

Jędrzej Chumiński

Wrocław University of Economics

**THE IMPORTANCE OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH
IN THE INSTITUTIONAL ANALYSIS
OF THE POLISH TRANSFORMATION AFTER 1989
(BASED ON SOCIAL CAPITAL)**

Summary: The disintegration of the USSR and the fall of communism has initiated a process of transition between the system of the so-called real socialism to the democratic system and free market economy in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. This transition has become an object of careful studies led by specialists of various scientific fields: economists, sociologists, social psychologists. These analyses, however interesting, are often abstracted from the historical conditions of the studied phenomena and processes. The studies on the social capital deficit in Polish society are a good example. The article will attempt to disclose the historically conditioned factors impacting the low level of social capital in the country, especially in the time of the People's Republic of Poland, where the apparatus of repression played a significant role.

Key words: social capital, totalitarianism, security apparatus in communist Poland, social activity.

1. Introduction

In 1979 the eminent Polish sociologist Stefan Nowak formulated a thesis on a specific “void” in Polish society existing between the micro-social level – family and the closest friends circle and the macro-social one – nation. According to his view, “there exists ‘a kind of a sociological void’ between the level of the primary groups and the national community from the perspective of people’s self-identification and their emotional commitment”, meaning that “the social structure of Poland would present itself as a ‘federation’ of primary groups, families, and groups based on friendship, united in a national community with other types of bonds between those two levels being very weak” [Nowak 1979, p. 160]. Among the causes of that phenomenon Nowak enumerated among others “alienation” and the lack of perceived impact on the “institutional set-up” within which the people operate. It is not difficult to notice that what Nowak’s thesis anticipated on Polish soil was a discussion growing in popularity in western science about the role of social capital in social and economic development. The paradox is that thirty years later in the

Diagnoza Społeczna (Social Diagnosis) study the authors assumed that one of the main barriers for the transformation of Polish society into a “development-effective society” is the social capital deficit [Czapiński, Panek (eds.) 2009, pp. 270-280]. Janusz Czapiński, the co-author of *Diagnoza*, even entitled one of his texts “Polska – państwo bez społeczeństwa” (“Poland – a state without society”) [Czapiński 2006, p. 7], since according to the relatively concordant opinions of the researchers, Poles do not trust themselves, do not care for the common good, are unable to cooperate, do not take part in public life, do not organise into voluntary organisations, remain the least tolerant and civic in Europe [Czapiński 2008, p. 98].

Throughout many questions that arise in the context of the penurious state of social capital in Poland, the key issue seems to be finding out which factors in history could make Poles suffer from such a lasting predisposition to distrust and atrophy of the capabilities to cooperate. The researchers dealing with this issues actually point out to the mental properties of the Slavs, the consequences of the organisational culture of the folwark (a serfdom-based farm), a legacy of the dual nature of Europe’s economic development, the negative aspects of the Sarmatian and plebeian cultures, 123-year-spanning time of the partitions, and the tragedy of the war and occupation. The emphasis usually goes also on the devastation made by real socialism. It is since difficult not to agree with Piotr Sztompka’s opinion that, in the political domain, it moulded “passivity and apathy instead of legalism, the affirmation of privacy and distance to the state versus civic loyalty”, while, in the domain of culture, “collectivism instead of individualism, opportunism and conformism instead of criticism, xenophobia versus openness towards others” [Sztompka 2003].

The article will present the historically grounded main theories on the origins of the social capital deficit in Poland. The same context will pertain to the analysis of the interpretation that has been so far neglected in the current literature of the subject, linking this property of Polish society to the activity of the communist security apparatus.

2. Social capital – definition problems and its supply in Poland

The first use of the term social capital is credited to the social activist Lyda Judson Hanifan, who used it in 1916 in the paper on the educational system in the United States. Since that time it has been “discovered” several times, both in Europe as well as America [Putnam 2008, pp. 33-35]. The term gained popularity in the Seventies thanks to the paper by Glenn Loury about the differing level of various groups’ social capital [Loury 1977]. Although its real career happened thanks to Robert Putman, who defined social capital in his book from 1993 as such “characteristics of an organisation, society as trust, norms and links that can increase the society’s efficiency facilitating coordinated actions” [Putnam 1995, p. 134]. At the end of the 20th century, there existed about 20 definitions of social capital, while the number of studies on it was growing almost exponentially (1996-2003 saw about two thousand papers on that issue) [Bratkowski 2007, pp. 60, 69].

Two approaches have crystallised in the scientific literature. The first is represented by such researchers as among others R. Putnam, Francis Fukuyama, or James Coleman. In their approach, it is a network of mutual trust and norms allowing people to cooperate within groups and organisations. In the second paradigm, which is represented by among others Pierre Bourdieu and the German economist Ekkehart Schlicht, social capital is understood as a private commodity which an individual possesses through participation in the social and economic networks. Such an approach can be rather used, along with the inclusion of cultural and economic capitals, to study the inequalities between people and not, as is the case of the first approach, the inequalities between regions and countries [Zarzycki 2004, pp. 45-48].

In the Polish research undertaken within *Diagnoza Społeczna*, a definition closer to Putnam and Fukuyama's approach has been taken assuming that social capital is "the social networks regulated by moral norms or custom (and not, or not only, by formal law rules), which bind the individual with the society in a way allowing it to cooperate with others for the common good" [Czapiński, Panek (eds.) 2006, p. 258]. The authors of *Diagnoza* assumed interpersonal trust, voluntary membership in an organisation and service there, participation in national and local elections, and a positive attitude towards democracy as the factors of social capital. The data concerning Poland negatively deviate in all these areas from the other countries in the scope of the study. The data concerning trust are especially meaningful. As little as 13.4% of Poles declared in 2009 that "most of the people cannot be trusted". This was the lowest percentage among the studied European countries and as much as four times lower than in Belgium and Norway, which scored the highest indexes (32% on average in Europe – data for 2008). Equally meaningful are the data concerning the answer to the question: "Do the people try to be helpful?". Only 11.7% of Poles thought so, whereas the average for all the studied countries was 26.5%.

