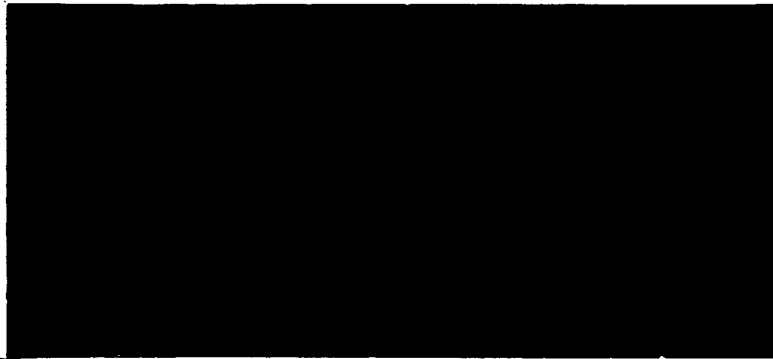




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TRANSFORMATIONS OF NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS
AND EMPIRICAL SOCIOLOGIES:
CLASS, STRATIFICATION AND DEMOCRACY IN POLAND

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TRANSFORMATIONS OF NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS AND EMPIRICAL SOCIOLOGIES:
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TRANSFORMATIONS OF NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS AND EMPIRICAL SOCIOLOGIES:
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Most will recognize that empirical social research carries certain normative presumptions about real and ideal social orders, even if those foundations are not acknowledged by the researchers themselves. While these evaluative components are often preeminent in the original construction of paradigms that guide empirical research, over time researchers can forget and or ignore such normative elements. The normative foundations of research paradigms nevertheless continue to construct not only the variety of interpretations offered, but also determine the range of questions that can be asked in empirical inquiry. Explicit attention to normative presumptions can facilitate reinterpretations of data already collected, but even then the new data analysis remains constrained to operate in the field of questions established by the original paradigm. Part of the sociological project must therefore be, from time to time, to ask whether the "right" questions are being raised.

To inquire into the "right" questions demands that explicit attention be paid the normative foundations of empirical projects. Nowhere, perhaps, is the salience of assessing the normative foundations for empirical research more important to raise than in contemporary Poland. Of course, this kind of metatheoretical reflection also must be carried out within specific discourses of empirical research already established, in order to avoid banishment to a philosophical ghetto. I therefore shall focus my remarks on that field which is generally considered to be the center of gravity in sociological research: inequality. What is more, I shall direct my attention, if not altogether exclusively, to that part of Polish research which has been translated into English. This not only helps me to narrow the project, but also highlights the contributions made by these researchers to the international community. But by this focus I do not mean to suggest that the principal audience for Polish sociology should be the international community. By contrast, I hope that by asking the "right" questions, Polish sociologists can contribute to the progressive

transformation of their own system in transition, by keeping in plain sight the relationship between inequality and their view of the "good" society.

In this paper I propose to do two basic things. First, I wish to discuss the normative foundations of some inequality research that has been conducted in Poland, beginning with that series of projects initiated by Szczepanski, followed by the Wesolowski series, and then discuss the status attainment/social mobility model, which became one of the dominant approaches to the empirical study of inequality in Poland. That framework for inequality's study became rather constraining with the advent of Solidarity in 1980-81, at which time the democratic civil society became the new center in Polish sociology. This focus did not, however, emerge in the context of inequality research, and especially that of status attainment or social mobility. Thus, in the second part of my paper, I wish to suggest an alternative line of analysis which depends on making a democratic society, rather than either the free individual, open mobility structure or an egalitarian or socialist society, the normative foundation for studying inequality.

PART I: NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF POLISH RESEARCH ON INEQUALITY

What have been the normative foundations, theoretical frameworks and research methods used in Polish research on inequality? We can begin to consider how this question has been broached in Poland before the recent period of remarkable transformation with the aid of an authoritative text on inequality research in People's Poland from 1945-75.

Wesolowski and Slomczynski (1977) emphasize the marxist heritage of Poland's stratification research, noting Poland's prewar legacy in sociology, and the special post-war theoretical contributions by S. Ossowski, J. Hochfeld and J. Szczepanski. Empirical sociological research blossomed under the direction of Szczepanski, with 28 monographs on the working class and intelligentsia being produced between 1955 and 1965. This is the first period of major empirical research on inequality in post-war Poland.

In Szczepanski's general framework, class structure was understood and explained in terms of the relationship between historical foundations enabling continuity and the changes wrought by industrialization and revolutionary transformation. These general themes were taken up by examining how specific groups within each of these larger classes experienced the dramatic changes Poland faced in this period. Inequality was not studied so much as class provided the point of departure for examining the consequences, both intended and unintended, for everyday attitudes and behavior of socioeconomic and political changes.

The normative foundations for this research cannot be understood apart from the political context in which they were structured. After the decimation of sociology during Poland's stalinist years, sociology had to provide a framework that would justify its existence to the political authorities while nonetheless struggling to realize intellectual independence. The problem of "unintended consequences" as an organizing theme could facilitate those dual ambitions.

One of the distinctions of sociology, and actually of the Scottish moralists including Adam Smith long before, this problem of "unintended consequences" allows social science to move beyond the politicians or layperson's practical sense and demonstrate the intellectual discipline's distinctive value in understanding everyday life. Because of this distinction, sociology can become extraordinarily useful to the rational administration of social life, helping any society's planners anticipate the problems of social life and restructure their plans accordingly. Wesolowski and Slomczynski (1977:26) emphasize this "practical" side to Szczepanski's vision: "Sound and systematic knowledge allowed one to make the most rational decisions. In the socialist system, he (Szczepanski) argues, where wide socio-economic planning causes several new phenomena and processes, intended and unintended, this kind of knowledge is essential for the rational leadership of social life". This kind of sociology could be compatible with the Party's own self understanding of its leading role, as sociology could provide its services to any elite, be it technocratic or marxist, that aspires to direct social processes.

Given the political constraints where sociology was obliged to demonstrate its utility to the political leadership while nevertheless struggling to defend its intellectual autonomy, the explicit

normative foundations for social research into inequality were constrained to work within an elitist model, as the old system was. It had to promise that more accurate empirical information about social processes could serve societal elites in their administration of society. I believe this proposition succinctly describes its explicit normative foundations:

Normative Foundation #1: To the degree that sociology can conduct its research without political interference, it can aid the organizers of social life in the rational administration of society by assessing both the intended and unintended consequences of the authorities' actions, thus enabling construction of the good society.

Above all, then, inequality research was constrained by its identification with the authorities. It accepted the vision of the good society promulgated by those authorities, and it explicitly sought only those features of social life which could be addressed and presumably rectified by those authorities. This practical side of sociology diminished a bit in the second phase of the development of the sociology of inequality.

This second phase was initiated when Włodzimierz Wesolowski began to head the Social Structures Research Group at the Polish Academy of Sciences. It simultaneously became more theoretically sophisticated and more systematic in its research methods. It integrated Max Weber's work into a more broadly developed marxist tradition that included not only the politically revered but also the theoretically innovative, including Antonio Gramsci.

In the main theoretical work of the period, Wesolowski (1966/79) argued that in socialist society, the traditional domains establishing inequality, notably property relations, had grown less significant, even while other more "Weberian" concerns, including education, prestige and authority, had grown in importance. In effect, he argued that the division of labor increasingly determined the distribution of rewards in socialist society, or that individual investments in the occupational structure shaped the material and non-material gratifications for those rewards. That meant, then, that inequality could not be understood exclusively in terms of broad general classes, and rather empirical research also had to examine socio-occupational categories and occupations themselves.

To the extent these groupings were understood in terms of hierarchy, their intellectual ancestor was mainly Max Weber; to the extent that these groupings were understood as structuring collectivities without implication of hierarchy, they were understood to be derived more from the marxist tradition (Wesolowski and Slomczynski, 1977:41). Wesolowski was even more clearly working within the marxist tradition when he argued that the continuing scarcity of goods within socialist societies meant that structurally based contradictory interests would continue, with the possibility that they also would become actual conflicts.

