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Struggling with Emotions in Times of Social Change: Control Restoring Operations in the Workplace and the Family

Abstract: Modernization discourses which penetrated into Poland after the systemic transitions of 1989 brought meanings that were in opposition to those embedded in the traditional models of interpersonal relations. Although the emergence of new meanings pertaining to asymmetrical social relations is typical for societies undergoing structural and cultural transformation, in the case of Poland these shifts have advanced rapidly, especially in comparison with the Western societies. This resulted in the fragmentation of the *doxa*—the set of taken-for-granted assumptions about the ‘natural’ shape of interpersonal relations. Due to this ‘responsible actors’ whose social roles have been so far based on authority have been affected by a loss of the sense of control over their basic social relations, i.e. the relations through which they define their identity and/or appoint life goals.

Using qualitative evidence from Poland we analyze interpersonal relations in two domains of social life, i.e. work and family, in order to identify interactional operations through which the ‘responsible actors’ (managers and parents) attempt to regain control over interaction partners. Comparison across two different fields of social life offers an in-depth insight into the general dynamics of control restoring operations, and the key role of emotion management in this process.

Keywords: interpersonal relations, ‘responsible actors’, emotions, workplace, family

Introduction

In this paper, we analyze social relations in two domains of social life—the workplace (public domain) and the family (private domain), in order to investigate operations in which individuals engage in an attempt to regain control over social reality which slips away from their grip.

Social practices which organize interpersonal relations in these two domains of social life have been so far analyzed in the Polish context separately (in the case of the workplace, see, e.g., Hryniwicz 2007; Krzyworzeka 2011; in the case of the family, see, e.g., Żadkowska 2016; Suwada 2017). In this article we combine reflection about the family and the workplace. We claim that in the case of Poland both in the domain of the workplace, and the family, the cultural models of interpersonal relations formed in the process of *longue durée* (Braudel 1995) are based on hierarchy. This implies that only one actor of the pair assumes responsibility for the outcome of the relation, and the social role of the dominant actor implies control over the other party: supervisor (not the employee) in the case of the

workplace, and the parent, (not the child) in the case of the family. Simultaneously, social relations in these two domains undergo intense democratization which brings about important consequences: changing balances of power, diminishing social distances between people, reformulation of hierarchies, changes in behaviors and manners (Slaboń 2006; Wouters 2004, 2007; Majewska-Opiełka 2012; Sikorska 2009). We posit that due to these transformations the so far ‘responsible actors’ (in the case discussed here managers and parents) are affected by a loss of the sense of control over their basic social relations. Hence the key question arises: what do these actors do to restore the sense of control? How do they navigate diverse and often divergent cultural models of interpersonal relations within the team of coworkers or the family?

We address these questions by analyzing social practices which organize social relations among co-workers in specific types of Polish organizations and members of selected Polish families. We begin by presenting the historical arguments which support our assumption that in the case of Poland both supervisors and parents have to combine diverse but also to some extent contradictory cultural patterns of relating to their subordinates and children. Due to this, although supervisors and parents operate in inherently different relational settings—the former in the public domain, the latter in the private domain—the challenges they face have an essential common denominator. The following empirical analysis of their strategies offers insights going beyond the specific focus of this research, and provides in-depth understanding of control restoring operations which may be employed by various kinds of responsible actors who construct lines of action from heterogenous cultural elements.

Polish Historical Legacy and ‘Modernization’ of the Workplace and the Family

In the case of both the workplace and the family the traditional ‘models’ of interpersonal relations were shaped in the course of prolonged processes of cultural and structural formation—the process of *longue durée* (Braudel 1995), which grounded the ways in which people relate to each other in a body of culturally embedded beliefs, myths and ideology about social roles in a given sphere of social life (see Leder 2014).