As meagre was the proportion of Poles who participated in voluntary organisations. It is enough to say that only 15% belonged to some organisation in 2007. According to the 2008 statistics, 58 237 associations and over nine thousand foundations operated in the country, from which only 58% operated actively, while 10% were just entirely inactive. This means that in the first decade of the 21st century the average Pole belonged to about 0.2 organisations, while in Sweden, Denmark or Holland that index was 2.5 [Czapiński, Panek (eds.) 2009, pp. 272-273].

Particularly dramatic is the turnout of Poles and not only compared to the other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, but especially to the countries of Western Europe. In the latter the post-war turnout is estimated at about 70%-80%, while during the last 20 years in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc at about 70%. In Poland, though, in the six elections in the years 1989-2007 this percent was estimated as little more than 49%, while, omitting the contract Sejm elections of 1989, that percentage drops to 47.31% (the average for the nine other post-communist countries was estimated at 69.44%) [Czeńnik 2007, p. 100; Czeńnik 2009, p. 6; Szostkiewicz 2007; Migalski 2007; Dlaczego Polacy... 2007].

Other studies also prove that Poles are characterised by a low level of tolerance towards dissimilarity (e.g., homosexuality), a relatively low percentage of them is content with democracy and only 5% presents a post-materialistic orientation [Czapiński 2006, pp. 13, 17, 22]. What is especially significant, though, is the fact that as much as 50% of members of society demonstrated a high level of dogmatism. This is because it meant a tendency to “perceive and define the world in the categories of US/THEM, and thus dichotomisation of the reality; extreme intolerance to views different than own and inability to strike any consensus with the members of the THEM group” [Jakubowska-Branicka 2010, p. 27].

3. Historical interpretations of the penury of social capital in Poland

The social researchers dealing with contemporary phenomena usually refer to historical research when the issues analysed are difficult to explain by means of the variables used for structural conditions (e.g., institutional infrastructure or social structure). As Mikołaj Cześniak observed, turning to historical reference can be treated as “a sign of scholarly helplessness” [Cześniak 2007, p. 169]. This is the more puzzling since, after Leibniz’s “principle of continuity”, expressed in a known maxim that “the present is fateful of the future” was formulated, it is difficult to imagine an in-depth analysis of the contemporary social phenomena and processes without the inclusion of historical conditions [Topolski 1998, p. 106]. It is however necessary to include both the individual “history” perspective of particular persons and a much more essential level, the experiences of the whole community. What is useful in this context is the concept of so-called “base society” used by Masahiro Taguchi, a society shaped by rudimentary elements typical for each nation such as: natural environment (climate, soil, natural resources etc.), race, language, history, religion, social structure, geopolitics etc. [Taguchi 2010, p. 37]. It is these factors that determine the other levels of the community’s organisation such as economic and political system, civilizational circle, culture, tradition etc. The effect of these factors is the formation of a specific *habitus* characteristic for each individual. The term was popularised by Pierre Bourdieu (although it had already been used by Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Emil Durkheim, Max Weber, and Norbert Elias) and means “a socially established nature”, i.e., a system of interconnected mental and biological attitudes (dispositions) along with unaware cognitive, thought, and action patterns. Depending on one’s individual fate, each individual possesses his or her own *habitus*, determining the reaction to the impulses of the outside world. In the choices made, however, man is not entirely free, as the dispositions acquired (especially during childhood and adolescence) usually become established “irrespective of the consciousness and will of individuals” [Chumiński 2010, p. 99].

In this context, it would be useful to note the interpretations that search for the roots of the low level of social capital in Poland in the very distant past. According to

some scholars, the reasons are to be found in the mental properties and organisation of social life of Slavs, settling in the Central-Eastern Europe in the 6th and 7th centuries AD. It was the characteristics of their culture, among others the lack of despotism resulting in tribal democracy, nomadic character of the tribes, organisation of social life centred around the family and clans, which formed small territorial units so-called "opola", and small size of the tribes, which were supposed to be the factors that limited the trust towards strangers and caused their lack of capacity to cooperate. The Slavic legacy also resulted in the low level of the "social linking capital" – crucial for the ability to cooperate with other people [Fazlagić 2008, pp. 23-28].

An interesting interpretation of the roots for the present unfavourable attitudes of Poles was presented by Janusz Hryniewicz. The dualistic nature of Europe's economic development since the 6th century resulting in the development of a farmer-serfdom economy east of the river Elbe caused the formation of specific mental traits not only among those who carried out supervisory functions, but also those who were employed in the folwarks. From "the owner-employers' side we had full unfettered power and the awareness of full decisional discretion", among the serfs "there emerged an ethos of forced or internalised obedience connected with no sense of responsibility and a need for detailed instructions during work and care from the supervisor outside of it" [Hryniewicz 2004, pp. 208-209]. It is then when the faults of the Polish society diagnosed by some scholars started to take shape – the specific syndrome of 5 x A (alcoholism, anarchy, anti-Semitism, authoritarianism, and alienation/anomy) [Boski 2009, pp. 374-375, 407]. The paradox is that what occurred in the times of PRL was a restitution of folwark economy. What occurred was a phenomenon labelled by Hryniewicz as "cultural regression", which meant that the behaviour and value system during the times of the so-called People's Poland copied the patterns from the times of folwark economy because of the conditions of the system [Hryniewicz 2007, pp. 35-38; also on this: Bendyk 2008, pp. 29-36; Sosnowska 2008, pp. 37-40].

