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 Economic Growth, Social Structure, Elite Formation:
The Case of Poland

by

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The notion of the "social prerequisites to economic growth" implies psychologically and I guess also logically two important assumptions: (1) Not all societies, at least in our time, are equally suitable and ripe to start moving on the path of economic growth, this inequality having been conditioned by internal social factors peculiar to these societies; (2) societies mature to economic growth spontaneously, "from below", due to some elemental piecemeal changes in their social structure, pattern of accepted values, prevailing cultural norms, etc. Both assumptions need to my mind thorough re-consideration.

Some necessary social or rather demographic factors conditioning more or less rapid economic growth do exist and their rôle cannot be challenged reasonably. But in general the wider the model of industrial society is spread throughout the world, the more limited is the rôle of the internal social characteristics of a given society in shaping the pattern and the rate of its economic growth. We can today seek and perhaps find ex post facto a certain unrepeatable, exceptional nexus of social forces and conditions which happened to exist some time ago when the very first model of an industrially organized society emerged. We can even put on this particular nexus the causal responsibility for this emergence itself. We can depict the actual sequence of historical events as the necessary chain of social situations, the sheer fact of their having once existed being the only and at the same time sufficient proof of their necessity. But the proposition really supported directly by the factual historical evidence is much less general. What we are in fact authorized to assume is merely this: as far as the appearance of the first industrially patterned societal organization is concerned, these social forces which initiated the industrial type of economic growth could make their job more easily in one kind of past historical conditions than in another; and perhaps due to particular circumstances these forces acted more energetically in one set of conditions than in others.

Once "invented" and put into life, the industrial pattern becomes however itself an important part of the social conditions of the world. Now the probability of economic growth being directly conditioned by "blind" forces, e.g. forces unconscious of the possibility of an industrial path of development and of

what will come out of it becomes less and less. The very existence of the industrial pattern in some parts of the world and the moral and political influence of the industrial societies' example are now the first-class acting factors themselves as far as ideological articulation of the organized mass social forces is concerned. The competitive or co-operative, jealous or helpful attitude of the societies already industrialized have to be pointed to also among the paramount "social prerequisites", e.g. factors limiting the sphere of liberty of choice which means in this case the probability of the general efforts toward industrialization appearing successful. To all who are interested nowadays in the social prerequisites to economic growth for practical reasons, the whole human world is the only adequate frame of reference. The whole world including its economic and ideological history embodied and institutionalized in the practically uncontestable cultural patterns highly appreciative of economic growth in general and the industrial pattern of society in particular.

These introductory remarks I thought indispensable as I wanted to argue in favour of the predominant rôle of the conscious, active, organized social forces in initiating and carrying forward economic growth, at least in the historical conditions we live in. No more can one expect spontaneity in economic growth in any part of the world. I am not going so far to neglect entirely the facilitating or thwarting rôle of the immanent cultural peculiarities of a given society. But the term "social prerequisites", being the subject of this meeting, means first of all "the dominant positions of social forces shaping consciously the frame of an industrial society". Each concrete historical and cultural situation opens manifold possibilities of further development; which possibility will finally become reality, which chance will appear as the "historical necessity" to the future generations of historians - depends in our time more than in any other on the presence or absence of adequate socially organized effort. I think the social history of Poland for the last two decades provides one of the multifarious possible proofs for the validity of this statement.

The starting point

Pre-war Poland could not be classified as the "classical" under-developed country in the generally accepted meaning of the word. The total national product as well as the yearly output of some goods often used as the reliable indices to measure economic growth were evidently much less than in the highly industrialized societies, but fairly above the level of many other countries (in 1937 the Polish output of electric power was three times more than Hungarian, Roumanian, Danish etc; the output of steel was in Poland much higher than in Sweden, Australia, Hungary, Spain, etc.). But in general - particularly from the sociological point of view - the pre-war Poland shared many characteristic features with societies having been usually chosen as examples of the relatively backward economic system.