These contradictory interests lead to conflict in capitalist society because they are based on a principle of distribution that is patently unjust: according to property. In socialism, by contrast, conflict is less likely because its principle of "(i) distribution according to work is recognized by the majority of the population as just; (ii) the long term evolution of society is directed towards the transformation of this principle into an "even more just" one, namely distribution 'according to need'" (Wesolowski, 1966/79:124). In this kind of society, therefore, tensions which produce conflict are likely to be minimized to the extent that the principle of "to each according to their work" operates in general, and when people are working for society, not the privileged.

Conflict might emerge nonetheless in socialist society either due to the application of the principle or its deviation, however. Class conflict is more likely to occur when the distribution of values in society is cumulative (Wesolowski, 1966/79:136). In socialist society, income, power and education are distributed according to autonomous principles, thereby undermining the possibility of values' cumulation into specific groups, Wesolowski (1966/79:137) argues. But the operation of the principle "to each according to his work" might serve to synchronize these values and thus generate conflict.

Conflict also could, however, occur as a result of the decomposition of class attributes, when for instance, the unskilled manual worker earns as much as or more than the more highly educated physician. Wesolowski (1966/79:118-19) finds that this likely will produce "feelings of social injustice" by the physician, unless a new world view emerges based on the idea that rewards should be differentiated rather than synchronized. It seems that here Wesolowski suggests the

sociologist should investigate the conditions under which such an alternative world view might emerge.

Wesolowski implies that the Party should inculcate this world view. But the communist party's position in these circumstances is problematic given that its role as the distributor of rewards and moulder of opinions makes it especially obvious as society's "antagonist". Conflict, then, may emerge not as class conflict but as conflict between society and the state to the extent the Party remains directly involved in decision making, and not merely the guardian of societal institutions and values (Wesolowski, 1966/1979:129-35).

The theoretical and normative implications of this work are considerable and deserve more attention than I can give here, but I shall raise its particular concern for justice.

Justice is understood both objectively and subjectively. The marxist emphasis on objective justice, in terms of classlessness, remains prominent in this work, but Wesolowski goes beyond this well understood normative foundation to emphasize that even with classlessness, certain "perceptions" of injustice may emerge. An uneasy tension between these two notions remains, therefore. On the one hand, Wesolowski clearly favors the movement toward a society whose distribution is based on need, and tolerates the political and ideological domination of a marxist party to realize it. On the other hand, however, Wesolowski treats conflict as "normal" (in the Durkheimian sense, that is regular), and implicitly cautions the Party to step back from its direct administration of society to avoid the escalation of conflict between it and society. We might summarize the normative foundations of this argument so:

Normative Foundation #2: Sociological research can aid the authorities in the construction of socialism by informing their evaluation of society's development, but it should help by investigating a) the degree to which status groups form through the cumulation of valued goods; and b) when groups and individuals appreciate this class decomposition rather than oppose it. This research is particularly important as the good society, one of relative consensus and of minimal inequality, might not be realized under prevailing modes of socialist construction.

This foundation suggests a tension that was not present in the earlier formulation suggested by Szczepanski. This second generation of inequality research does not presume that the authorities can resolve conflicts and feelings of social injustice even if they have adequate information.

Instead, it suggests that group conflicts might be inevitable in a socialist society, and mitigated only to the extent that both the decomposition of class attributes occurs and that decomposition is valued by all groups. It goes further to suggest that the Party might not only be unable to resolve these conflicts, but to the degree that it assumes responsibility for them, it will become the object of antagonism.

I believe that we can interpret this transformation of normative foundations as a suggestion that justice cannot be reduced to questions of "inequality". Justice in a socialist society must be understood in terms of how its inevitable conflicts over scarce goods are adjudicated and subjectively rendered. Thus, injustice is in part, although not entirely, a matter of subjective perceptions and procedural matters, not only a matter of objective levels of inequality. That then removes injustice from the immediate field of research on inequality.

The normative claims of marxism about inequality and injustice, that the generation of classlessness resolves problems of injustice, thus already are undermined in Wesolowski's (1966/1979) work, anticipating his later move to Weberian questions of legitimacy which are more focused on matters of subjective perceptions and procedural matters. But in the process of making inequality less sufficient in moral and social theory, Wesolowski also opens up the study of inequality to a form of stratification research that is both less theoretically ambitious and more empirically driven. With his theoretical argument, Wesolowski provided the intellectual justification for examining inequality in a way more similar to social stratification research in non-communist countries. It provided an opening for status attainment research to enter the Polish intellectual world.

THE NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF STATUS ATTAINMENT AND SOCIAL MOBILITY RESEARCH

Blau and Duncan's (1967) status attainment research is an exemplary model of scientific investigation. Its original paradigm was simple and clear in its concepts and their operationalizations, as well as in establishing the relationship between variables. In the most

rudimentary description, the model argues that the final occupational status of an individual is to some degree dependent on the occupational status of that person's family, but may be affected by a variety of factors including, but not limited to, education.

This basic model has been elaborated in a variety of ways. The Wisconsin School, for example, has introduced greater complexity and greater specification by adding a range of factors concerning psychological motivation. The model also has been important in cross cultural research, clarifying what are the universal and what the peculiarly American features of its approach.

When brought to Eastern Europe, for instance, one of the most important elaborations that had to be made was the distinction between attainment based on structural changes in the economy, called structural mobility, and those based on the openness of the structure itself, called circulation mobility. While this was but an after the fact observation in the original Blau and Duncan work that explained the continuing openness of the class structure, structural transformations are a central (Connor, 1979; Pohoski and Mach, 1988) even if they are not the exclusive factor (Slomczynski, 1986), in explaining attainment and mobility in socialist systems. Were the normative foundations of the model also changed when brought to Eastern Europe?

The normative foundations and meta theoretical underpinnings of the original status attainment model in the USA were called into question not long after the model was introduced. Some argued that the approach was "atheoretical" while others argued that it was based on a structural functional model of society. Knottnerus (1987) has recently added that a certain "image of society" was essential to making status attainment research meaningful. In effect, the image was one of a mass society whose only constraints on occupational mobility derived from two potential sources: 1) a continuing cultural emphasis on ascribed over achieved factors; and 2) an economy sufficiently static that higher status jobs would not be generated through development. I might add, too, that the society status attainment envisioned was a) domestic b) male and c) civil, meaning that it referred only to the non-political and non-familial sphere of social life, which had been overwhelmingly male, and limited only to a single political system. Pohoski and Mach (1988)

do provide, however, a valuable comparison between mobility patterns of men and women in 1972 and 1982 in Poland.

Thus, a vision of justice and the good society did indeed reside in the status attainment model, mainly in terms of assuring the relationship between, on the one hand, individual efforts and achievements, and on the other, occupational status. The notion of the "just" society in status attainment research was therefore not dependent on "equality", except perhaps in terms of equality of opportunity. But even here, equality of opportunity did not mean the same starting point for everyone; it meant only that achieved factors would be more important in affecting final occupational status than ascribed factors, and that structural factors would not pose barriers to these individual efforts. The project was, therefore, never even about equality or inequality. It was about "freedom".

Since the age of Reagan, freedom has been more and more associated in the United States with economic freedom, the opportunity to "get ahead". The anti-feudal notion of freedom also was constructed in these terms; a kind of negative liberty that would allow individuals to do whatever they wanted so long as that would not injure others. And of course, as a struggle informed by the position of the bourgeoisie, this was a struggle over freedom of the entrepreneur from the state. It makes sense, then, that this research would have as its sole focus individuals in a domestic civil society.

If we think about the normative implications of status attainment research, this notion of freedom is probably the best contender for claiming foundational status. Of course, we are not here considering the state's constraints on economic freedom, but we are considering similar constraints as that which the state imposed on pre-capitalist society: that certain economic activities were constrained by the station of one's birth. While in feudal society that station might have been rooted in caste or estate, in capitalist society those constraints come from race, gender or occupational origins.

Such normative foundations for pursuing sociological research have much less obvious connection to the ruling authorities of capitalist society, and therefore realize one important

normative foundation of research on inequality: institutional autonomy of the research itself. These status attainment sociologists were not doing research on any actor's literal behalf. But they were extremely useful in another sense of demonstrating that there was a clear connection between one's individual efforts, as in educational attainment, and one's occupational attainment. In this sense, then, the outcomes of status attainment research could be used to demonstrate the openness of the class structure, and therefore its justice, so long as economic freedom remained the normative foundation of the ideological structure in which the research was conducted and disseminated. Whatever its ideological use, however, status attainment research in the USA has been connected to one of the central problems of that culture: just how much individual achievement can affect one's occupational success. The normative foundation for this research might thus be expressed succinctly so:

Normative Foundation #3: To the extent individual achievement leads to changes in occupational status, one has the good society.