An important trend within the search for the causes of the low level social capital in Poland is research concerning the consequences of Poland's loss of independent state existence for 123 years. Andrzej Nowak rightly remarked that "the three empires sought to raise subjects not citizens". On the other hand, a nation devoid of its country had to protect itself from denationalisation by means of self-organisation. The multitude of foundations for social welfare maintaining hospitals, orphanages, poorhouses, and charity institutions was a Polish phenomenon. Various private health insurances and mutual insurances as well as educational and sport associations aimed at promoting social solidarity and national identity were numerous. What is worth noting separately is highly numerous economic initiatives: people's banks, credit cooperatives, parcelling companies, agricultural circles, instalment associations, craft, and productive organisations etc. Enough said that, for example, in 1914, 3745 cooperatives organising 1 458 562 members operated on Polish soil. In this context, Nowak's conclusion that "learning how to do without a state, the elements of, we

could say, an anti-etatistic ethos had also a positive side to them in the legacy of the Polish 19th century” [Nowak 2008, pp. 69-71; Frączak 2006, p. 28].

Undoubtedly though, the main factor which social researchers would perceive as the source of the negative attitudes of Polish society was the time of the so-called real socialism. A belief quite common among Polish scholars is that the “mentality and consciousness-related” consequences of communist Poland became one of the most significant barriers in the success of the Polish transformation started in 1989 [Reykowski 1993, pp. 41-44]. Various writers elaborated among others. on “leftist-collectivistic” beliefs and attitudes, “lowered morale syndrome”, “learned helplessness”, “pragmatisation of consciousness”, “defensive-revindicatory” type, “socialist residua”, “socialism post-abolishment living attempt”, “socialist subconsciousness”, “internal communism”, which lasts in spite of disposal of “external communism”, “modernisation capital” deficit, “passive-productive-anti-individualistic” mentality, possibly a “defensive-preservationist-demanding” one etc. [Miszewska 1996, pp. 7-47; Lutyński 1990, pp. 174-218; Chumiński 2010, pp. 100-101; Koralewicz, Ziółkowski 2003, pp. 177-210; Sztompka 1994, pp. 14-15].

The achievements of Polish political scientists, sociologists and social psychologists analysing the psychological consequences of the so-called real socialism, however important, have nevertheless one essential weakness. They lack detailed research attempting to discern which particular systematic factors shaped the negative social attitudes. The same concerns determining the reasons for the penury of social capital. As Karol Fjałkowski rightly pointed it out, remarking that “the isolation of socialist past as a factor shaping the current stock of social capital” would require complex research and one including international comparisons. What pertains in the contemporary studies are general remarks on the influence of “the institutional and cultural traditions of different regions” [Fjałkowski 2007, pp. 467-468].

These papers also do not attempt to verify whether the thesis on the destructive impact of the so-called real socialism system on the supply of social capital in Polish society is true. It results somehow from the methodological problems. It would be necessary to compare its supply right before the communist rule and right after it. For obvious reasons this is impossible. What is achievable is, however, at least a partial attempt to compare it with the interwar period. Especially taking into account that among the four gauges of social capital assumed by Czapiński, there were two characterising social behaviour: the participation in parliamentary elections and voluntary membership in social organisations (next to interpersonal trust and attitude to democracy).

In this context, it should be surprising that the turnout in the parliamentary elections was nearly 20% higher on average than in the Third Polish Republic. In the five elections carried out in 1922-1938, the average percentage of the voters was actually 67% – we did not include the first elections from 1919 since due to the on-going military conflicts they did not span across the whole Polish state and

were conducted at different times. In the case of the Third Republic the average turnout was estimated at 47.3% – the data represents the results from six elections – without the elections for the contract the Sejm in June 1989. During the interwar period all the election results, apart from the ones from September 1935 oscillated within 70%-80%. The lowest turnout of 46.6% happened only after the admission of the democratic system-limiting April Constitution in 1935. This is because the whole opposition asked to boycott the voting. Still, that turnout did not differ from the average in the Third Republic. It is worth stressing that the highest turnout in the last years happened in 2007, yet it did not exceed even 54% [*Encyklopedia...* 1999, pp. 502-503].

It would be difficult to give a straightforward answer to what caused the low turnout in Poland after 1989. Among others, it was M. Czeńnik that indicated that testing various hypotheses and concluding that none of them explains the roots of this phenomenon in a satisfactory fashion. He assumed, however, the hypothesis relating them to the influence of historic-cultural factors to be the most credible [Czeńnik 2007, pp. 217-222]. It still seems that the causes are to be sought chiefly in the issue of negative phenomena in the mental sphere of Polish society raised by numerous scholars.

A second important factor indicating the unfavourable changes that occurred in the second half of the 20th century compared to the interwar period is the percentage of Poles in voluntary organisations. A particular marvel of the Second Republic was a very high participation rate in various types of organisations and societies. Many of them had an estimated hundreds of thousands of members (although the largest ones also organised schoolchildren), e.g., in 1938 the League of Anti-aerial and Gas Defence consisted of 17 647 circles and 1897 thousand members, the Maritime and Colonial League an estimated 889 thousand members, the Polish Red Cross had 9024 circles and 784 thousand members, while the Catholic Share counted 614 thousand members and the Fire Brigade Union 366 thousand. What is also striking is the number of philanthropic organisations dealing with motherhood, child and adolescent as well as adult care. In 1937 there were 1040 care associations numbering more than 210 thousand members supported by 1566 foundations. There were 9121 sports associations which had 521 thousand members (not including military and schoolchildren associations). Also high in numbers were cultural-educational associations such as the Polish School Matrix (having 34 thousand members in 1938), the People's Schools Association (110 thousand members), People's Reading Clubs Association (22 thousand), Worker's University Association (11 thousand) etc. It is worth mentioning that there were nearly 100 thousand non-registered associations operating in the interwar period (in the fifties there remained only 99) [*Mały Rocznik...* 1939, pp. 288, 305, 351-352; *Encyklopedia...* 1999, p. 14].

