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## **Habitus, Reflexivity and the Transformation of Self. Biographical Identities of Workers and Business People in Post-Communist Poland**

Polish society after 1989 has been marked by a change that takes place on all levels of its structuralization. The fall of socialist system, with its characteristic institutions and rules of action and behaviour, placed again in the centre of individuals' attention, the problem of their identity. The question "who I am?" became truly problematic in the situation, when the previous reference groups disappeared or drastically changed their character, and the new ones were still to be formed. The new ways of defining self, however, did not appear in the "social vacuum". They were the result of old habits, competences and resources influenced by the occupied position, as well as the process of learning "game rules", which are in force in new, just emerging social order. The necessity of reflexive definition of identity encouraged individuals to form new patterns of identifications, going crosswise traditional structural limitations. However, actual possibility to shape reflexively the self, reminded socially distributed. The main theoretical problem we formulate in the paper is a question to what extent the social change liberated individuals from the limitations put by their resources and their habitus, in the process of defining self; and to what extent identity strategies reflected traditional structural divisions and connected with them ways of acting.

The answer on that question will be formulated on the basis of empirical analysis consisting in the comparison of biographical ways of defining self applied by the representatives of two social milieus – workers and business people. Analyzing carefully the life stories of the representatives of these two social milieus is aimed at reconstructing their ways of defining self, which are diverse, ambiguous and often contradictory to widespread stereotypes of transformational "losers" and "winners". In the comparative analysis we will focus on the problem of persistence of identity strategies brought from the period of real socialism, and of their change in the course of adaptation to transformed reality. Explaining the sources of similarities and differences in the ways of defining self applied by workers and business people, we will point at the importance of habitus, possessed resources and reflexivity. In conclusions we will try to answer the main question of our paper assessing the influence of social change on reproduction, transformation, and construction of new identities in the two investigated social milieus.

Empirical analysis will be based on 200 biographical narrative interviews with workers and business people, collected in the years of 2001-2003 in Silesia region in Poland. The interviews were carried out in the framework of two, independent PhD projects. Methodological assumptions of both projects are determined by the grounded theory methodology. Theoretical inspirations in the researches are derived from P. Bourdieu's theory, selected concepts of "agency theory" and the tradition of interpretative sociology.