Working with this normative foundation, Polish sociologists could then engage sociologists from capitalist countries on their very own terms. Polish sociologists could point to the massive amounts of upward social mobility as indication of their society's greater openness, and therefore greater justice. In return, sociologists like Connor (1979) argued that this apparent openness was a consequence of industrialization, not anything peculiar to the organization of the economic system or its property relations. Slomczynski (1986) in turn has argued that there is relatively greater circulation mobility in Poland than in the US in the early 1970's. More recently, however, Pohoski and Mach (1988) found structural transformations to be the central factor explaining mobility in 1972-1982.

In any case, this move to status attainment/social mobility research enabled direct comparisons not only of mobility regimes, but implicit comparisons of the relative justice of the systems which contained them. Another theme in prestige studies performing similar functions and structuring like debates was on the relative position of the blue collar working class, where in socialist society they enjoyed relatively higher prestige than in capitalist society.

Many of the substantive debates informing these system comparisons then moved forward to determine the methodological artifacts which led the working class to its relatively prestigious position, or the relative impact on structural changes for influencing the true openness of the social structure. But in neither case was the matter turned around. Why should we have such a focus on economic freedom as the measure of a system's social justice? Why should civil society, and not political society, be the object of our inquiry into inequality? And why should the system we consider be only national, and not international? Certainly by itself this idea of freedom within domestic civil society is not controversial. It might, however, be considered problematic when it is connected to the kind of culture and society that makes it so central, and to the questions that it fails to ask.

The culture, or dominant attitude, which makes status attainment research fundamental in sociological research is one based on "status seeking". This materialistic mentality was often criticized in the US for its narrowness, but Blau and Duncan saw something virtuous in this status seeking disposition. They argued that it was an integral part of the universalism that opened up the class structure to individual achievement rather than inherited ascribed status. Furthermore, this status seeking mentality was even beneficial to the democratic order because status differentials came to be understood in this framework as differences in degree rather than as inherent differences of superiority and inferiority. This gave political equality some meaningful referent in the culture of civil society, making variations in status not foundational for questions of democratic governance (Knotterus, 1987).

If status seeking was to be a cultural manifestation of a real social structure rather than a mystification for an unjust order, this mentality had to be a part of a society in which there were few particularities or closed communities based on class or status. The image of "mass society" was thus the macrosociological compliment to this status seeking mentality. Technological dynamism created the open society that made significant status differentials and closed communities into anachronisms. In this mass society, the individual was basically free as the only constraints on freedom, like the class of one's birth or of one's race, became increasingly

irrelevant. Inequalities remained because of unequal access to education, which might themselves have their roots in personalities and cultural legacies, but other than these, there were no real constraints on this individual achievement. Thus, mass society and status seeking culture are part of the good society, complimentary to and even essential for social justice. Whatever the measure of appeal this argument still holds for society in the USA, it became even more problematic when brought to communist party led societies.

Sociologists from these societies could claim that their socialism realized this mass society condition even better than capitalism. Indeed, the absence from this problematic of political society even made the research paradigm politically feasible for inquiry in socialist societies. To study the partynomial system, as Bauman (1972) called it, in addition to the class system or civil society, might have made inequality research impossible. But aside from this question of political feasibility, does this notion of economic freedom within domestic civil society provide enough normative justification for making the study of status attainment and social mobility so central to the sociological project? Especially if it provides some justification for a system that has been so uniformly rejected in the end of the last decade?

There are two plausible answers to this question. First, one could say that while existing socialism has been rejected, the alternative capitalist society to which the Soviet-type system was being compared is not really being embraced in contemporary Poland. Most citizens of the old state socialisms prefer a heavily subsidized welfare state society rather than a cold capitalist one, especially like that in the USA.

While that is a reasonable response, it does seem that even if the general public opinion rejects a harsh market solution to the problem of alternatives, many of Poland's intellectual and now political elites are embracing just such an approach. Indeed, the main lines of discourse depend on a capitalist framework for their resonance: against primitive egalitarianism and against learned helplessness, in favor of a much more sharply unequal distribution of rewards and an alternative ethos of self sufficiency. Those seem to be part of the essential recipe for a thriving capitalism, at least in ideological terms.

Second, one could argue that those who have conducted social mobility and status attainment research were not arguing that this was an essential part of the normative project. And I am sure they are right in their personal claims. But at the same time, because they adopted an empirical project developed in the USA that did have a normative foundation that elevated economic freedom above other normative claims, these sociologists were, unintentionally if not intentionally, helping to reproduce in Polish sociology the dominant claim that economic freedom within domestic civil society is the social approximation of justice.

On the other hand, of course, we have seen that these very limited normative claims facilitated greater openness of sociological investigation in the socialist countries. In capitalist countries too, the status attainment problematic facilitated much research as the available data, and the data that could be collected, began to establish more and more the kinds of research that would be conducted. But in this status attainment tradition, the connection to the larger discipline and the bigger questions which motivated it were typically reduced in significance as the increasing sophistication of techniques and the replication of original studies in a wider range of formats became the central preoccupation of the sub-discipline's practitioners. The engagement of these often brilliant sociologists on such questions took them away from the central problems that modern societies must confront, especially when freedom of inquiry and speech came to be supported by the state.

THE NORMATIVE SHIFT IN POLISH SOCIOLOGY OCCASIONED BY SOLIDARITY'S FORMATION

Even before that freedom was supported by the Polish state, it seemed that Solidarity's example led more and more sociologists to ask questions in the framework of their research that had roots in the normative commitments generated by Solidarity. By this time, the intellectual autonomy of sociological research was more or less taken for granted, but the degree to which questions were asked that were related to matters of broad public significance and political conflict were not all so common. It seems to the outside observer that Solidarity had a great impact on

the critical quality of sociological inquiry. In particular, what impact did Solidarity's formation have in studies of inequality?

Two main angles seemed to emerge. On the one hand, sociologists of inequality became more committed to demonstrating the real material deprivations of people (e.g. Lidia Beskid, 1987). On the other hand, we also saw a return to the work of S. Ossowski, who argued that images of class structure were as important to studies of inequality as "actual" patterns. As such, the work of Zaborowski (1986), Slomczynski and Kacprowicz (1986) and the collection edited by Wnuk-Lipinski (1987) suggest a valuable effort to link these subjective and objective dimensions of inequality research, especially in terms that might be linked to questions of just distributions of rewards and images of political domination. In particular, this critical approach to inequality's study began to find in the popular consciousness less the functionalist stratificational images the old sociology emphasized, and rather an antagonistic view of inequality directed above all against the political authorities (Koralewicz and Mach, 1987:20). Given that the authorities were so important in the society's view of inequality, researchers of inequality were pushed away from such a focus on civil society and its forms of identity to those established in the interaction between state and society. Two chapters from the Wnuk-Lipinski collection illustrate this nicely.

Koralewicz and Wnuk-Lipinski (1987) investigate the deprivation not only in family and collegial relations, but also in the public sphere. Not surprisingly, their research on engineers and workers finds that in the first two spheres, needs are relatively satisfied. In the public sphere, however, there is considerable deprivation which is even greater among workers than engineers. Workers more often than engineers find the possibility of controlling and criticizing the authorities very important, for instance. This finding is of considerable significance for challenging the common stereotype that the highly educated are more committed to democratic values than are workers.

Mach (1987) also reworks the stratification literature by challenging the very notion that occupational status is, in fact, so significant. Rather than assuming occupational status fundamental for social self identification, he asked his respondents to name the group whose life

situation is most similar to their own. Although occupational categories finished a respectable fourth with 15% of a general Polish sample, being somehow unable to manage was the most common (25.8%), the well adjusted second (20.4%), and "the ordinary" in third (18%) (p. 168). This kind of work was an especially important move even if it was not entirely without precedent. Of course the Ossowski tradition suggests this, but another branch of its ancestry can be found in what Wesolowski (1966/79) suggested much earlier: that justice not only has an objective but a subjective dimension, especially in terms of class.