The time of PRL¹ paradoxically meant a drastic increase of the number of people united in various social organisations. This was consistent with one of the major

¹ PRL is a Polish abbreviation for People's Republic of Poland.

characteristics of the totalitarian systems – their mobilisation-centred character. The membership of, in fact, “nationalised” social organisations was treated by the communist regimes as a test for loyalty and a proof of support for those in power. However, the individuals not eager to openly manifest the joy of the “benefits” of the system exposed themselves to suspicion of hostile intentions and to repressions [Zaremba 2001, pp. 110-111; Chumiński 1999, pp. 350-351]. Yet, such experience caused the membership in numerous social organisations to be considered an unacceptable coercion by most Poles and not a manifest of their own interests and beliefs (which actually should be the purpose of social organisations). This was reflected by the exodus of members after the transition of 1989. Enough to say that just in the first years after the systemic transformation PRC lost 261 thousand members, Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society 395 thousand, Nature Protection League 1340 thousand, sport-related organisations 3335 thousand, while the League of Women that still in 1985 counted 600 thousand currently counts about five thousand. This was actually a common phenomenon in the countries of the former Eastern Bloc. While the percentage of people in Poland not belonging to any association numbered 80.8% at the end of the 20th century, it numbered 87.7% in Russia, 84.7% in Lithuania, 85.9% in Romania, 75.3% in Hungary (in the western countries that percentage was more than ten, or even, in the case of the most socially active countries, more than several dozen percent lower, e.g., Holland 8.8%, Sweden 7.7%, Germany 48.8%, France 61.5%, Italy 60.3%) [Leś, Nałęcz 2002, p. 25; Bartkowski 2002, p. 36].

What is significant is that the low social activity is followed by a generally critical evaluation of the democratic system. Right after the admission to the European Union only every fifth (21.2%) citizen in Poland believed that democracy is the best form of rule, 46.6% is of the opinion that there are “other better types of rule”, while 32.2% declared that “it is hard to say” (in the 10 former communist countries that entered the EU these percentages are respectively: 37%, 45.1%, and 17.9%) [Czeźnik 2007, p. 200].

The answer to the question what caused such a radical change in the current attitudes and behaviour of Poles in comparison to the Second Republic (resulting in among others. a very low turnout and unwillingness to cooperate within social organisations) needs to be sought first of all in the experience of PRL. It seems, though, that the most important factor was the activity of the communist security apparatus, which effectively caused the destruction of Polish social capital.

4. The role of the security apparatus in the PRL in the destruction of social capital

An immanent characteristic of the PRL was the significant role of the security apparatus. In characterising the “communist system in Poland”, Andrzej Paczkowski claimed that “it was always repressive, always criminal – because it did not respect

not only the norms of international law, but also its own constitution – it was always ready to use violence (also the military) on a mass scale, while in its early years (1944-1956) – it was maleficent” [Paczkowski 1999]. The goal of the omnipotent security structures was to force society into obedience and submission. This was realised during all the decades of the PRL with the same methods, albeit with different intensity. The pillars of this policy were invigilation, control, and terror.

It is beyond doubt that what was of most importance from the point of view of the destruction of social capital was the universal surveillance of society. In fact, it reduced what was its foundation, i.e., trust, not only at the level of interpersonal relations between particular members of the society, but also the so-called systemic trust “directed towards the whole social system and its participants (political system, civilisation, economy)” [Sztompka 1999, p. 97]. The deficit of trust was immanently related to the character of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, while “strongly developed distrust” was its common heirloom in the societies of Central and Eastern Europe after the communist period. The attempt to institutionalise trust, typical to autocratic regimes leads in fact to the so-called “boomerang effect”, because “excessive surveillance, control and coercion from the government [...] creates resentment and cynicism and undermines trust towards it [...]” [Sztompka 2007, pp. 294, 359].

It is still difficult to be surprised by this situation taking into account the scale of denunciatory activities, control, and terror in the PRL. The scale of these phenomena was significantly high especially in the first period until 1956. As A. Paczkowski put it, a “conquest of the country” occurred in 1944-1947, followed by “mass terror” resulting in the arrest of tens of thousands of people considered by the regime political enemies, while in 1948-1956 a “conquest of society” was made with the use of “widespread terror”, which meant that everybody could become an “object of active interest” for the security apparatus [Paczkowski 1999, p. 56].

While as of July 1945 the number of delators was still estimated at about 3.5 thousand, the intensification of recruitment occurred between the referendum (June 1946) and the elections (January 1947), when, as one of the reports told, they “were recruiting wherever possible and whoever possible”. In consequence, as early as mid 1948, 53.1 thousand secret collaborators appeared in the files of the Security Office [Paczkowski 1999, pp. 63-64]. The peak of surveillance fell in 1953, when the number of Security Office’s registered informers was estimated at 85 333 persons (see Table 1). At the same time, it should be stressed that this number was only the proverbial “tip of the iceberg”. Beside the registered denunciators (residents, agents and informers), there also existed categories of non-registered so-called “confidential contacts”, the number of which was comparable. In Stalinist times there were even attempts to specify desirable agency “saturation indexes”, e.g., for the industry workers environment it was supposed to be one informer for 100 people employed, for rural one 1 for 500 etc. Incidentally, 1 denunciator corresponded to 88 employees in the case of state industry in 1951, while for some industries

Table 1. Secret collaborators of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs in the years 1950-1985