First of all, Poland was a country based on a predominantly rural economy, with two thirds of population living in the village-type communities and deriving their only incomes from agriculture. Hardly eight per cent of the population was employed in the non-agricultural occupations. The family enterprise was the most usual and popular unit of the productive system; the kinship ties interfered deeply with the traditional economic activity thus acting for the unusual strength of traditionalism patterned by the institutions sanctioned and controlled

by the local community. The traditional way of thinking was solidly entrenched in and nourished by the system of social relations almost unmodified for many generations and continuously re-created as the institution of inheritance played the almost exclusive rôle in determining the social status of the individual. The preservation of the traditional set of social relations by the all-penetrating community control was facilitated by the universal character of the social bonds located in the community. This was the very initial stage in the long process of ramification of the social ties leading gradually to the institutionalization of particular aspects of the human activity in specialized formal organizations.

Poland was not a feudal country; on the contrary, she was well advanced on the road to capitalist development. But inert and non-expansive economy strengthened the domination of the typically feudal hierarchy of values with its main discriminating feature: this particular "orientation on the past" which enforced the inherited ingredients in the individual's status and seriously weakened the stimuli to personal achievement. This was an important psychosocial obstacle against broadening the scope of social mobility. Relatively backward economy did not provide much room for somehow numerous candidates to climb up the social ladder. To these factors acting strongly against social change one has to add one more important hindrance - the lofty scorn of hard work deeply ingrained in the traditional gentry culture. The contempt for hard work, especially manual one, was something like the first commandment in the decalogue of the dominating culture being the national bequest of the gentry rule. Making one's living on this kind of work was sufficient to exclude the sinner from the well-bred society. The other side of the same cultural system was the extremely high esteem ascribed to all kinds of "clean" job, the "cleanness" being a value in itself, independent of how the social utility, rationality, and appropriateness of the job and its rôle in multiplying the goods and wealth was estimated. Pre-war Poland was a country with a considerable surplus of professionals and other groups of "intelligentsia", particularly those with the kind of skill irrelevant to the industrial activity. (By the way: the enormous popularity and importance of the term "intelligentsia", embracing all persons who are not manual workers, is a symbolic manifestation of the cultural norm we have mentioned; "intelligentsia" is an all-inclusive word coined to denote the people who are placed on the higher rungs of the ladder solely because of making "clean" job. Such an extensive term is entirely unknown to the majority of the western cultures and for this reason, untranslatable literally.) There was one more important element in the cultural bequest of the gentry rule: the rapid attachment to the individual's sovereignty and independence, called liberty; this particular concept of liberty was rooted historically into the long struggle of the Polish gentry against the rule of aristocracy. Equality of the social and political rights of the gentlemen, won in this struggle, was based on the land ownership; it was the equality of landowners. The popular Polish saying declared: "The gentleman in his farm is equal to the voivoda" (voivoda - a Polish magnate of a very high rank, comparable to the English Lord) - the stress having been laid heavily on the words "his farm". The enormous attachment to one's scrap of land or a workshop, even the most miserable one and constituting no base for a successful economic activity, was the direct result of this historically conditioned understanding of "liberty". The permanent unemployment suffered by the great part of inhabitants of the few industrial centres offered additional arguments to those who preferred the most pitiful but "independent" existence to the position of an actual or potential employee and thus kept frantically to artisan or peasant-like way of life. According to the prominent Polish economist Ludwik Landau the number of artisans in the pre-war Poland was equal to those employed in the whole Polish industry. The industry having been

concentrated in a few big towns - this means that nearly all local communities lived under continuous and practically uncontested pressure of the small ownership culture and that this culture shaped the dominating goals and patterns of life success.

The viewing of the order of the human world as something unchangeable and almost eternal flourished abundantly on the fertile soil of the actual inertia of the social structure. There was neither bourgeois and political nor industrial revolutions in the Polish past - nothing that could uncover the fundamental flexibility of the framework of human worldly existence and make people face the transitionality of the almighty principles of the human co-existence. The rate of economic growth was too small and too slow to be easily noticeable, either. In 1929 there were 2,400 thousand people employed outside agriculture - in 1938 their number hardly reached 2,000 thousand. The popular image of the social structure was as fossil as the structure itself.

