads, triads, and social networks as the elementary units of sociological analysis. Second, we would like to introduce to our empirical analyses a number of variables that were not considered in the present volume. Particular significance is to be assigned to large batteries of psychological variables characterizing egos and alters, as well as to variables characterizing the intensity of their relations from varying perspectives. Third, we would like to introduce some of our empirical findings into the theoretical discussions currently underway in relational sociology. Fourth, we intend to concentrate on issues pertaining to the influence of social circles and networks on individual attributes, with a view to tackling the relations between the networked nature of social life, social inequality, and class structuration in society.

Keywords: social networks, social relations, social inequality, class structuration

We hope that having come to the end of this volume, our readers will understand the ego and alter as concepts pertaining to the social circles that emerge and function around each of us. Society is a conglomerate of such circles—partly independent of each other and partly intersecting. Every individual is both an ego and an alter with respect to a number of the interpersonal relations comprising such circles. Only direct analysis of the relations contained in dyads, triads, and social networks of all sizes will allow us to understand the mechanisms of diffusion, proliferation, and modification of social behaviors and norms grounded in interdependent structures and cultures. Sociological studies that use “atomically” defined human individuals (cut off from their alters) as units of observation, empirical analysis, and the interpretation of data by theory, not only fail to account for such mechanisms but also prevent them from

being understood. The “relational turn” of recent sociological studies mentioned in the introductory chapter centers on acknowledgement of this fact. Our first steps on the new sociological path can be described as follows:

- (1) For the first time in Polish sociological studies we have obtained information from both a large nationwide (Polish) sample of respondents and from the respondents’ alters. We also remain convinced of the high quality of the collected data.
- (2) In every chapter of this volume we have systematically referred to information obtained from the alters about themselves, as opposed to information on the alters volunteered by the egos. The former tends to be more accurate and credible than information from the egos.
- (3) We have documented multiple cases where attributes of the alters that comprise a context for individual actions significantly correlate with the actions and attitudes of the egos. It is not easy to speak of interpersonal causal influences when we are limited to data from a single, fixed point in time. Nevertheless, significant correlations between the attributes of the egos and alters point to the significance of the social circle in shaping and modifying individual attributes.

In analyses for further publications we are planning to go in the following directions. First, in terms of empirical research we would like to take a more direct approach in analyzing dyads, triads, and social networks as the elementary units of sociological analysis. One context we find particularly interesting in this regard is the subset of analyses delineated in the chapter by John E. Jackson, Bogdan W. Mach, and Ireneusz Sadowski, which compares actual dyads with their artificial counterparts, constructed on the basis of different assumptions about the nature of the relations connecting the egos with their alters. Second, we would like to introduce to empirical analyses a number of variables that were not considered in the present volume. Particular significance will be assigned to large batteries of psychological variables characterizing egos and alters, as well as to variables characterizing the intensity of their relations from various perspectives. Third, we would like to introduce some of our empirical results into the discussions of theory currently underway in relational sociology. Our interest in social relations does not in itself signify that this is another “turn” leading to the erosion

of ties between theory and praxis. On the contrary, our aim is to provide a meticulous characterization of the “morphogenesis” of contemporary society. Furthermore, we see ties between the study of egos and alters and those research projects that derive from network analysis or conceptualize the individual–society relation in transactional categories. Such analyses, which are grounded in the articulation of actors’ relations with their surroundings, have led us to tackle the issue of interactions with respect to daily life, social practices, the social system, and civil society. In a sense, we share the conviction that each social fact is relational in nature: starting with what constitutes the voluntary nature of the actor’s individual action in relation to others, through categories of non-individual structural configurations, and ending with the complexity of the system of contemporary society. Fourth, we intend to go beyond the focus of this volume, which concentrates on issues pertaining to the influence of social circles and networks on individual attributes, with a view to tackling relations between the networked nature of social life, social inequality, and class structuration in society. To this end, we will use the mass online survey mentioned in the introductory chapter, in which the characteristics of contacts with individuals of different social standing (and exhibiting different social behaviors) help determine membership in “networked social classes” or other types of interpersonal relational bonds.

Contributors

John E. Jackson

M. Kent Jennings Collegiate Professor Emeritus of political science in the Department of Political Science at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, USA. Specialist in the field of research methods in political sciences and statistical data analysis. Co-author of the textbook *Statistical Methods for Social Scientists* (1977). He received the Career Achievement Award from the Society for Political Methodology in 2008. His interests include changes in social and organizational structures in Central and Eastern Europe after 1989. An expert on the Polish transformation, he is co-author of *The Political Economy of Poland's Transition: New Firms and Reform Governments*, with Jacek Klich and Krystyna Poznańska, Cambridge University Press, 2005, which received the Minister's Award from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education in 2006. He also writes extensively on U.S. politics. He is an elected member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Bogdan W. Mach (project leader)