These studies tend to move without that status attainment/social mobility framework, however, as they consider not only occupational status and the status seeking mentality, but also search for real world referents of life chances, and search for broader notions of subjectivity than that which the status attainment paradigm emphasizes. There were, however, other important efforts that tried to link social mobility analysis to other major problems of the day, exemplified by the work of Wesolowski and Mach (1986) (see also Mach, 1989).

Wesolowski and Mach (1986) transformed the status attainment/social mobility problematic to increase its relevance to a wider variety of sociological questions. Above all, they sought to demonstrate that mobility carries certain "potential functions" in it for system performance and for system reproduction, for economic development and for the legitimation of the political and social order. In Poland, however, these systemic functions went unfulfilled.

The type of mobility characterizing a socialist regime is dependent on the reigning ideology, they argued. An emphasis on equality of conditions in the marxist problematic led to an emphasis on collective mobility, wherein differentials between the major classes are reduced. A more meritocratic marxism led some regime actors to emphasize an individualist qualificational or occupational form of mobility. The extent to which both principles of mobility are linked to one another rationally influences how well mobility contributes to both legitimation and development.

Wesolowski and Mach find that in the first stages of socialist development, the former egalitarian orientation generally predominates, but as problems of economic development and innovation grow more prominent, the meritocratic version becomes more essential. But in the

Polish case, collective mobility did not contribute to regime legitimacy and even individual mobility was not constructed so as to lead to overall economic development. While the ceremonial value of the laboring classes was elevated in the new regime, the "alienating and degrading aspects" of that work did not abate (p. 175) nor did their real political influence increase (p. 176). Individual mobility became non-functional too because the qualificational/occupational hierarchy in which mobility operates became less significant due to "blockages and disorders in the qualification principle of training, selection, allocation, promotion and remuneration in the economic system" (p.178).

This line of thinking is important because it rethinks the normative presuppositions of the status attainment model. Indeed, it extends the model's self consciousness by noting that an open mobility structure is not only important for realizing freedom from ascriptive discrimination, but also that it is essential for a rational social system which apportions talent to the right places, thus enabling continued economic development and legitimation for the political and social order. We might summarize the normative foundations of this reinterpretation of status attainment/social mobility research so:

Normative Foundation #4: The good society is both efficient and legitimate, which in turn depends on there being a rational link between a meritocratic occupational system and a minimally inegalitarian class system.

Like foundation #3, this foundation also takes for granted the autonomy of research, but this is also a reinterpretation of the mobility/attainment problematic, designed to make it more relevant to the Polish situation. In some ways, this reinterpretation of the mobility project is a smooth extension from normative foundation #2, if we exclude the Party allegiance made in that framework. Once again, there is some explicit commitment to minimal class differentiation, and to the subjective appreciation of the system, this time expressed through the concern for legitimacy. This project diverges from the old paradigm in two important ways, however. First, there is much less interest in avoiding the "cumulation of valued goods", finding instead a clear cumulation important for the reintroduction of the status seeking mentality. Second, the interest in subjectivity is expressed in terms of legitimacy rather than in some vision of competing

worldviews. Both are extremely important shifts and mark an explicit turn away from some aspects of the marxist conception of justice. But in this very shift, a certain contradiction emerges between the first and the second aspects of the paradigmatic transformation.

POWER, LEGITIMACY AND INEQUALITY IN STATUS ATTAINMENT

Status attainment research generally focuses on a civil society effectively devoid of power. The problematic which guides this research finds the only kind of systemic power to be that which limits economic freedom through the elevation of ascribed over achieved characteristics; the only kind of strategic power is that used by the individual to achieve and move up. Power to energize the status seeking mentality is the only kind of agency theorized in this problematic. Of necessity, scholars from the old socialist countries had to recognize that this civil society was not somehow "natural", but rather was subject to elite policies. Thus, the power to transform mobility regimes is necessarily introduced in the study of status attainment in socialist societies.

Wesolowski and Mach clearly incorporate this recognition into their problematic by noting that the kind of mobility regime and the effectiveness of its operation is a consequence of the elites' policies. Nevertheless, while Wesolowski and Mach thereby introduce power into the problematic, they continue to leave it out of civil society. They restrict the capacity to transform social relations to the elites, be they of revolutionary or technocratic inclination. Wesolowski and Mach explicitly deny the power of the ordinary actor in socialist civil society by noting, for instance, that even after the collective mobility project, "workers do not sense themselves to be either a subject of history or a subject of a political process, in which their interest will, or political action could be, transformed into a state policy" (p.176). Thus, the system itself denies the transformative subjectivity of class actors. But it does seem to generate an individual subjectivity of considerable measure. Indeed, this individual subjectivity is so great that Wesolowski and Mach consider its operation pathological for the survival of the system.

The individual mobility process has been "gradually deprived of substantive meaning both for the individual and society in Poland", write Wesolowski and Mach (p.176) with the consequence

that qualificational mobility ceased to become a desirable goal of action. Instead, a good family life or interesting private life rather than getting ahead became a central life goal. Several spheres contribute to this deevolution of the status seeking mentality. The school system encourages obedience rather than encouraging talents; the promotional system, although formally based on credentials, ignores real competence in favor of political loyalty; and the remuneration structure does not encourage the individual to plan strategically his or her occupational career. Wesolowski and Mach characterize the Polish crisis by noting that people's activities to survive -- cynical obedience, manipulating informal networks to obtain goods and a move toward private enterprise -- have pathological effects for the legitimation and economic development of the system.

In this account of the individual mobility process, Wesolowski and Mach clearly demonstrate the power, or really here the agency, of individual actors. When the status attainment system is irrational, actors can find other ways of surviving and realizing personal happiness. As Giddens would describe it, actors have the capacity of doing otherwise, thereby demonstrating their agency. But rather than see this action as a demonstration of the vitality of subjectivity and power of individuals, Wesolowski and Mach see it as an example of the pathology of the system. Indeed, given the economic crisis and illegitimacy of the old system, it is not surprising that such subjectivity could be understood as "dysfunctional". But rather than take this as a point of departure for the critique of the "status seeking mentality", Wesolowski and Mach use its absence as an indication of the system's pathology.

Thus, one of the essential normative foundations of the original status attainment model is preserved even in this basic transformation and extension of the project. The principal kind of action that the paradigm recognizes, and now more than ever explicitly values, is that of status seeking. But of course this mentality must operate in a rational system in which status seeking is transformed into a systemic good.

The two system goods that Wesolowski and Mach identify are system effectiveness and system legitimacy. While the former is easily identified with a system based on economic freedom, the

latter is far more difficult to assimilate into the status attainment project, precisely because for legitimacy to avoid its tautological rendition, actors must be sufficiently empowered to volunteer their consent to be governed.

Wesolowski and Mach clearly recognize that mobility is but one small part of a system's legitimacy, and that should be noted from the start. They seem to suggest, however, that an effective system with a status seeking mentality contributes to system legitimacy. Indeed it might, but on the other hand, one might consider that just such a status seeking mentality undermines the very conditions in which legitimacy might become something other than a tautology.

Peter Blau (1970) called this tautology the paradox of legitimate domination. How can one be sure that it is not fear or coercion, and rather voluntary submission, that characterizes obedience? Reinhard Bendix (1962) notes that the idea of legal domination is itself circular, with legal domination being distinguished by the belief that it is legal. Wesolowski (1986) himself considers this matter and agrees with Habermas that a democratic variant, based on democratic procedures and democratic values, might be the only way to establish this notion of legitimacy in a way that is neither tautological or paradoxical. In the end, then, Wesolowski finds democracy, both procedural and substantive, to be the best approximation of a legitimate order in which compliance with authority is truly voluntary. The best way to find this, he suggests, is to recognize that "undistorted human communication" might be the best foundation for "testing the truth of society's belief in legitimacy" (p.49). But, how compatible is that problematic of undistorted communication with the problematic of the status seeking mentality? I turn to this in the final section of this paper. But before I do, I should summarize the arguments of the paper to this point as I now conclude the section analyzing inequality research in Poland.