I have tried to explain why there were no sufficient incentives to social mobility and economic initiative in pre-war Poland. I have sought the causes in the domination of the pre-industrial type of economy and the perseverance of the anti-industrial gentry culture. Evidently both causes need explanation themselves. Much was said and written already on pre-war Poland having been in a semi-colonial position of a market ruthlessly exploited by foreign capital. Heavy pressure exercised by big land interests on the economic policy of the Polish ruling élite and the notorious subordination of Polish native business circles to the foreign financial and industrial companies, are also quite well known facts of the Polish history. Perhaps that is the proper field in which the basic causes of the Polish economic backwardness could be found. But the point I would like to stress particularly is: the global result of all these intertwining factors and at the same time the direct cause of the absence of anything we may call reasonably economic growth was lack of a reliable social force capable of leading and organizing the planned effort to set the country moving on the path of industrial development. This force being absent, or anyway deprived of political power, Poland was not able to tear asunder the spell-bound circle of stagnant economy nourishing the pre- and anti-industrial mentality and pre-industrial culture which reinforced the economic inertia.

Some dimensions of change in the class structure.

This force appeared in 1945, when the social structure of the country was not very different to the one described above, rendered responsible for the inert and static economic life because of providing no necessary social prerequisites to economic growth. The nature of this force was political and its appearance was the result of a political upheaval. The adherents of central economic planning based on centralization of ownership of basic means of production were brought in power. Enormous resources accumulated on the one hand through the sheer act of the nationalization, founded the initial basis for rapid economic growth and intensive capital investments. The policy of severe thrift which was possible solely in the conditions of centralized ownership and, perhaps, political power because of slackening the rise of living standard, also contributed to the accelerated rate of economic growth. Social changes often pointed out as the necessary conditions of an industrial revolution (and what happened in Poland during the last seventeen years surely deserves the name) did not

belate - but emerged mainly as the result and not the cause of the economic action. The main acting force was the political power and its organized and planned activity. This activity does deserve the name of the "social prerequisites" to economic growth.

As we are interested in the change in the social structure of Polish society, two events organized "from above" by forces holding political power have to be pointed out as those of primary importance. The first is the nationalization of big business, the second - the agrarian reform. During 1945-1949, 814 thousand new peasant farms were brought into being, the area of many others being considerably increased thus providing healthy conditions for a normal agricultural activity in heretofore declining farms. Altogether well above six million ha of land were divided among 1,068 thousand peasant farms. Due to the abolishment of the big land property the so-called rural proletariat, the most mercilessly exploited part of the pre-war Polish population, disappeared entirely. But the agrarian reform influenced not only the social position of those people who benefited directly from the land having been divided: the whole social-economic structure of the rural population as the sinister ghost of the over-population was removed and thus the bargaining position of the poor peasantry fundamentally improved.

The real social consequences of the agrarian reform cannot be however appreciated correctly when analysed separately. Agrarian reform was carried out simultaneously with the beginning of an unprecedented expansion of the Polish industry (how big the expansion was, we can gather from two facts: during the post-war years the number of people employed outside agriculture increased four times, the volume of global output - eight times). Agrarian reform was unable to cope with the social problems of Polish village by itself; only when connected with the nationalization of big industry and finance opening the road to rapid economic growth it could induce a real and lasting social change. Without the growing industry in towns the village in spite of all possible agrarian reforms would not encroach the threshold of an industrial pattern of social relations.

The incessant industrial expansion constructed broad and smoothly functioning channels of social mobility linking the heretofore overpopulated rural communities and small semi-rural towns with the new industrial centres. It offered the owners of economically senseless and irrelevant tiny shops and workshops an attractive alternative of stable and secure employment in industry or manifold auxiliary services. This great exodus of peasants and artisans towards industry which took place in Poland in the middle of the twentieth century differed in many crucial respects from apparently similar process in Britain from the beginning of the nineteenth century. English, Welsh and Scottish peasants and artisans, thrown forcibly away from their farms and workshops and turned into homeless vagabonds and paupers perceived this change as the real social decline as their relatively healthy and decent human conditions were replaced by the melting-pot of the first factories, as they lost their cherished independence and were submitted instead to the greedy pioneers of industrialization and the semi-feudal practices of foremen. The majority of former peasants and artisans in Poland perceived the change in their social status as real advancement - as they substituted stable and safe existence in civilized and attractive urban conditions for a shabby and shaky living in an apparently independent, but in fact severely exploited "enterprise". At least by the young people leaving the land of the forefathers and becoming factory workers, is considered as undoubtedly upward mobility.