A shared characteristic of the traditional ‘models’ of the workplace and the family is the principle of one-sided domination and enforcement of control. In the case of the workplace, this derives from a key feature of the agrarian economic system based on manor farm economy in which peasants-workers were virtually deprived of agency: their role was to perform the tasks assigned by the supervisor in the prescribed way. As a result, the supervisor was the only individual responsible for the outcome (Leder 2014; Hryniwicz 2007). Such an organizational structure influenced the formation of archetypical organizational roles, and the notions about their reciprocal relation: the supervisor’s as the ‘owner,’ and the ‘workforce’ as a ‘resource,’ which must be controlled by the owner in the name of the organization’s growth. This archetypical model implied a tacit antagonism and rivalry between the manager and the subordinates: the manager perceived employees as a potential source of threat and struggled to preserve control often with the use of violence and fear (Leder 2014). The traditional model of family relations shares the key principle of one-sided responsibility and control: in the patriarchal model of family the father was viewed

as the ‘head of the family’ and the responsible breadwinner, the mother—as responsible for the household, childcare and upbringing, while both parents together remained the dominant party in their relationship with the child (Żarnowska 2004). The child was perceived as a passive recipient of adults’ socializing efforts, an ‘object’ of socialization (Sikorska 2019).

In the period of Polish People’s Republic (PPR, 1945–1989) the workplace and the family evolved differently—whereas the structural arrangements of PPR introduced new cultural motives into the model of interpersonal relations in the workplace, they also strengthened the patriarchal model of family shaped in the previous era. The workplace was transformed into a basic unit of social organization (Poleszczuk 1991). The supervisor became a gatekeeper to a variety of privileges and benefits. Juggling with access to benefits helped her to ensure subordination of the employees. Simultaneously, the significance of feelings and emotions rose: personal liking became an important asset (Giza-Poleszczuk 1991). Hence, the growing importance of control not only over co-workers’ behaviors, much like in the manor-farm model, but also their emotions. In the case of family life, the period of the PPR preserved the patriarchal model of relations between parents and children. Obedience was among the most desirable qualities in a child, as mentioned by the parents (Bojar 1991). An obedient, well-mannered child with good grades at school—that is, well controlled by parents at the behavioral level—was seen as a sign of prestige for the family, and an evidence of the parents succeeding in their role (Podgórecki 1976; Bojar 1991).

The systemic transformation of 1989 resulted in the opening of Poland’s borders both for commercial contacts with Western European countries and for new discourses about interpersonal relations regarding both the workplace and the family. The ‘new’ managerial discourse was based on the assumption that market circumstances specific for late capitalism (Harvey 1992) call for an in-depth reorganization of interpersonal relations at the workplace, primarily for a redefinition of the notion of ‘subordination’ of employees and ‘domination’ of managers. Contemporary interpersonal relations at the workplace are now supposed to be organized according to the principle of shared responsibility for the company’s performance (Sennett 1998; Urciuoli 2008). The managers are expected to engage subordinates’ emotions: elicit devotion towards the company and the sense of responsibility (Llouz 2007). Their main task is to control the employees’ engagement. In a similar vein, in the aftermath of the political transformation the patriarchal family model was questioned. The new parenting discourse stresses the democratization of family life (Beck, Beck-Gernsheim 2002; Giddens 1992), the needs of the child (Jamieson 1998), the emotional dimension of family life (Zelizer 1994), as well as the importance of children’s needs and emotions in socialization processes (Land 2004). In this approach, in the relationship with parents, the child is a ‘subject’ and a quasi-partner for the adults, who are expected not so much to control its behaviors or emotions, but to satisfy its needs and facilitate personal development.

The processes of shifts of authority and meanings pertaining to so-far asymmetrical interpersonal relations have been already acknowledged in the case of other European societies (Bauman 2006; Beck 2009; Beck and Lau 2005; Giddens 1991, 1992; Wouters 2004), both the workplace (Azambuja and Islam 2019; Beck 2000; Ekman 2013; Lloyd and Payne 2014; Sennett 1998), and the family (Beck and Beck-Gernsheim 2002, 2007; Chambers 2012; Cheal 2008; Detlev, Widmer and Česnulitytė 2017), and Poland—in this sense—fits in a wider European trend.