SUMMARY TO PART I

The problem of inequality has shaped much of sociology's discourse, both in socialist and capitalist countries. In the latter, the normative foundation underlying this research on inequality

has varied, and has not always been based on the valuation of equality. Indeed, the status attainment tradition made economic freedom within domestic civil society, rather than any version of equality, its basic normative guide. In socialist countries, by contrast, sociology's normative foundations were more problematic. It had first to establish the conditions for its intellectually autonomous existence.

To study inequality in this framework would have been impossible, as the communist elites claimed to be engaged in the creation of a fundamentally more just society, especially in regard to material equality. Instead, sociology could reestablish itself only by offering its services to these elites as independent researchers who could help political elites administer society in a rational way, discovering both intended and unintended consequences of policy in various class settings.

Polish sociology's normative foundations seemed to shift as the discipline acquired more autonomy from the authorities. Although the leaders of the discipline implied that sociology could help realize socialism, they no longer refrained from challenging certain basic aspects of marxist orthodoxy. In particular, it was argued that certain contradictions would remain in socialism and that the Party may not be able to resolve them without generating even greater resentment against it. In this shift, the orthodox marxist association between inequality and justice was undermined, finding that even in a classless society, perceptions of injustice may remain.

This intellectual shift facilitated the introduction into Poland of various research projects with a weaker connection to equality as a normative foundation than some varieties of marxism claimed. Status attainment and social mobility research, in particular, developed considerably. But while this research could proceed in gathering data and employing increasingly sophisticated techniques of analyzing the data, it grew further and further away from the normative concerns that generated the research in the US. Nevertheless, it continued implicitly to reproduce the problem of the good society by asking questions about the measure of economic freedom in various domestic civil societies. In so doing, however, it also remained far away from the normative issues that confronted Polish society.

Polish sociological research shifted its focus after the emergence of Solidarity and the imposition of martial law. Its emphasis on the scientific and the comparative questions was now supplemented by a concern for social problems, political conflicts and more peculiarly Polish issues. Inequality research reflected this shift from scientific to emancipatory normative commitments too. Researchers began to emphasize more absolute impoverishment in the system as well as subjective perceptions of inequality and domination. There were also attempts to transform the status attainment project, to make it more relevant to broader normative issues. In so doing, status seeking became an essential part of the good society, but how that status seeking mentality relates to the construction of a democratically based legitimacy, the other aspect of the "good society", remains a problem. The second part of this paper will address this issue as it tries to establish democracy, rather than economic freedom or equality per se, as the normative foundation for research on inequality.

PART II: DEMOCRACY, INEQUALITY AND JUSTICE

The social transformations of Soviet-type societies in 1989 suggest that Wesolowski's emphasis on democracy, as a normative foundation, is not only intellectually sensible but also politically relevant. As sociologists, I believe that we should be historically sensitive to how social transformations can recast our intellectual paradigms. After all, direct observation of the French transformations of 1848-51 led Tocqueville and Marx to some of their most salient analytical points: that undemocratic governments are easy to topple, that class struggle in politics is likely to intensify; and that revolution and reaction tends to produce authoritarian outcomes (Calhoun, 1989). Although a comparison of 1989-90 with 1848-51 would be instructive on analytical grounds, we might also note here as a more relevant point that this nineteenth century shift also established the main schools of subsequent sociological theory on normative grounds, in its social/conservative (Comte), autonomously political/liberal (Tocqueville) and economic/radical (Marx) guises (Calhoun, 1989). It seems plausible that similar normative differences could

emerge from 1989-90 too, as we have conservative advocates of some Party of Order, we have many more liberals in the Tocquevillian tradition, and we even have economic radicals, except this time the determination of emancipation is that of the free market rather than the socialization of the means of production.

That last exception is fundamentally important to future politics and scholarship. One of the most unfortunate gaps we have seen in the twentieth century is the gap between democrats of socialist and liberal persuasion. In many places, most notably in the third world, democratic socialists have been obliged to ally with revolutionary socialists, while liberal democrats have felt obliged to throw their hat in the ring with authoritarian and dictatorial governments. Instead of the normative splits being over the measure of democracy in the system, the major divergences were over which elites would rule and to what purpose the coercive power of the state might be pushed.

As communist party led states fall, or as they become modified and accept the principles of liberal democracy, the traditional oppositions might be recast. Instead of an opposition between socialist and bourgeois politicians and scholars, with the positions of each on democracy being relatively insignificant, the measure of commitment to democracy might become the new line that divides: democrats of liberal and socialist stripe vs. authoritarian advocates of moral/racial purity or of free market survival. This becomes then the debate between those of authoritarian inclination and those who insist on normative principles that can be found beyond the here and now, who find freedom and democracy an ideal to be sought rather than a tradition to be defended or a luxury that can be put off to some future time. This emphasis on a democratic ideal may become especially important in the conflicts that will inevitably surround the period of post-communist transition.

Several Polish sociologists have noted that systemic transformation in Poland may be obstructed by the distribution of interests generated by the old system (Mokrzycki, 1990; Wesolowski, 1990). In fact, Cichomski (1989) has demonstrated that the workers in December 1988 who had relatively strong feelings about being underpaid, quite apart from their actual

material situation, were more confident in the old political economic system and less supportive of market transformations. This could suggest, then, that democratic transition in Poland could well prove difficult, if that democracy is to be based on a market system with an empowered civil society rather than a market system imposed by a power elite with a democratic rhetoric.

The heritage of Solidarity can, however, be understood as a struggle of a democratic civil society against a state. The critical sociologies of Poland in the 1980's certainly reflect this conflict between democracy and dictatorship, between civil society and state repression. But the constitution of a democracy where the conflict between civil society and state no longer dominates public discourse demands that an alternative kind of normative foundation, rooted in democracy, be made explicit. Otherwise, this normative commitment could easily be replaced by other principles that once again subordinate the individual to a system, except this time one that demands some kind of functional rationality or national integration.

Fortunately at the very time that historical developments have led to the possible recasting of just such a intellectual and practical politics, philosophical developments have moved to buttress just such a move. I have been convinced by the arguments of Jurgen Habermas and his colleagues that there is a normative foundation that might be introduced that makes equality an ancillary, even if it is not a foundational, aspect of justice. To avoid a long philosophical argument here, we might argue simply that a procedural, rather than substantive, notion of justice is essential for providing this normative foundation for sociology. Democracy, rather than equality or freedom, might reflect this difference. Held (1987) provides a lengthy discussion of different models of democracy, and the below "foundation" is inspired by his discussion as well as that of Dahl (1982).

Normative Foundation #5: Social justice and therefore the good society depend on having an open public space where social problems can be recognized, their origins debated, and their solutions raised and acted upon. This means further that each actor must have access to the public sphere, so that s/he can put forward before the community that grievance which s/he is in a special position to recognize. The public sphere must be so constituted so that each problem can be fairly and openly discussed, so that no position or argument is repressed without having its fair hearing, and no position or argument is accepted without being available for critical scrutiny and open criticism. The solutions open public debate obtain must then be implementable and realizeable. This means that the public must have an institution

of sufficient power and sufficient responsiveness so that its decisions can be enforced. Finally, this instrument of enforcement cannot be so powerful as to be able to override or eliminate the conditions which enable the openness of the public sphere to be reproduced. This, in effect, is the model of a democratized society and a democratized state, connected by an open public sphere.

One can diagram this normative foundation so (see appendix):

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

Presenting this in diagrammatic fashion, we can more clearly establish empirical problems.

Let me consider each briefly in turn, beginning with an identification of each of these concepts:

1) civil society: the "non-state" sphere of social activity. This does not traditionally include the family, but under the influence of feminist theory, it can. It also includes voluntary associations like trade unions, privately owned and managed economic enterprises, religious organizations and so on.

2) political society: the "representative" sphere of social activity. This includes all those who seek to become, or who are, elected officials whose power is delegated to them by civil society. This therefore includes political parties.

3) the state: the "administrative/coercive" sphere of social activity. This includes all legitimate uses of violence, as well as other exercises of public power whose range is not limited by anything other than the guarantee that the public sphere continues to remain open and influential.

4) the public sphere: the "informational" sphere of social activity. This includes all media of information, but also less formal sites for the actual exchange and debate of viewpoints.