One of the foremost results of the rapid industrial expansion was the general increase in the number of social positions of relatively high rank available to the incomers from the "lower strata" (this process as a universal feature of industrialization has been pointed out by Lipset and Bendix in their studies on social mobility in industrial society) and thus the substantial extension of the upward social mobility. This result was in Poland very vivid indeed; social mobility of an unprecedented intensity literally turned upside down the traditional social structure. Roughly half of the present Polish population lives now on incomes drawn from the non-agricultural occupational activity. The notorious "over-production" of "intelligentsia" appeared to be merely "under-consumption"; there are no unemployed members of "intelligentsia" nowadays, although the number of students in technical and engineering schools increased seven times, the total number of students in institutions of higher education being three times more than before the war.

The intense social mobility heavily influenced the place of the family in the class structure - the phenomenon already mentioned by G.D.H. Cole in his studies on the British class structure, but beyond doubt much more advanced in the present Polish conditions due to the extreme rapidity and scope of the social change. Family no more plays the traditional rôle of the elementary unit of the social class: at the birthday table in a peasant house sit together an engineer and a miner, junior or senior executive and army officer, peasant and physician. Instead of being a rough brick in the construction of one particular class, the family becomes often the exchange market for multifarious class and class-like subcultures and behavioural patterns. As the result the traditionally sharp differences in the way of life of the social classes previously isolated from each other are visibly blurring, though their time is not yet over and they ought not to be considered as finally blotted out.

Neither differences, nor barriers dividing social classes disappeared in the present Polish society. The tradition of relative separation of the socially differentiated milieus, long lasting and deeply rooted in the national culture, still influences heavily the dominating customs, style of living, the whole class subcultures. As far as the structure of the family budget consumption patterns, cherished life goals and the general mode of life are concerned, there persist still sharp differences between individuals socialized in intelligentsia or working-class, working-class or peasant environments. When a worker and a white-collar earn the same amount of money, that does not mean their behavioural patterns conform. Serious differences in selection and perception of cultural goods, in educational expectancies and - partly because of this - in the scope of life chances - still are in full force. Dealing with the differentiation of life chances, we face the problem of persistent barriers between classes: the actual equality of educational and so status achievement chances, the necessary condition of the real abolishment of these barriers, demands not only equality of formal rights, but equality of cultural standards, too. As research done by Stanisław Widerszpil showed, among schoolboys of working-class origin only 7 per cent, and among school-girls of the same origin only 17 per cent, dream of the university education; at the same time the percentage of brain-workers' children wishing to enter universities is 30 for boys and 60 for girls. The number of manual workers' children who do not seek any kind of the higher education at all is twice as much as the corresponding number of brain-workers' offspring. Widerszpil investigated distribution of expectancies and dreams; turning to the actual degree of their fulfilment we find the discrepancy broadened even more.

This is an important restraint of the social mobility in its function of breaking the inter-class barriers. As education becomes the chief ladder between social classes and the most important tool of individual achievement and advancement, the persistence of the above-mentioned differences in the actual educational chances reinforces the natural tendency of each social class to re-create itself in the next generations - and so to regenerate the whole class structure of the society.

Some dimensions of change in the social stratification

The concepts of "being higher" and "being lower" constitute the principal building material of the social stratification. The image of stratification depicts society as consisting of some layers put one over the other; as a hierarchy of aggregated individuals classified together due to having possessed some important features in a similar degree. The choice of these and not of the other features is always justified and can be justified only by these features being accepted and highly estimated values in the cultural system of the analysed society. Thus any stratification is a product of evaluation - and evaluation based on indices generally accepted in a given culture as symbols of social position which is always seen as being "higher" or "lower" than other positions. The high degree of universality which exemplifies the social acceptance of the chosen value is a condition sine qua non for strata discriminated being something more than sheer product of the scientist's research operations and logical divisions. The actual emergence of groups more or less stable and lucidly discriminated from each other on particular rungs of the social ladder is a product of the societal institutionalization of positional estimations and their criteria.