The existing literature focuses on cultural and structural developments, in most cases taking one of three perspectives. The role-centered perspective investigates psychological or cultural propensities shaping role-performance and style (e.g., [Leder 2014; Hryniwicz 2007](#)). The social-ritual oriented literature investigates daily rituals and manners (e.g., [Słaboń 2006; Krzyworzeka 2011; Sikorska 2019](#)). Culturally oriented perspective looks into discourses shaping beliefs about desired models of social relations (e.g., [Dembek 2013; Urciuoli 2008; Garbula, Kowalik-Olubińska 2012](#)). However, none of these allows for investigating interpersonal strategies carried out in interactions, whereas in the times of rapid social transition and reformulation of cultural patterns, these strategies, including control restoring operations, determine the shape of social relations.

Our study complements this gap, addressing a set of specific questions regarding emotions and actions of ‘responsible actors’: who has the agency in shaping relations in the workplace and the family? What kinds of emotions do supervisors and parents experience when they interact with, respectively, employees and children, and why do such emotions emerge? What kinds of control restoring operations do they employ, and why these?

Methodology and Data

The present analysis is based on data collected during two separate research projects. Both research studies, i.e. with co-workers and parents, were conducted according to the procedures and techniques of qualitative social research. In the case of co-workers the Focus Group Interviews method was implemented, while in the case of parents—Dyadic In-Depth Interviews (except for 6 Individual In-Depth Interviews with single parents). Application of these research methods allows for analysis of social phenomena from the perspective of the respondents—in this case the ‘responsible actors’—and for taking into account the language they used. Qualitative techniques can also be used to analyse emotions of individuals as well as their daily experiences ([Silverman 2001, 2005; Denzin, Lincoln 2000; Hochschild 2003](#)).

For the workplace, we utilized the data collected during three Focus Group Interviews: with supervisors in the private sector, with supervisors in the public sector, and, additionally, we analyzed statements by respondents who, at the moment of interviewing, held a subordinate position but had experience of being a manager. In sum, eight respondents participated in each interview. Interviews were conducted in Warsaw, Poland. Although the fact that in the case of the FGIs the data was collected in the capital city might have influenced the content of the discussion, the analysis was aimed primarily at revealing interactional mechanisms through which relations and experiences are managed. In this sense, placing interviews in Warsaw, an example of a Polish metropolis, was expected to provide insights into most advanced, rapid, and sharpened experiences of social change pertaining to interpersonal relations. The groups included equal numbers of employees from large and small organizations as well as women and men, all of whom were first-line middle level managers, working in daily direct contact with at least five subordinates.

To explore family interactions, we collected the data using two rounds of Dyadic In-Depth Interviews carried out jointly with the mother and the father, plus 6 Individual In-

depth Interviews with single parents. The sample consisted of 30 families: 15 interviews were held with middle-class families living in Warsaw (the capital of Poland, approx. two million inhabitants) while the remaining 15 interviews were conducted with working-class families living in a medium-sized town (approx. 45,000 inhabitants). The respondents classified as middle class had higher education, the income in a family per capita was above the national average and the interviewers worked as entrepreneurs (employing workers) or specialists with higher education (e.g. economists, teachers, lawyers). Those who represented the working class had maximum secondary education, the income in their families was quite similar to the national average, and they represented the middle-level employees whose work is managed. In the issue of parental control over children social class had no impact, as reported emotional reactions and strategies did not vary across the respondents differentiated by this factor, and was therefore not considered any further in the paper.

In total, 54 parents were interviewed. Each participating family had at least one child aged up to six years (five families also had older children). In determining this criterion, we assumed that responsible actors, in this case parents, expect parental control over younger children, whereas older school-age children and especially teenagers are culturally perceived as prone to insubordination. In the same time, the recognition of ‘agency’ of toddlers is lower compared with the recognition of ‘agency’ of pre-adolescent and adolescent children. Therefore, an analysis of the experiences and practices of parents with young children seems particularly interesting.

The collected data were analyzed with qualitative tools (see [Silverman 2001](#)), precisely with the thematic analysis approach (see [Guest et al. 2012](#)) using the ATLAS.ti software (see [Fries 2019](#)).

Results

The analysis indicates that both managers and parents experience feelings of losing control over the interactions in which they hold the role based on authority. Although these feelings arise in ordinary and apparently insignificant everyday situations, the reconstruction of how these situations are defined by the actors reveals the actual source of experienced emotional states.