These four basic concepts are connected through various mechanisms. The civil society is the source of all authority for action. It delegates certain responsibilities to political society as its representatives. Although political society is obliged to participate regularly in the public sphere in order to inform civil society of its activities, civil society must also have direct access to this public sphere so that the politicians' authority can be challenged not only in the formal electoral arena in which they are elected, but also in the matter of specific issues which the public sphere

addresses. In particular, this is one place where social movements are important, for they represent a relatively unmediated form of power directly from civil society that can challenge the institutionalized bases of politicians.

The state is delegated power by those representatives of civil society in political society. Because the state is the institution which can effect the policies decided in the public sphere, it must have sufficient resources, of both material and moral quality, to enable it to act. One of the principal activities of this state is to ensure the conditions which allow for the empowerment of civil society and the equal participatory potential of its actors in the public sphere. In that case, certain rights must be realized, including the guarantee of civil (e.g. freedom of speech) and political rights (e.g. one person one vote). It must also assure, however, certain economic rights (a minimum standard of living that would allow participation) and social rights (a minimum level of education that would allow participation). Finally, it must also assure reproductive rights, where women would have freedom of choice as whether to bear, or not bear, children, in order to assure that public participation be not gendered. The empowerment of civil society thus would not only assure effective public participation, but it would also create the conditions to assure that the state's power is also restrained.

Political society need not only delegate responsibilities to the state. It also can delegate responsibilities to civil society. The very idea in the United States, for instance, that utilities should be privately owned is an example of this delegation of what most nations consider a public responsibility to civil society.

Of what use is this ideal model? Although not used explicitly by Polish social scientists, I believe this model can incorporate some of the basic themes of that social science in the 1980's that were explicitly concerned with matters of social justice, even if inequality was not the major theme that they addressed. Instead, it seems that from 1980/81 to the late 1980's at least, the theme of "blocked channels of interest articulation" was the main theme of critical social science.

POLAND 1980-81 AND THE NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS OF POLISH RESEARCH

In the first period of Solidarity in 1980-81, the struggle for democracy was based on the democratization of society. In this conflict, the struggle by voluntary associations for independence from the state was the foundation for the establishment of a means of defense for certain civil liberties. Within civil society's associations, too, certain political rights were created but these rights did not extend to the political society and its state apparatus. Civil society in this period was virtually, in terms of power relations and in terms of actual size, coterminous with Solidarity. In this period, too, the state apparatus derived its power from outside the country, its legitimacy resting first and foremost in the eyes of the USSR, and its coercive capacity depending on the threat of invasion by that Soviet Union. The public sphere created in this period raised many issues not raised before, and through alternative publications issued forth a new openness that post-war Poland had not enjoyed previously.

Civil society was in part empowered by this state, in as much as this state provided the minimal economic, social and reproductive rights which enabled public participation. Solidarity pressed for an extension of these rights, especially on behalf of those least advantaged, including health care personnel and teachers (see Kennedy, 1990). By virtue of the empowerment by the state, in combination with its new found autonomy, it could also defend itself from the state. The main barrier to democracy, however, lay in the virtually absent connection between civil society and political society, and the sources of the state's resources for its empowerment.

Given this state of affairs, it is not surprising to see in the Polish social scientific discourse of 1980-81 and its aftermath an emphasis on "blocked channels of interest articulation" (e.g. Tarkowski, 1981; Koralewicz, 1987). This blockage occurs before 1980-81 because civil society is not able to articulate its interests, and in 1980-81 because civil society was not able to control political society or the state.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

It is important to note, however, that in this version of barriers to justice as democracy, inequality has no place. The only kind of inequality that was represented was that between civil society and the state, with civil society having no power of societal intervention, and political society having little dependence on civil society. This is especially obvious in some discussions of legitimacy in Poland, where the contradictions between systemic and social legitimacy were emphasized (Rychard, 1987). By contrast, Wesolowski's (1986) more general discussion of legitimacy suggested the relationship between inequality and legitimacy to be quite problematic. As one point of departure, we might consider not only the general relationship between democracy and inequality, but also the relationship of the status seeking mentality and its associated order with the open public sphere characteristic of a legitimate democratic system.

POLAND, 1989-90 AND NORMATIVE FOUNDATIONS FOR EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The theme of blocked channels of interest articulation no longer can serve as the principal argument of critical social science in Poland. Indeed, inequality might return to a central position as the normative foundation for Polish empirical research. It likely will not return, however, in the marxist guise, as the tenets of market capitalism and liberal democracy seem to have won the support of all but the most marginalized in Polish society. We might clarify this new research agenda by returning again to the basic model of ideal democracy listed above but this time with new issues.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

Democratization in Poland of 1989-90 has been mainly in the democratization of political society and of the state, and in the opening of the public sphere. Open and contested elections for the Senate and for 35% of the Sejm in June, and the election of Mazowiecki's government in August of 1989, suggest that the representative capacity of political society of civil society has

increased considerably. The connection between civil society and political society is relatively well made, especially in the direction from political society to civil society.

The struggle for political society to gain control of the state continues, with some considerable progress. The attempt by the Mazowiecki government to appoint a more familiar Minister of Defense, for instance, suggested a move toward greater control by political society over the state and its apparatuses, even in the coercive arm. The local elections in May 1990 also represented an attempt by political society to gain control over the local state. The vigour of the public sphere impresses the outside observer with its considerably broadened scope and greater access to it by those previously read only in the underground. Indeed, it seems also that the public sphere is much better connected to both civil society and political society, whereas in the past, the underground and official public spheres were connected to civil society and political society respectively. Although democratization seems to have moved ahead impressively, considerable barriers to democratization appear to remain, especially in the sphere of inequalities.

First, the public sphere and political society, while respectively more open and more formally representative, seem to have become overrepresented by Poland's male intelligentsia. Indeed, the bulk of civil society seems much less politically active than had been expected (Kolarska, 1990; Marody, 1990). Elections to parliament and the mobilization of various information media seem to favor the participation by above all men of the highly educated classes. This may be less problematic for overall democratization if other classes and women are well organized and their interests fairly represented. It does seem that recent debates in Parliament over interest rates for loans to peasants suggests some measure of peasant representation in the Sejm, perhaps even more than for workers. But this measure of representation of other classes and women in a public sphere and political society overwhelmingly dominated by the male intelligentsia deserves empirical research. Here, for instance, beyond the obviously important questions of actual participation by those of different backgrounds, one might analyze the discourse in the Polish media and in the parliament and government itself to see how it frames the matter of various class and gender interests and of inequality itself.

Second, to the degree a state must depend for resources on sectors which are not from within its constituency, democratization will be frustrated. This is virtually definitional, as the state will be forced to act on behalf of actors who are not within the civil society the state is supposed to represent. This contradiction was most apparent before 1989, when the Polish state was obliged to the Soviet Union's implicit threat of invasion to justify communist party rule. But this contradiction also exists today, where the Polish state depends on foreign economic resources to complete its economic reform program, as much as if not more than it depends on domestic popular legitimacy. This means, therefore, that foreign economic dependence, and the inequality between domestic civil society and foreign capital, will limit the chances of democracy. But this too needs empirical research. One might, for instance, consider how the very uneven economic resources of foreign capital and domestic civil society structure governmental support for investment options in Polish society. We might compare investment projects on two scales: their likely contribution to Poland's overall long term development, and their immediate return to Poland's foreign investors, and compare those projects to similar packages of foreign investment in other countries.

Third, by virtue of this inequality and potential structural contradiction between foreign interests and civil society's perceptions, the state may seek to manipulate civil society rather than empower it. Indeed, it does seem that the kinds of economic reforms the state is obliged to undertake are acting to undermine the social and economic rights the communist state provided. The foremost example of this problem is represented by the problem of strikes. The government argued in its press conference on May 23, 1990 that the wildcat strikes by railway workers on the Coast were an illegitimate means of protest in a democratic system, given that workers have other means of pressing their interests. What is even worse, the government argued, was that their international reputation for business investment was endangered by this action. If the state also becomes too obliged to the Catholic Church, especially that sector which wishes to use state power to enforce its particular vision of gender roles and abortion's illegality, the state may also serve to undermine reproductive rights and the capacity of women to participate in the public

sphere. In effect, therefore, sociologists might investigate the state's policies toward civil society on questions of the empowerment of citizens to participate in the public sphere.