Sociologist and political scientist, full professor, head of the Department of Socio-Political Systems in the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. Author of books and articles on social structure, social inequalities, and their psychological and political consequences, including *Funkcja i działanie: systemowa koncepcja ruchliwości społecznej* [*Function and Action: A Systemic Concept of Social Mobility*] (Warsaw 1989), *Pokolenie historycznej nadziei i codziennego ryzyka: społeczne losy nastolatków z roku 1989* [*The Generation of Historical Hope and Daily Risk: The Socioeconomic Trajectories of People Who Were Teenagers in 1989*] (Warsaw 2003), which was awarded the Stefan Nowak prize; co-author of the volume *Social Mobility in Europe* (Oxford 2005). By combining the research paradigms of sociology, political science, and social psychology, he operates in both the field of objective social disparities (the shape and changes of social groups and networks comprising the social structure) and the field of subjective disparities (attitudes, views, values, and political

behaviors.) His particular areas of interest in the last decade have included transformational changes in the system of social inequality and the socioeconomic life-cycles of individuals; voting and the development of attitudes toward European integration; and attitudes on individual identity and the sense of agency.

Aleksander Manterys

Sociologist, full professor, employee of the Department of Socio-Political Systems in the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. Author of books and articles on sociological theory and microsociology, including *Wielość rzeczywistości w teoriach socjologicznych* [*Multiple Realities in Sociological Theories*] (Warsaw 1997), *Klasyczna idea definicji sytuacji* [*The Classic Idea of Defining a Situation*] (Warsaw 2000), *Sytuacje społeczne* [*Social Situations*] (Kraków 2008). Scientific editor of Polish editions of the works of Herbert Blumer, Talcott Parsons, Alfred Schütz, and Jonathan H. Turner. Co-editor (with Janusz Mucha) of the anthology *Nowe perspektywy teorii socjologicznej* [*New Perspectives in Sociological Theory*] (Kraków 2009). His areas of interest include the formation and existence of social microstructures and their significance for the functioning of social networks. He is now working on a book to be entitled *Zarządcy wrażen: paradygmat Cooleya* [*Impression Managers: Cooley's Paradigm*].

Ireneusz Sadowski

Sociologist, assistant professor in the Department of Socio-Political Systems in the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. His specialty is research on the social structure, public institutions, and the mutual relations between both. For several years he has been working on methodological innovations in the aforementioned field and publishing his findings: "Poza wiedzą i majątkiem: nierówności w kapitale społecznym w okresie transformacji systemowej" [*Beyond Knowledge and Wealth: Inequality in Social Capital during Poland's Transformation*] (*Studia Socjologiczne*, 2012), "Lokalne i kontekstowe czynniki krystalizacji elektoratów w nowym podziale politycznym" [*Local and Contextual Factors of the Electorate's Crystallization*].

in the New Political Divide (*Studia Politologiczne*, 2013), and in the book *Spoleczna konstrukcja demokracji lokalnej: rola kapitału społecznego w działaniu instytucji przedstawicielskich* [The Social Construction of Local Democracy: The Role of Social Capital in the Operation of Representative Institutions] (Warsaw, 2011). His research is aimed at the multidimensional and dynamic representation of the social structure and its connection with various areas of society's functioning.

Andrzej Szpociński

Graduate of Polish studies and sociology at the University of Warsaw. Full professor in the Institute of Political Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, former expert in the National Broadcasting Council (KRRiT), in the years 1989–1991 the Polish representative in CIRCLE, scientific editor of the publishing series *Współczesne społeczeństwo polskie wobec przeszłości* [Contemporary Polish Society and the Past] (Scholar). Author and editor of numerous books, including *Przemiany obszarów przeszłości 1962–1985* [Transformations of Dimensions of the Past 1962–1985] (1989) and *Inni wśród swoich. Kultury artystyczne innych narodów w kulturze Polaków* [Others among Our Own: The Artistic Cultures of Other Nations in Polish Culture] (1999), as well as 83 articles, primarily on artistic culture, cultural legacy, and the media.

Jakub Wyszczepanik

Historian and sociologist interested in the interdisciplinary combination of both fields. Assistant professor in the Department of Socio-Political Systems in the Institute of Political Studies at the Polish Academy of Sciences. His studies to date have pertained to the social history of cities; culture; and the politics of memory. His areas of interest also include the history and sociology of emotion. He is the author of four books and a dozen or so articles published in Polish and international academic journals. He is the laureate of several grants, distinctions, and stipends, including from the National Science Centre, the Foundation for Polish Science, the Kosciuszko Foundation, the Lanckoroński Foundation, and the National Humanities Development Program.

Alicja Zawistowska

Sociologist working in the Institute of Sociology and Cognitive Science at the University of Białystok. Her areas of interest include issues of social structure, educational inequalities, and gender-based disparities. She is the author of *Horyzontalne nierówności edukacyjne we współczesnej Polsce* [*Horizontal Inequalities in Contemporary Poland*] (Scholar 2012) and articles devoted to questions of education. In her research, she makes use of other disciplines, including psychology and economics, and both quantitative and qualitative approaches. She received a Fulbright Senior Award scholarship at Stanford University. In recent years she has concentrated on gender differences in the results of mathematics tests. Her research findings have been published, among other places, in *Studia Socjologiczne*; *Studies in Logic, Grammar and Rhetoric*; and the *Polish Sociological Review*.

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