The managers aim at forming a relationship with their subordinates which would be based on the subordinate’s devotion for the company, solidarity with fellow team members, engagement in the performed tasks, and respect for the manager and her position as the leader (authority). They experience negative emotions in situations in which they feel that they are unable to obtain this goal. These situations can be grouped into three different categories based on the level of anxiety aroused in managers.

The first category of situations can be given a generic name of ‘demotivation.’ ‘Demotivation’ occurs when an employee loses enthusiasm towards her tasks and the company in general. ‘Demotivated’ employees are seen as a considerable threat: by emotionally disengaging from the tasks at hand, they can decrease productivity of the whole team or even alienate customers. However, managers know how to prevent this scenario from happening: as they believe that excessively harsh criticism is the main cause of ‘demotivation,’ they implement disciplining strategies which are not too harsh or straightforward, and which

provide a ‘motivational sandwich’ instead, i.e. criticism ‘sandwiched’ between layers of positive feedback.

Situations which pose a more difficult challenge for the manager entail ‘emotional disidence,’ that is a persistent form of ‘demotivation.’ An employee changes into an ‘affectionate deviant’ (see Hochschild 2003), when she continuously rejects the emotional norms imposed (and executed) by the supervisor, which demand emotional engagement in the tasks performed. Such an employee is perceived as more dangerous than an employee who is simply ‘demotivated,’ because she is not only emotionally withdrawn from work herself, but her approach may also ‘infect’ other team members and ‘demotivate the whole team.’ Therefore, managers observe subordinates’ behavior and create ‘psychological profiles’ in order to identify who can potentially ‘wield destructive influence’ on the team’s group dynamic. Such knowledge enables them to neutralize the negative impact of ‘mischiefous’ individuals.

The worst-case scenario for a manager is a ‘mutiny,’ i.e. a situation where the manager loses control over the emotional dynamics of her team, and the whole team jointly refuses to accept the norm of emotional engagement in the tasks performed. No informant in our study confessed to have experienced such a situation, but they all agreed that this is the most serious threat that a manager can face, and a probable one, should a manager overlook or disregard the symptoms of rising discontent among her subordinates.

In a fixed organizational model, for instance a manor farm, the managers could take the shape of the company-manager-subordinate relation for granted and enforce their own control, if necessary. However, in contrast with this model, our informants feel that in the actual, current circumstances they need to engage in subtle interactional and emotion work (Hochschild 2003) to form a desired kind of relationship with their subordinates, which at times proves extremely difficult.

In the case of the family, negative emotions, for instance a feeling of helplessness, stems, among others, from the parents’ sense of losing control over their children (the phrase about children ‘walking all over their parents’ was repeated many times during the interviews).

The respondents spoke of such loss of control mainly in two contexts: first, when describing situations in public places, typically in a supermarket, where the child would demand the purchase of sweets, small toys or magazines and throw a tantrum when the parent did not meet her expectations. When describing such incidents, the respondents often admitted that they would occasionally ‘capitulate’ and would ‘budge’ or ‘cave in’ ‘just to have a moment of peace,’ which—in addition to the sense of helplessness—would lead to a sense of irritation and anger among the parents. In this context, the respondents described their feelings as ‘furious’ and ‘mad,’ claiming that the child “would really know how to set their teeth on edge.”

Another context in which the respondents experience a loss of control over their children includes situations where they feel that the children act purposefully and out of spite (e.g., by pretending not to hear when the parent calls out to them several times) or cross the previously agreed boundaries (e.g., by using electronic devices for longer than agreed).

Some respondents emphasize that the children know how to ‘play’ and ‘manipulate’ them, for example by exploiting the fact that one parent is more lenient than the other. In their view, if one of the parents surrenders more easily while the other remains strict, controlling the child becomes far harder.

The respondents also underlined that maintaining control over the children (and, to some degree, also over their own emotions) is facilitated through consistency and ‘sticking to the rules.’ Simultaneously, they admitted that in many situations they could not remain consistent, justifying such inconsistency with impatience, ‘lack of energy or strength’ or ‘laziness’ (situations where the parents would agree to something in order for the child to calm down or stop making demands). Some parents, especially parents of single children, admitted to having ‘spoiled’ the child themselves, causing problems with control, which they recognized as ‘their own fault.’