Years	Secret collaborators of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs																				
	As of January 1						Registered						Removed from evidence						As of December 31		
	Dep.		Div.		Total		Total		therein newly recruited		Total		therein eliminated		Total		Dep.	Div.	Total		
	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	Dep.	Total	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
1950	1388	48 908	50 296	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	167	5 380	5 547	1706	55 626	57 332			
1951	1706	55 626	57 332	1048	25 891	26 939	742	17 301	18 043	670	175 30	18 200	205	6 492	6 697	2084	63 987	66 071			
1952	2084	63 987	66 071	1359	28 567	29 926	929	18 685	19 614	784	16 854	17 638	259	5 933	6 192	2659	75 700	78 359			
1953	2659	75 700	78 359	2060	30 837	32 897	1153	16 459	17 612	1493	24 430	25 923	371	9 999	10 370	3226	82 107	85 333			
1954	3226	82 107	85 333	1126	23 438	24 564	632	11 640	12 272	1469	32 589	34 058	758	18 863	19 621	2883	72 956	75 839			
1955	2883	72 956	75 839	-	-	-	160	4 331	4 491	-	-	-	1003	38 618	39 621	1720	34 365	36 085			
1956	1720	34 365	36 085	476	11 353	11 829	195	7 237	7 432	1238	26 735	27 973	920	22 835	23 755	958	18 983	19 941			
1957	958	18 983	19 941	437	4 158	4 595	63	929	992	592	12 357	12 949	253	10 049	10 302	803	10 784	11 587			
1958	803	10 784	11 587	229	3 527	3 756	89	2 157	2 246	172	3 583	3 755	101	2 919	3 020	860	10 728	11 588			
1959	860	10 728	11 588	252	2 994	3 246	94	1 949	2 043	209	3 506	3 715	109	2 883	2 992	903	10 216	11 119			
1960	903	10 216	11 119	222	3 003	3 225	118	1 807	1 925	175	5 449	5 624	108	4 405	4 513	950	7 770	8 720			
1961	950	7 770	8 720	177	2 938	3 115	90	1 861	1 951	180	2 103	2 283	129	1 619	1 748	947	8 605	9 552			
1962	947	8 605	9 552	321	6 370	6 691	114	2 718	2 832	254	5 239	5 493	119	2 088	2 207	1014	9 736	10 750			
1963	1014	9 736	10 750	154	3 289	3 443	62	2 013	2 075	215	3 045	3 260	142	2 053	2 195	953	9 980	10 933			
1964	953	9 980	10 933	117	2 611	2 728	48	1 824	1 872	175	2 943	3 118	120	2 429	2 549	895	9 648	10 543			
1965	895	9 648	10 543	144	2 731	2 875	55	1 705	1 760	165	2 951	3 116	85	2 102	2 187	874	9 428	10 302			
1966	874	9 428	10 302	115	2 512	2 627	64	1 865	1 929	127	2 023	2 150	87	1 517	1 604	862	9 917	10 779			

1967	862	9917	10779	122	2 885	3 007	60	2 243	2 303	158	1 783	1 941	105	1 295	1 400	826	11 019	11 845
1968	826	11 019	11 845	149	3 239	3 388	64	2 549	2 613	119	1 902	2 021	52	1 385	1 437	856	12 356	13 212
1969	856	12 356	13 212	120	3 364	3 484	66	2 569	2 635	135	2 346	2 481	86	1 647	1 733	841	13 374	14 215
1970	841	13 374	14 215	135	3 373	3 508	92	2 655	2 747	137	2 275	2 412	89	1 642	1 731	839	14 472	15 311
1971	839	14 472	15 311	178	4 886	5 064	99	3 913	4 012	168	2 472	2 640	89	1 714	1 803	849	16 886	17 735
1972	849	16 886	17 735	209	4 317	4 526	80	3 252	3 332	260	3 310	3 570	115	2 235	2 350	798	17 893	18 691
1973	798	17 893	18 691	222	5 347	5 569	128	4 247	4 375	163	3 267	3 430	76	2 055	2 131	857	19 973	20 830
1974	857	19 973	20 830	218	4 803	5 021	116	3 790	3 906	276	3 577	3 853	123	2 578	2 701	799	21 199	21 998
1975	799	21 199	21 998	174	15 022	15 196	102	2 428	2 530	156	18 435	18 591	84	5 279	5 363	817	17 786	18 603
1976	817	17 786	18 603	184	5 196	5 380	113	4 436	4 549	137	3 488	3 625	79	2 755	2 834	864	19 494	20 358
1977	864	19 494	20 358	203	5 698	5 901	148	5 142	5 290	91	2 875	2 966	47	2 276	2 323	976	22 317	23 293
1978	976	22 317	23 293	229	6 429	6 658	172	5 074	5 246	121	3 930	4 051	71	2 525	2 596	1084	24 816	25 900
1979	1084	24 816	25 900	286	5 771	6 057	172	5 024	5 196	186	3 636	3 822	94	2 757	2 851	1184	26 951	28 135
1980	1184	26 951	28 135	233	6 007	6 240	179	5 339	5 518	203	3 273	3 476	157	2 546	2 703	1214	29 685	30 899
1981	1214	29 685	30 899	877	9 669	10 546	597	6 114	6 711	295	5 885	6 180	75	2 508	2 583	1796	33 469	35 265
1982	1796	33 469	35 265	753	14 474	15 227	689	13 018	13 707	208	4 798	5 006	136	3 509	3 645	2341	43 145	45 486
1983	2341	43 145	45 486	1177	18 075	19 252	701	14 358	15 059	710	8 401	9 111	244	4 713	4 957	2808	52 819	55 627
1984	2808	52 819	55 627	804	22 550	23 354	696	18 060	18 756	470	8 848	9 318	294	5 148	5 442	3142	66 519	69 661
1985	3142	66 519	69 661	757	20 651	21 408	650	16 665	17 315	459	11 199	11 658	299	6 905	7 204	3440	75 971	79 411

