Kamila Biały

Professional Biographies of Polish Corporation Workers in the Late Capitalist World

MUZEUM HISTORII POLSKI

Kamila Biały
University of Lodz

Professional Biographies of Polish Corporation Workers in the Late Capitalist World

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

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

Kamila Bialy, PhD is an Associated Professor in the Department of Sociology of Culture, University of Lodz, and Gestalt therapist. Her field of scientific interest is: sociology of culture and sociology of knowledge, discourse analysis, intercultural communication; main research questions concern reproduction of symbolic order and the role of self and subjectivity in late capitalism; professional biographies of Polish corporation workers in the late capitalist world of self and subjectivity in late capitalism.

email: kamila_bialy@poczta.onet.pl

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

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

[1] This is Opus 6 Project under the principal investigation of Professor Andrzej Piotrowski (University of Lodz), entitled

members of these two prediagnosed vocational groups.

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Poles in the world of late capitalism: changes of biographical processes in terms of professional careers, social relations and identity at the time of system transformation in Poland".

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

[7] Whenever I use terminology drawn from the language of psychology in this article, I will do so based on the mentioned theoretical perspective, *that is*, S. Johnson's psychoanalytic developmental theory (Johnson 1998), reconciled with an existential orientation. He claims that characteristic personality patterns do not appear only in the most serious form of mental illnesses: they have been documented to occur in the normal population. Hence Johnson draws a continuum of human disorders ranging from the lighter forms to the more serious ones, with interaction as the decisive factor determining the successful adjustment of every individual.
It therefore becomes necessary to formulate my own approach to the question of mental health. Following the author of "The pathology of normality", I don't see it only within a historical and cultural perspective as successful functioning in a given society (the concept of mental health oriented towards society), but also I define it through criteria specific to every individual (the concept of mental health oriented towards the human being).

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

Empirical Analysis[9]

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Empirical Analysis

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

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

such a way that you gain new knowledge, new experience and so on.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Institutionalized Pattern [Subtype B]. Individualized Institutionalization Pattern

The narrator also represents an institutionalized pattern of the professional career, further specified as ‹individualized›, implying that her (and others' of this type) involvement and bond with the company is of a more reflexive character, developed as a result of the many different dilemmas, events, increasingly more conscious choices and decisions she has faced

in the course of her professional career. She has been working in the same company for over ten years, but both her first professional experiences and the first years of employment in her current job show a truly adventitious attitude to the world of work. These types of people do not have many expectations, attitudes or rigid constraints related to a single clearly defined professional career pattern. This allows them to see situational inconveniences differently than through the lens of a trajectory, hence acquiring new skills or emerging new possibilities do not assume the miraculous proportions in their eyes, which was the case with the narrators of the cyclothymic pattern. The qualities of light-heartedness, adventitiousness and aleatoricity (rhetorically associated with the conceptually broader ideology of individualism[12]) have nowadays become a certain recommended model (or task), and, as such, are much more difficult to fulfil.

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

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

Empirical Analysis

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

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

---

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

have you passed? "Yes, I have, and you, have you got a job", I mean he asked me 'Have you got a job?' and I was like why, and he was like do you want one? And I was like how d' you mean, "cause my aunt is looking for an assistant,' he said. The aunt turned out to be a lady who was just beginning to develop W, which was a supplement to magazine X at the time, and it later on came to be an independent, I mean an independent magazine, published as a separate monthly … a monthly, or a quarterly it was. At the time, it was a quarterly supplement. And so she needed an assistant, we agreed on a specific amount of money, I agreed to be available if it didn't get in the way of my studies, and it did not get in the way too much for I didn't have many classes. And that was another job where I learnt things that came in handy later on, it was a job in the editor's office, which is a very chaotic place, focused on what I completely, I mean, what was, that wasn't a passion for me, that is design, perfumes, gossip and the like, everybody specialized in something there, and she specialized in design. […] So I found out, I noticed how much one can gain by just smiling on the phone, I mean how much this can be heard in the voice, what you are like, what attitude you show, how much you can get done and I must admit that came in useful on many occasions later on in my work. So that was one year, indeed we had made arrangements for this one year, it worked out at about 10 hours a week. And then I was somehow taking long to write my MA, but then I got a big kick 'cause the teacher said September was no good, she said either July... I mean, she said July was no good, either June or September, that's what she said. So I said, 'September, I don't want September, I want my holidays.' I did it, I wrote this thesis in one month and that was it. And then I had the longest holidays in my life, proper 4-month holidays, and then I said, 'Alright, now I am going to look for a job.' So, but somehow I couldn't come up with any idea of a job, I knew it wasn't going to be at school, unless I had to, well […] and so I went to one, in my whole life, to one job interview and when the lady heard I would like to work for 7 months, she said, I take 7 months to train my assistant and then I want her to bring some profits. So I said thank you, she thanked me and I thanked her. [...] So I sort of didn't know what to do. And somehow it all worked out for the best, 'cause after Christmas, so I had, it was half a year after the defence, but I had been translating the movies so I was making some money, a friend called on the Boxing Day, saying they were looking for people where she worked, to do a temporary work, it was urgent, she said, and there were few people available 'cause everybody had gone away. (…) So I went there. The job was to compare data on a printout with what was in the original document, so that was the so-called proofreading, a trivial thing in itself. But they paid well, it was warm, there was food, people were nice, so I worked there for, well, as long as they needed, maybe a week or two, 'cause it was urgent. And then her sister, she asked me what I was studying, I said I'd graduated and I said I did linguistics, so she asked, 'So if there is something to translate, do you want to do it?' and I said yes, please.