The key problem that the actors, both managers and parents, struggle with in these situations is the sense of having an insecure position in the relation and, as a result, uncertainty as to whether they will be able to impose the desired interaction script over the interaction partners (be it subordinates or children). In the next step, we identify operations through which the actors aim at regaining control over relations in general, as well as specific interactions, thus shaping the social reality in which they act.

Managerial and Parental Operations

The first set of practices is aimed at eliciting positive emotions and establishing good rapport with the interaction partners. With this aim in mind, managers employ an operation which they call ‘using a non-financial incentive.’ A ‘non-financial incentive’ is a simple and pleasant reinforcement—‘a cool thing,’ as one informant put it—which does entail any significant increase in the company’s spending. Among such incentives, the respondents mentioned handing out ‘some tickets from the boss’ or offering ‘some donuts’ which the manager buys on her way to work. The core of this practice is to make the employees work harder whenever necessary (e.g., when the company faces a rising number of assignments coupled with shrinking availability of workforce), without simultaneously stirring negative emotions. Such ‘non-financial incentives’ warm the relations between the manager and the subordinates, and, according to our informants, enable the former present herself as a ‘likable and helpful’ person: not so much ‘a demanding supervisor,’ but ‘a caring friend’ instead.

In the case of parents, ‘bribing’ the child can be regarded as an operation of handling ‘crisis situations’ by bringing joy and positive emotions in the child. The respondents referred to it either directly (their own use of the word) or indirectly, describing parents resorting to bribes, but distancing themselves by not using the word. One recurring example of bribing as an action aiming at preventing the child’s inappropriate behavior (as seen by the parent) was related to taking the child to see a doctor. The parents reported that prior to a doctor’s appointment they would make an arrangement with the child and agree that if the child ‘behaved well’ (i.e., did what the doctor asked, without hysterical protests) she would receive a small gift or sweets afterwards. Some informants described bribing as rewarding, maintaining an ambivalent attitude: on the one hand, parents resort to this operation because it is effective while, on the other, they are not sure if it is commendable. Parents who expressed doubts as to bribing their children feared that this form of reward could easily lead to an ‘escalation of demands’ on the part of the child and, additionally, could serve as an ultimate proof of the loss of control since the parent ‘has to strike a compromise,’ ‘sur-

render' and accept the fact that the child only acts as expected by adults when she receives a gift in return.

The second set of practices is composed of actions through which actors stir self-reflected 'corrective' emotions in the interaction partners: either constructive (remorse, a desire for improvement) or destructive ones (shame, sense of inadequacy). These operations are aimed at 'straightening up' the interaction partners who display behaviors or emotions contrary to those desired by the actor, and enforcing respect for the actor's decisions. With this aim in mind, managers use an operation called 'serious talk.' Such 'serious talk' can adopt different forms. It may be either a 'motivational sandwich,' as described before, or an explicit criticism. As one informant put it, "If I didn't tell my guys off, if I didn't sometimes yell at them and cuss them out, we wouldn't get along. But ten minutes later, we're all buddies again." In this case, shouting and using explicit language are modes of communication that are accepted by both parties to the contract, without creating tension in the relationship. However, 'serious talk' sometimes involves uncivil and unacceptable actions such as "swearing, throwing things at their desks, scolding them [the employees] and bullying" with the aim of provoking negative emotions in the subordinates, i.e. fear and anxiety. Although all our informants criticize such disciplining means, such practices appear quite popular in the Polish corporate world since all of them have witnessed it. Both forms of 'serious talk' are aimed at reviving a sense of hierarchy in the interaction participants and eliciting respect for the actor who demonstrates her domination.