Source: own summary based on: AIPN Warsaw, sign. BU 0394/1 vol.3; 0394/18; 0394/19.

the degree of saturation was even much higher, e.g. in the electrical industry 1 denunciator corresponded to 30 people employed, in mining 65, in metallurgy 69 [Chumiński 2010, pp. 22-226; *Rocznik...* 1967, pp. 286-288]. Confidants of other types of services should be remembered, e.g., the militia, which possessed 145 255 “information sources” as early as 1951, 25 thousand of which were members of the Voluntary Reserve of the Civic Militia (ORMO). Their own confidential network was also operated by: Borderland Defence Forces (WOP), Internal Security Corps (KBW), Military Information. In total the estimates are that in the country of 25 million inhabitants in 1950 the number of the people collaborating in some form (as officers and denunciators) with the terror apparatus was 410 thousand [Chumiński 2010, p. 193; Jarosz 2010, p. 118].

That gigantic “army” of delators passed hundreds of thousands of pieces of information. They were used to control society as they were the basis of commencing the so-called “operational cases”. The scale of the phenomenon is illustrated by the fact that in the years 1945-1956 about six million Poles had their evidential folders created. This means that more than 1/3 of the adults were considered politically suspect by the regime (H. Dominiczak even claims that more than 10 million people were qualified as “class enemies”). It is an important fact that the security apparatus commenced more than 880 thousand cases in those years, where millions of people were so-called “figureheads” (see Table 2) [Chumiński 2010, p. 164].

Surveillance and control were the basis of the universal terror (see Table 3). According to incomplete data, the Polish security apparatus arrested 243 066 people 1944-1956, of which 58 825 were members of illegal organisations, 9793 people cooperating with them, 15 981 for “hostile propaganda”, 24 801 for political banditry, 15 919 for sabotage and diversions, 1599 for “fascisation” of the country before 1939, 1369 for anti-state speeches etc. These data do not cover the repressions against the peasantry opposing collectivisation, workers who went on strike, the arrests carried out by the soviet terror apparatus and the other units of terror (MO, KBW, WOP). From 20 to 27 thousand people served sentences in the forties due to political reasons, with the number rising to more than 30 thousand in the fifties to finally number 49.5 thousand people in 1952, the peak of the Stalinist terror [Chumiński 2010, p. 171; Machcewicz 2003, pp. 123-126; Paczkowski 1999, pp. 46-47]. It is very difficult to give an answer to how many people lost their lives then. Only the military courts alone sentenced about five thousand people to death in 1944-1955, one would have to add several hundreds of people sentenced by regular courts as well as Special Criminal Courts. According to the data from the Central Administration of Penitentiaries, 20 439 people were executed or died in prisons and labour camps in 1944-1956 [Machcewicz 2003, p. 123].

The experience of the first 12 years of the so-called “People’s Poland” left a strong mark on the consciousness of Poles. Mirosława Marody wrote about a “behavioral training” in which through “brutal violence” attempts were made to “adapt Polish society to the communist system” [Marody 2001, p. 134]. At the same time, Hanna

Table 2. The amount of cases carried out by the security apparatus in 1944-1980

Year	Cases registered							
	As of na 1 January		Number of cases in total	Therein new	Removed from the case evidence		As of na 1 December	
	Number of cases	Number of people			In total	Therein moved to the archive	Number of cases	Number of people
1944-1954	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	N.A.	846 000	N.A.
1955	–	–	31 706	18 809	3393	–	28 313	30 451
1956	28 313	30 451	21 167	15 950	25 310	18 779	24 170	24 973
1957	24 170	24 973	7 054	3 523	18 212	13 515	13 462	15 226
1958	13 462	15 226	6 146	4 479	6 617	4 916	12 991	15 974
1959	12 991	15 974	4 919	3 589	6 721	5 160	11 189	14 207
1960	11 189	14 207	5 247	4 028	7 482	6 110	8 954	11 228
1961	8 954	11 228	7 010	5 251	5 307	3 896	10 657	13 113
1962	10 657	13 113	6 582	4 787	6 123	4 470	11 116	14 769
1963	11 116	14 769	3 930	2 991	5 894	4 442	9 152	14 390
1964	9152	14 390	2 391	1 938	5 887	5 106	5 656	10 826
1965	5 656	10 826	2 344	1 807	3 015	2 403	4 985	10 505
1966	4 985	10 505	1 881	1 645	2 287	1 987	4 579	10 197
1967	4 579	10 197	2 270	1 966	1 934	1 728	4 915	10 434
1968	4 915	10 434	3 768	3 285	1 988	1 517	6 695	13 089
1969	6 695	13 089	2 943	2 600	2 198	1 862	7 440	14 375
1970	7 740	14 375	5 755	4 787	2 785	1 831	10 410	17 232
1971	10 410	17 232	6 850	5 910	2 232	1 699	15 028	21 456
1972	15 028	21 456	5 979	5 029	4 117	3 034	16 890	23 227
1973	16 890	23 227	4 525	3 668	3 427	2 571	17 988	25 748
1974	17 988	25 748	4 443	3 503	7 697	6 558	14 734	23 794
1975	14 734	23 794	12 935	5 107	14 391	6 217	13 278	18 426
1976	13 278	18 426	6 890	6 334	7 718	6 920	12 450	15 805
1977	12 450	15 805	6 945	6 374	6 742	6 008	12 653	15 843
1978	12 653	15 843	7 045	5 639	6 869	5 368	12 829	15 899
1979	12 829	15 899	–	6 119	–	5 313	13 565	16 067
1980	13 565	16 067	–	8 200	–	6 697	15 037	–

Comment: Only the general number of cases is known for the years 1944-1954.