Fourth, a word of acknowledgement to those who consider democracy utopian, especially in these circumstances. The model I have been using does not take into account the significance of a stable economy for democracy's development. I agree with those who argue that economic recovery is a precondition for democracy's survival, and that therefore some measure of dependence on foreign capital and repression of domestic rights might be necessary in the short run to assure democracy in the long run. This is an argument that is worth considering seriously, and I believe it can be considered by asking one question: How is this repression of domestic needs in favor of foreign capital, of building better hotels when more apartments are needed, of making sure airports are in good shape before domestic mass transport is reconstructed, handled in the public sphere? Is it being treated and discussed as a consequence of the power relations of the world system, where the power and resources of foreign capital impose certain necessary options on domestic civil society, whose resources are nevertheless delegated to foreign capital with its conditional permission? Or is it being discussed as the return to a natural system of economy? If it is understood in the latter sense, democracy as a fundamental value goes out the window as power relations in the most important dimension of civil society are jettisoned in favor of some natural image of exchange. This is precisely where the question of the "status seeking mentality" as a preeminent orientation to action may become problematic for the realization of democracy in a system.

Blau and Duncan argue that the status seeking mentality contributes to democracy especially by undermining the legacies of aristocratic cultures. Wesolowski and Mach argue that it might also help to make (post?) communist societies more efficient as work and professional competence become something centrally valued. But I don't believe that the inculcation of this mentality into the post-communist system will contribute to the realization of democratically founded legitimacy.

The status seeking mentality removes the actor from the public sphere, and moves him to consider only that portion of civil society most closely related to his work and his consumption.

What is more, that mentality also moves the actor to an overwhelmingly individual focus, rather than generate the civic consciousness Dahl (1982) finds so essential to the actual functioning of democracy. Instead, what the status seeking mentality seems to do is to provide the system with an implicit legitimation of some kind of elite domination, except this time of technocracy and foreign capital, rather than of technocracy and communist party. Whether this leads to an "efficient" system this time may be up for question. It does, however, seem unlikely that it would lead to democracy.

Nevertheless, this too is a question for research. Thus, not only might we investigate the differentials among classes or strata in public participation, but we could also tie this to the status attainment tradition. We might not only investigate the conditions of upward mobility, but also how a focus on this mobility influences public participation and the civic consciousness essential for democratic governance. Finally, we might also examine the conditions within classes and strata that increase the capability of individuals to become democratic citizens, rather than consider only those conditions which enable individuals to leave their class or stratum.

I am suggesting that inequality research could prove not only interesting but extremely important to constructing democracy in contemporary Poland. But that function might be more likely realized to the extent that a normative foundation of ideal democracy directs its questions. For in that condition, we will not only ask about feelings of deprivation, forms of social self identification and conditions of economic freedom, all matters that are traditional questions of inequality research. We also will ask questions that go beyond civil society to political society, and beyond the nation-state to the world system. It is in these connections between civil and political society, as well as between national and international systems, that democracy's chances will be discovered.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has been about the relationship between justice and inequality, but not as if these were two objects to be investigated in Polish society. Instead, the "justice" I have discussed is

mainly the normative foundation used by sociological researchers to structure their interpretations and generate their research questions. Inequality, on the other hand, is a broad field of substantive inquiry that has ranged from using class structure as the basic definition of society's makeup to examine how social changes are experienced in different places, to the examination of how open economic chances are in different societies. In particular, I have asked what normative foundations have underlaid Polish empirical research into inequality.

Although by no means an exhaustive review, I have suggested that the explicit link between research on inequality and normative foundations has been reduced with status attainment research, even while an implicit valuation of economic freedom remains. This research scheme, although facilitating autonomous research with a comparative emphasis, is relatively disengaged from questions of justice beyond this single notion of economic freedom. Indeed, it limits its inquiry almost entirely to the question of inequality within the domestic civil society. The social transformations of 1989, along with the intellectual transformation occasioned by Habermas's theory of communicative action, have introduced a new potential normative foundation that might direct us to a different approach to inequality's study, however.

If democracy is the normative foundation for inquiry into inequality, we are above all interested not only in who gets what and why, or what conditions increase the openness of mobility regimes, but also how unequal distributions of resources affect the capacities of civil societies to govern themselves. This means, therefore, that we must consider the interaction between several spheres, and not only limit ourselves to study of material inequalities within domestic civil society.

First, inequality might be studied in terms of civil society's participation in the public sphere and in political society. Who speaks? Who listens? How is the public sphere constructed? To what degree is it manipulative of civil society, or to what degree is it respondent to civil society's pulse? Who is active in political society and who is elected? What conditions enable the broadest measure of participation in governance? These are not novel questions of course. They are studied in the "style of life" research tradition in Polish sociology. They are studied in political

analysis. But these also are important questions of "inequality", especially if democracy is our normative foundation. This might be referred to as the problematic of "inequality between civil and political society".

Second, what is the relationship between civil society and the state? What are the conditions that lead civil society to influence the state directly through social movements, and how does the state undermine or enable these movements? Here, the problematic is one of inequality between civil society and the state, assuming that political society can never represent the interests of civil society perfectly. One should ask, then, what the comparative resources of state and civil society are.

Third, to what extent is political society able to direct the state? Even when there are responsive relations between civil and political society, this by no means guarantees state responsiveness. Actors within the state, usually identified as bureaucrats, have their own resources which enable them to resist and/or undermine other actors, especially representatives of political society. This was even true in communist party led society, as communist party elites could not direct those who were their vassals given the strategies of passivity those vassals employed (Kennedy and Bialecki, 1989).

Fourth, to what extent are the resources which empower the state coterminous with the constituency to which it is formally responsible? In Poland today, as in the past, significant resources for governmental action come from without Poland's borders: in Moscow before and in foreign capital today. Here, we cannot only attempt to measure the disparity, but also consider the consequences in terms of social action of the relevant disparities. We might even ask that if socialism is not possible in one country, whether democracy might not be equally impossible.

I have been only suggestive here as to what strikes me as the important questions that should be asked about inequality. By no means do I intend to convey the impression that I know what should be asked, for that is more a matter for Poles to decide. But I do hope that by asking these questions, I might learn about some of the work I do not know, and perhaps suggest new directions for the work we all have not yet considered.