In the case of parents, actions to 'straighten up' the interaction partner take the form of punishment. The punishment action comprises, firstly, a warning of imminent punishment (to frighten the child) and, secondly, an actual punishment. Such punishment may include, e.g. a ban on eating sweets, ban on using electronic devices; no play with favorite toys; isolating the child (sending the child to a separate room or on 'time out'), yelling at the child, and, finally, applying corporal punishment. In the context of corporal punishment, most respondents set a clear distinction between beating the child and giving 'a simple smack on the bottom.' While the former option was strongly criticized, the latter was accepted to some extent. Some respondents declared that "they do not support violence towards children" but they certainly support 'a simple smack' and readily admitted smacking their own kids while stressing that they "do not use violence with the child."¹ The most common reasons for punishment include children's disobedience, being 'naughty,' 'not listening,' ignoring what the parents say (some parents mention 'being forced to repeat things a dozen times'); 'not listening' at school; hitting other children or siblings and damaging other people's property; and tantrums, making noise, especially in public. The latter situations are particularly difficult for the respondents as they evoke a sense of shame.

¹ A recent quantitative study (Jarosz 2018) shows that 24% of the respondents agreed with the statement that 'a beating never hurt anyone' (incl. 2% of those who strongly agree), 42% disagreed strongly and 34% tended to disagree. The approval level for spanking was even higher, with 43% of respondents agreeing with the statement that 'there are situations where a child must be spanked' (with 4% strongly in favor), while 57% held the opposite view (incl. 23% were strongly against). It should also be noted that approval levels for both 'beating' and spanking show a steady decline in Poland. The results of the aforementioned quantitative study also point to differences in the frequency of resorting (or at least admitting to) hitting and spanking: 90% of respondents claim, that 'they were never in a situation where they would punish their child with a beating,' while 51% replied that they had never spanked their child (Jarosz 2018).

The last category encompasses operations which aim to prevent negative emotions from occurring in the interaction partners. Actors achieve this objective through negotiations aimed at establishing rules to regulate reciprocal relations, i.e. ‘privileges’ and ‘obligations’ of the parties to the ‘deal.’ In the case of managers, this set of practices is grounded in the belief that each employee is a person with a unique potential, involving talents, experience, personality and character, but also their own preferences concerning work and interpersonal communication. To unlock this potential and enhance motivation, the manager must admit the employees to decision making, and establish the rules of cooperation together with them. Managers who negotiate with subordinates adapted their actions to a new model of relations in the workplace, based not on a vertical relationship of domination and subordination, but on a horizontal partnership for mutual profit.

In the case of parents, the negotiation strategy is based on the parallel assumptions that the child is a person and a partner in the relationship, and that both parties (the parents as well as the child) should participate in establishing rules to be followed by everyone in the relationship. The negotiating strategy is based on the assumption that the child is able and entitled to take some decisions, which—as the parents pointed out—gives the child a sense of agency. In this context, the respondents often mentioned a method of ‘simulating the child’s decision,’ which aims at encouraging the child to make a decision for herself, and involves offering choices on what to eat, what to wear, etc., while limiting the choices to a set of alternatives selected by the parent. In contrast to the operations described earlier, the parent-child relations in which the parents employed the negotiation strategy were based on the idea that the child is a subject and a quasi-equal partner in interactions.

On the one hand, the control restoring operations described in this section rely simply on the distribution of positive or negative sanctions. The fact that both managers and parents can distribute sanctions proves that they still hold the dominant position in the relations with—respectively—subordinates and children. On the other hand, they do not feel that this ability is a simple derivative of their roles or established norms. On the contrary, in their own view, it is them who need to invest great effort into shaping their interactional partners’ emotions. In their own perception, these sanctions become a component of interactional and emotion work (Hochschild 2003) through which they attempt to mold the shape of relations and steer the course of interactions.

Concluding Discussion

Our analysis demonstrates that ‘responsible actors’—those, whose social roles are based on authority and responsibility for the shape of relations with interaction partners—experience a state which we call ‘emotional quivering’: they are both deeply emotionally engaged in the relations with subordinate actors, and they feel that they do not control these relations adequately, which leads to anxiety or helplessness arising during the performance of their key social roles.