Source: AIPN Warsaw, sign. BU 0394/1 vol.1, *Stan i ruch spraw operacyjnych w kraju (wszystkie kategorie razem) w poszczególnych latach od 1955 do 1967*, p. 4. Data for the following years based on various reports of the security authorities: sign. BU 0394/2 vol. 1-5, 0394/3 vol. 1, 0394/4 vol. 1-5, 0394/5 vol. 1-3, 0394/6 vol. 1-4, 0394/7 vol. 1-5, 0394/8 vol. 1-6, 0394/9 vol. 1-14, 0394/10 vol. 1-11, 0394/11 vol. 1-7.

Table 3. Number of arrested by the Security Office and Service according to the category of offences in 1944-1980

Arrested acc. to the category of offences	Years				Total
	1944-1949	1950-1956	1957-1970	1971-1980	
Espionage	2 005	2 497	349	113	4 964
Members of illegal organisations	46 323	12 502	566	60	59 451
Collaboration with illegal organisations	7 968	1 825	–	–	9 793
Terror, political banditry, homicides, and assaults	19 319	5 482	212	67	25 080
Diversion, sabotage, and economic pestering	8 364	7 555	2675	2128	20 722
Anti-state speeches	910	459	466	63	1 898
Hostile propaganda, distribution of leaflets, anonymous, and threatening letters	4 477	11 504	1287	201	17 469
Hostile activity of the clergy and lay people*	–	–	420	25	445
Jehovah witnesses	6	288	507	22	823
Betrayal of state secret	13	70	47	62	192
Illegal crossing of the border and smuggling of people abroad	3 682	5 286	459	143	9570
Illegal possession of firearms	21 534	4 889	257	37	26 717
Fascist activity until 1939	1 194	405	2	–	1 601
Occupation-time offences (war crimes, cooperation of Volksdeutsche with the Germans)	3 6061	3 542	281	5	39 889
German revisionism**	–	–	556	–	556
Desertion	3 893	423	1	–	4 317
On-duty offences of the Security Office officers	932	1 069	14	–	2015
Other	21 753	6 836	109	516	30 214
Total	178 434	64 632	9208	3781***	256 055

* The data are contained in other references; ** The data are contained mostly in the reference “Członkowie nielegalnych organizacji” (Members of illegal organisations); *** For the years 1971-1980, the data concerning the people arrested acc. to the offence category do not add up to 3781, because only a general number of arrests is available for 1980, without the division for particular categories.

Source: AIPN Warsaw, sign. BU 0326/431 *Aresztowani przez Służbę Bezpieczeństwa w latach 1944-1970 (23 czerwca 1971 r.)*, p.3. The data for the other years based on the yearly reports of the security authorities: sign. BU 0394/2 vol.1-5, 0394/3 vol.1., 0394/4 vol.1-5, 0394/5 vol.1-3, 0394/6 vol.1-4, 0394/7 vol.1-5, 0394/8 vol.1-6, 0394/9 vol.1-14, 0394/10 vol.1-11, 0394/11 vol.1-7.

Świda-Ziemba underlined the fact that the period saw the falling of “Great Silence and Great Fear”. This was because people were afraid that “they will disappear from the street, become imprisoned, subjected to torture or killed” [Świda-Ziemba 1997, p. 211; *Z niewolq...* 2011]. Stalinism became also a point of reference for the later generations, while the memory of that time had a key influence on the following adaptation of the society to the communist rule in Poland. It is difficult to disagree with A. Paczkowski, who wrote: “to secure everyday obedience the memory was enough – collective and individual – of overflowing prisons, draconian sentences, showcase trials, sentences for telling a joke or a rumour, of beating in detention. Also the memory about the fact that the denunciators – contract and voluntary – can multiply in no time, that in the ‘black offices’ somebody else’s letters are read and every phone can be tapped”. Society came “transformed from the ‘Stalinist mills’, of which ‘the Security’, combining terror and control in itself, was one of most important parts. From that viewpoint the years 1948-1956 could be called – as the communist propaganda claimed – the years of ‘building the base of socialism’” [Paczkowski 1999, p. 75].

The regime could refrain from the most brutal forms of repression in the following years. That does not mean, however, that their use was entirely abandoned. The typology proposed by A. Paczkowski recognises the use of “selective repression system” in 1956-1981, within which surveillance and control of society were common occurrences.

During the period of Gomułka the number of confidants fell. In 1960, when the number of informers was the lowest in the history of the PRL, it was estimated at 8720 people and it grew thereafter to reach 15 311 in 1970. It deserves to be pointed out, however, that what spread was denunciation directed to the instances of the Party. This was noted by H. Świda-Ziemba in one of the interviews, who remarked: “what decided de facto about the fate of people were denunciations not to the Security Service, but to the Party. That sinister UB or SB was further away from an average person, who was afraid of the party and militia on the daily basis. People acted differently – better, worse, some were easy to break, others difficult. But in order for the SB to recruit someone it had to resort to threatening, the PZPR (Polish United Worker’s Party) – did not. The denunciations to the Party were voluntary: a wife denounced her husband to be shirking work, because he had a lover; one colleague another colleague to be drinking, because he was jealous of him” [*Z niewolq...* 2011]. What is indicative of the scale of activity of the political police during Gomułka’s rule is that it commenced 46 676 cases of operational exposure, while 9208 people were arrested. Most were detained due to diversion, sabotage and economic pestering – 2675, hostile propaganda – 1287, membership of illegal organisations – 566, anti-state speeches – 466, hostile activity of the clergy and lay people – 420 etc.