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

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

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

> I mean I have a reputation for always informing on time, it's not always like that, I mean sometimes I literally lean over backwards, 'cause the sensible deadline is gone and now I really have to do it, but I am really far from all those planning, vision, mission, and that concept that's on now in my office - leadership capability, for me it's just a lot of gibberish, just a waste of time. I say, keep it simple, tell me what I'm supposed to do, by when, how, who to ask if I don't know how to do it, and now I'm not only talking about work 'cause I can be different in everyday life and I tend to be active, so then someone at work noticed that I would sometimes take on more work, which was a little naive 'cause I didn't realize when they say at work now you need to put in a bit more effort, I thought they would later make it a little lighter, but that just never happens, and I was just being naive. It always needs to be harder, more efficient, at some point people in our office began using the saying "you don't need to work harder, work smarter.

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

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

Kamila Biały

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

Conclusions

Polish researchers have been much more interested in Poland's transformation processes after 1989. Although their contributions have been broad in scope, they remain relevant to the Polish context only and the analyses thus produced are mostly of the macrosociological type (e.g., Domański 2002; 2004; Marody, Giza 2004). They have not been directly concerned with relations between macrostructural (i.e., formal and institutional) properties of these changes and the phenomena taking place in the various areas of everyday life. These phenomena include practices and interpretations ordering the flow of biography, and, simultaneously, defining how far and in what manner individual experience is biographically grounded in the patterns of activity and interaction prevailing in the society. In this study and in the project I referred to, we intend to combine the micro perspective with the macro-structural perspective close to the neoinstitutional approach (so-called transitology) currently prevailing in Poland. In this sense, it is the chance to introduce biographical research into mainstream Polish sociological research.

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

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

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

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

---

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

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

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

Kamila Biały

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

References

Bernstein, Basil. 1990a. *Odtwarzanie kultury*. Warsaw: PIW.

Bernstein, Basil. 1990b. *Class, Codes and Control: Volume 4 – The Structuring Of Pedagogic Discourse*. London and New York: Routledge.

Braudel, Fernand. 2013. *Dynamika kapitalizmu*. Warsaw: Aletheia.

Brubaker, Rogers and Frederick Cooper. 2000. "Beyond Identity." *Theory and Society* 29:1-47.

Collier, Stephen. 2009. "Topologies of Power: Foucault's Analysis of Political Government beyond 'Governmentality'." *Theory, Culture and Society* 26:78-108.

Domański, Henryk. 2002. *Polska klasa średnia*. Wrocław: Wyd. Fundacja na Rzecz Nauki Polskiej, Wyd. Wrocławskie.

Domański, Henryk. 2004. *Struktura społeczna*. Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.

Foucault, Michel. 1995. *Historia seksualności.* Warsaw: Czytelnik.

Foucault, Michel. 2000. *Filozofia, historia, polityka. Wybór pism.* Warsaw: PWN.

Fromm, Erich. 2013. *Patologia normalności.* Warsaw: Meandry kultury.

Helling, Ingeborg K. 1990. "Metoda badań biograficznych." Pp. 13-37 in *Metoda biograficzna w socjologii*, edited by J. Włodarek, M. Ziółkowski. Warsaw, Poznan: PWN.

Johnson, Stephen. 1998. *Style charakteru*. Poznan: Zysk i S-ka.

Marody, Mirosława and Anna Giza. 2004. *Przemiany więzi społecznych. Zarys teorii zmiany społecznej.* Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar.

Milchman, Alan and Alan Rosenberg. 2009. "The Final Foucault: Government of Others and Government of the Self." Pp. 62-71 in *A Foucault for the 21st Century: Governmentality, Biopolitics and Discipline in the New Millenium,* edited by S. Binkley, J. Capetillo. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.