We posit that the ‘emotional quivering’ is a derivative of the fragmentation of the shared knowledge in which these roles were embedded. Bourdieu (1990) claims that what people do and how they interact is circumscribed by structural constraints: social order is recreated

in and through pre-reflexive, routine practices grounded in the *doxa* (the taken-for-granted body of shared knowledge about ‘the way things are’). When the shared knowledge pertaining to key social roles and their performance is indeed coherent and unquestioned, practices deriving from these roles can be unreflective. This is not to say that in such circumstances the role performance does not generate intense emotions, especially if it regards relations with important others. However, emotions are prescribed to certain social situations, and, thus, predictable and relatively manageable. In the case analysed here, the fragmentation of the *doxa* results in emotions being both intense, contradictory, and disorderly, giving rise to a deep-going anxiety in the role performance.

We see the fragmentation of the *doxa* as a derivative of a series of transformations experienced by Polish society in the course of the last century. The first one was the transition to Communism after World War II, which resulted in introducing social organization based on ideological premises (Marody 1991). The second, and probably most consequential one, was the economic and political transition to the free market and liberal democracy in 1989, which gashed the patterns of interpersonal relations in nearly all domains of social life so deeply that it is often referred to as the ‘cultural trauma’ experienced by the Polish society (Sztompka 2000). The third one was the accession to the European Union in 2004 (Matthes 2016), which accelerated the processes of cultural modernization and penetration of Western models of interpersonal relations into the Polish *imaginarius*. These ‘revolutions’ not only enforced deep and local, so to speak, transformations of the *doxa*, but also, in the case of the latter two, brought Poland into the sphere of influence of global processes of cultural changes.

The intrinsic heterogeneity of the Polish cultural legacy deriving from these transformations leads to a situation in which the *doxa* is not only fragmented in the Polish society but, additionally, composed of contradictory, incompatible elements. Modernization discourses which penetrated into Poland after the systemic transformation of 1989 brought meanings that were in opposition to those embedded in the traditional models of interpersonal relations. This is clearly visible both in the sphere of work and in the family life: in the case of work relations, the ‘manor farm’ model based on the owner’s virtual possession of the workforce contrasts starkly with the ‘modern workplace’ model based on horizontal networks organized around employees and their personal capital. In the case of family, the ‘patriarchal model’ organized around parents and their prerogatives contrasts with the ‘child-oriented’ model organized around the children and their needs.

This is not to say that the evolution of social relations in domains of work and family in Poland follows a clear pattern towards increasing democratization, and that the changes in both spheres must necessarily go through the same stages. Rather, we posit that the underlying mechanism which gives impetus to these developments is similar in both cases: the contrast between archetypal and modern patterns of relations deprives the *doxa* of its taken-for-granted quality. As a result, the ‘normal’ routine of social practices and interpersonal relations is disrupted. Additionally, the modernizing discourses, both in the realm of the workplace and of the family, steer ‘responsible actors’ attention towards emotions and their own responsibility for adequate emotional management, both of their own feelings, and their interaction partners. As a result, control restoring operations are aimed at reclaiming control over emotions in the relationship.

As Hochschild (2003) convincingly demonstrated, people are able to manipulate their own emotional expression and feelings in order to influence others' feelings, moods, and, thus, behaviors, that is, engage in reciprocal affect regulation (Niven, Holman, Totterdell 2012). Niven, Holman, and Totterdell argue that such form of emotion management has two dimensions: the first is largely automatic and occurs without the conscious effort of the individual. The second is controlled, and it involves "the deliberate use of strategies that require conscious intent, awareness, and monitoring" (2009: 498). We posit that the fragmentation of the *doxa* forces 'responsible actors' to engage in a more reflexive, conscious emotion management, pertaining both to their own emotions (emotional control), and emotions of the subordinate actors with whom they interact (relation control).

In this process, both managers and parents utilize culturally heterogeneous elements, from which they combine their lines of action. The analysis proves that the Polish cultural *imaginarium* encompasses divergent and contrastive ways of understanding the interaction partners and corresponding patterns of reciprocal relations, which serve as building blocks for strategies of emotional management in key social relations. It can be concluded, then, that Polish culture—both organizational and parental—is much better pictured as "a 'toolkit' of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems" (Swidler 1986: 273). Every element placed in the Polish cultural 'toolkit' generates different emotions, giving rise to a variety of tensions—the emotional quivering—experienced especially acutely by these actors who assume responsibility for the shape of relations.

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