Paradoxically, despite the circulating opinion that it was a period of relatively liberal rule of the communist regime in Poland, the decade of Gierek was the time of a rise of the scale of surveillance. The amount of registered confidants actually

doubled from 15 311 in 1970 to 30 899 in 1980. Those people were used in 55 883 implemented operational cases (in the times of Gomułka a yearly average was 3334 cases started, while in those of Gierek 5558). The data from the “B” Office dealing with the observation of people under suspicion are indicative of the scale of invigilation. Only in 1980, 239 thousand people were taken under control, while a year later in 1981 there as many as 500 thousand [Dominiczak 1997, p. 260]. Still, the number of arrested fell. In 1971-1980 the SB arrested 3781 people, of which the most, i.e., 2128, for economic offenses and 201 for hostile propaganda (data for 1971-1979).

The rise of “Solidarity” and the introduction of martial law meant that the regime entered a new phase, which A. Paczkowski described as “mass repressions attempt”. This opinion is hardly surprising though given the fact that 9700 people were interned in total and four thousand arrested out of political reasons. At the time of the greatest repression, about 10 thousand people were denied freedom due to political reasons [Machcewicz 2003, p. 127]. The surveillance system also expanded. In the mid-eighties, there were 79 411 registered secret collaborators, in the last year of the PRL’s existence as much as 96 103 (more than at the time of the greatest intensity of Stalinist terror). That number would have to be supplemented with the so-called “operational contacts” (in 1984 there were 121 158 of them), operational provisions – 17 848, residents – 253 and consultants – 701. That is without the inclusion of confidants in contact with the Civic Militia and those voluntarily denouncing to the relevant organs of the Party [Chumiński 2010, p. 187]. The security apparatus also carried out dozens of thousands of cases, e.g., 22 709 in 1982, 23 708 in 1983, and 23 343 in 1984, in which tens of thousands of people were in the process of exposure.²

The data concerning the period of the PRL’s decline indicate that the essence of the communist system did not in fact change in its whole lifetime. In the prerogative state the existing political and legal system did not allow the citizens any chance to defend their rights. The repression and surveillance scale exclusively depended on the decisions of a narrow band of party management, which could engage the apparatus of terror at any time, sharpen the repressions and broaden the scale of surveillance of society

5. Conclusion

The low level of social capital in Poland after 1989 stated by the scholars had its roots undoubtedly in the difficult situation of the country. It is impossible to elide the consequences of the economic backwardness being a result of the refeudalisation

² See: AIPN Warsaw, sign. BU 0394/14 vol. 1, *Notatka dot. niektórych danych statystycznych z pracy Służby Bezpieczeństwa w 1983 r. (9 stycznia 1984 r.)*, p. 6; *ibidem*: 0394/15 vol. 7, *Informacja dot. niektórych danych z pracy Służby Bezpieczeństwa w 1984 r. (28 stycznia 1985)*, p. 7.

and the serfdom folwark, some mental characteristics of the Slavic population, the effects of the partition period etc. It is beyond doubt however that in the whole catalogue of the reasons for the penury of social capital the most important role was played by the nearly half-century long period of communist rule in Poland. In that time not only there were no tendencies to increase it, but also contrary to that even those resources that were already there were destroyed. Since, if we were to assume the definition of social capital, as understood by Francis Fukuyama, to be “an instantiated informal that promotes cooperation between two or more individuals”, then the communist totalitarian system “consciously sought to undermine all forms of horizontal association in favour of vertical relations between Party-State and individual. This has left post-Soviet society bereft of both trust and a durable civil society” [Fukuyama 1999, p. 11]. That aspect of the so-called real socialism in the PRL was also indicated by H. Świda-Ziemia, who wrote that the communists “possessed an exceptional skill for destruction” against any spontaneous initiatives. She claimed that “one of the essential, constantly deployed strategies in Poland was to break up (smaller or bigger) social groups founded on >>extra-systemic<< values, which – exactly because of those values – threatened the smooth realisation of the existing scenario” [Świda-Ziemia 1997, pp. 68, 238]. Apart from other instruments it was the security apparatus that was mainly used for that destruction. It watched people, forced them to denounce, used provocations and threatening against extraordinary and independence-demonstrating people, and finally it repressed those who undertook intensive activity viewed by the regime as hostile. Jakub Boski aptly observed it remarking that “the presence of the security services in the public life which dealt with threatening the citizens and collecting denunciations of some against the others had a catastrophic effect in the fall of the social trust in the PRL” [Boski 2009, p. 269]. In consequence, a successful destruction of Poles’ predisposition to cooperation was made, their trust towards other people was shaken, the sense of the joint responsibility for the common good was limited.

A separate, yet extremely important and difficult to study problem is the question why no mechanisms which could effectively aid the reconstruction and increase of social capital were yet deployed in the Third Republic.

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ZNACZENIE BADAŃ HISTORYCZNYCH W ANALIZIE INSTYTUCJONALNEJ TRANSFORMACJI POLSKIEJ PO 1989 ROKU (NA PRZYKŁADZIE KAPITAŁU SPOŁECZNEGO)

Streszczenie: Rozpad ZSRR i upadek komunizmu rozpoczął w krajach byłego bloku wschodniego proces przejście od systemu tzw. realnego socjalizmu do systemu demokratycznego i gospodarki wolnorynkowej. Przejście to stało się obiektem wnikliwych badań przedstawicieli różnych dyscyplin naukowych: ekonomistów, socjologów, psychologów społecznych. Analizy te choć bardzo interesujące, często jednak abstrahują od uwarunkowań historycznych badanych zjawisk i procesów. Dobrą ilustracją są badania nad deficytem w społeczeństwie polskim kapitału społecznego. W artykule podjęta zostanie próba wskazania uwarunkowanych historycznie czynników wpływających na niski poziom kapitału społecznego w naszym kraju, zwłaszcza zaś w okresie PRL, w którym szczególną rolę pełnił aparat represji.

Słowa kluczowe: kapitał społeczny, totalitaryzm, aparat bezpieczeństwa w PRL, aktywność społeczna.