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APPENDIX

FIGURE 1: IDEAL DEMOCRACY

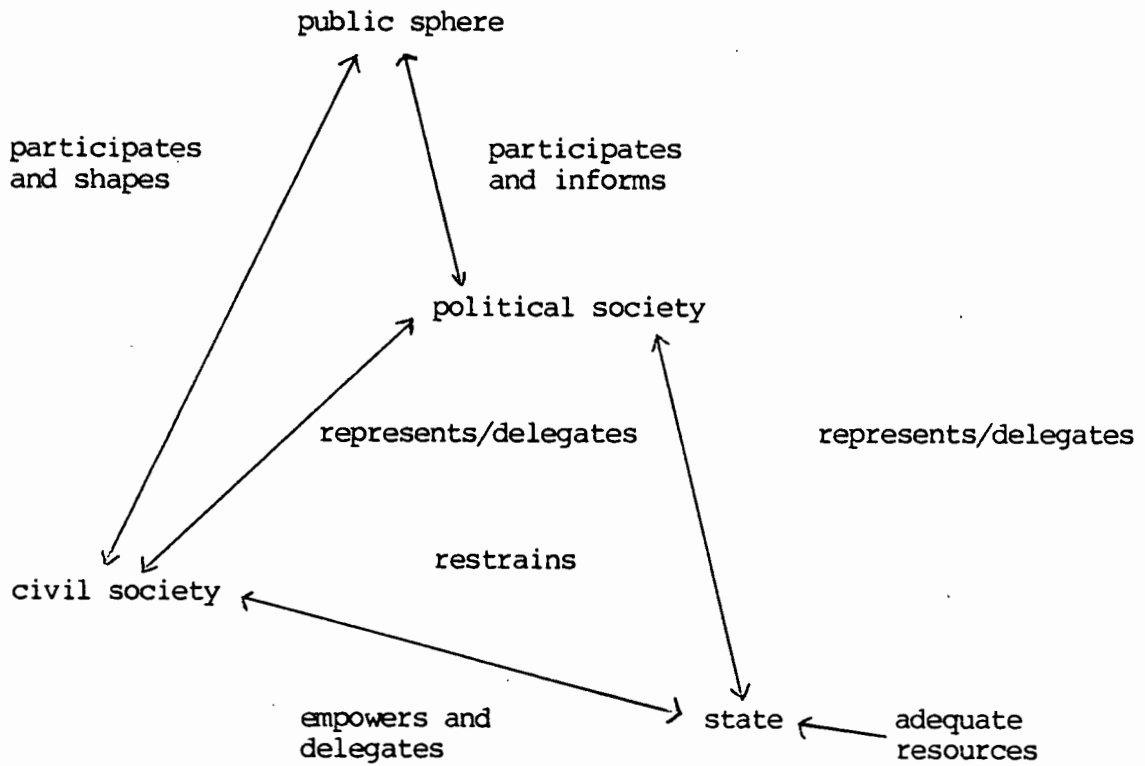
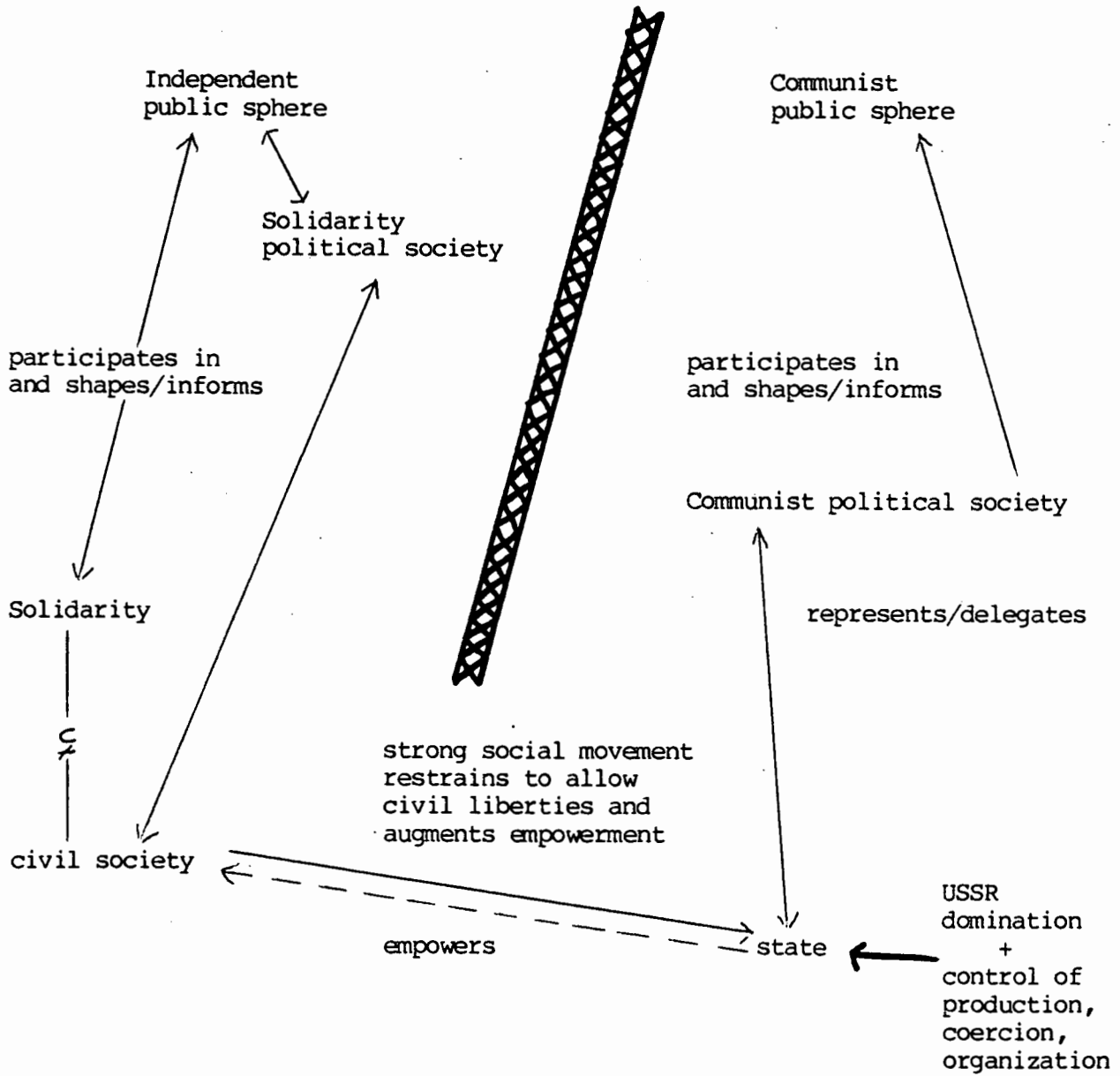
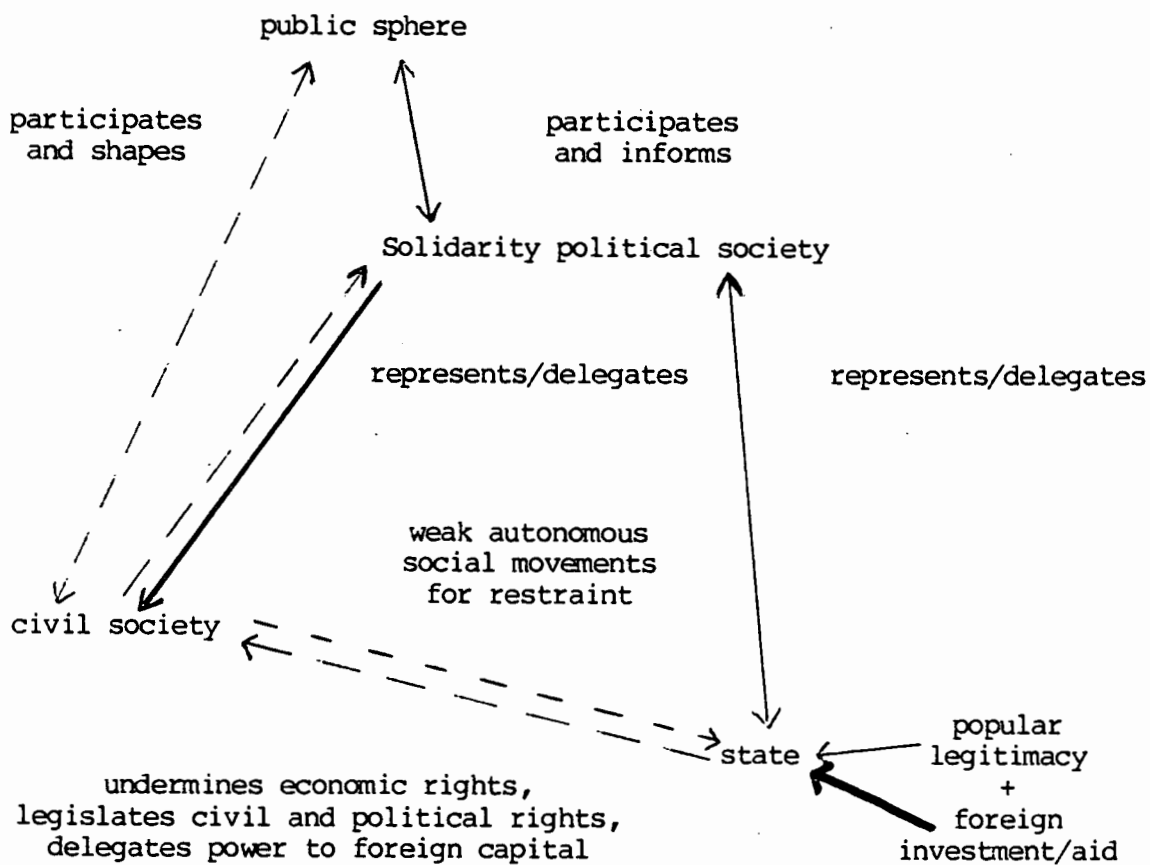


FIGURE 2: THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT, POLAND 1980-1981*



* The boldness of an arrow indicates the strength of the relationship, with thicker arrows being more powerful relations.

FIGURE 3: POLAND 1989-1990 AND THE DEMOCRATIC STATE



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