This very important trait of social stratification is often overlooked; in the U.S.A., where the theoretical and empirical studies in this field originated and developed, acceptance of dominant cultural standards is so deep and universal (due to the social continuity in the American history) that they easily and reasonably can be taken for granted. The crucial question on whether there exist some generally accepted value standards constituting the real foundation of the stratification system can be omitted. As far as the U.S.A. is concerned, no false conclusions follow this omission. Without going too far into the problem of universality of cultural standards, one can rest assured that the stratification one is analysing is a real thing, a part of social reality.

But in some other societies the problem is not so simple. We can speak sensibly on social stratification in relatively stable societies only, with the same class dominant in social, political and economic spheres for many generations, with the same class shaping for many decades the uniform cultural framework for the processes of socializing individuals. Step by step the value standards, functional to the existing social system and so supported by all means the dominating class can make use of, become integral part of the common culture; they are being internalized during and due to the process of societally organized education; general consensus concerning the inequality of social positions and seats occupied by the various milieus on the social ladder is an outcome of this process. This general consensus leads to fairly real and "material" divisions in the society: individuals placed in the same layer of the social hierarchy maintain reciprocal social relations, accept socially each other, marry their children, enter the same clubs and social circles, rent houses in the

same district of the city, wear similar clothes, fill their dwellings with the same kind of furniture, exchange and conform their views, likewise abstain from intimacy with people "from below" and are full of reverence toward those "from above". In short, they form gradually a rather cohesive social group. Thus the final result of the evaluation of the social structure is emergence of large self-accepting and self-co-opting groups, looking at some with a feeling of superiority, and at others with a feeling of inferiority. The universality of value standards is the main link joining the processual chain in a cohesive whole.

If there are no value standards universal enough, the question whether social stratification does exist at all has to be answered before we pose the next question of how it is built. And that is the case of Poland (and, I guess, of all countries while experiencing rapid social and economic change). Ogburn's cultural lag supplies here the main argument: the image of the social structure and its manifestations in human folkways is in general much more conservative than the structure itself and tends to outlive its changes. All available theoretical and empirical data show that the upheaval in the Polish class structure undermined the old system of social stratification but the construction of the new system did not keep pace with the rapid metamorphose in the composition of social classes and in the web of their mutual relations. I doubt if we are at all justified in speaking of social stratification in present Poland. Manifold value standards intertwine here in highly unexpected proportions. In such conditions any coherent image of social stratification can be solely a product of statistical operations and does not correspond to the real framework of human attitudes and behavioural manifestations of positional appraisals. Two traditional values which had been formerly the main thread in the texture of social stratification - namely the values of "money" and "noble birth" - still compete with the new values, partly popularized by the official propaganda and partly winning acceptance due to their great instrumental significance - such as "social utility" or "participation in power". There is no unique and monopolistic value on which a coherent and stable social stratification, based on the consensus of all parts of the nation, could be built.

Some investigation of this extremely intricate problem was done by Sarapata and Wesolowski, two Polish sociologists. Let us not forget that the image of social stratification emerging out of this kind of research owes its pretended cohesion to the statistical method and not to the real divisions of the investigated universe; but still we can gather from accumulated data what are the main trends in the process of the societal re-stratifying and what kind of positional criterion becomes preponderant in the heterogeneous mixture of the multifarious cultural influences. Such a cautious interpretation allows us to pick out the level of skill and education as the value most often used to estimate the place of an individual on the social ladder. Men of science and teachers, engineers, professionals, and politicians of high rank were most often placed on the top layers of the social hierarchy. If all these different groups have something in common, this something is a very high degree of skill and education these people are generally expected to possess. This value outstripped considerably other values, such as income or "clean" character of work. Clerks and other auxiliary office workers were placed well below the position ascribed to the skilled manual workers; it is not enough to do "brain work" to be bestowed with a great ratio of social prestige; one has to perform additionally a function to which an expectancy of high skill and educational achievements is ascribed.

As Robert Presthus already demonstrated in his study on Middle-East bureaucratic systems, the pattern of prestige distribution in bureaucracies superimposed somewhat artificially on a generally traditional society differs in many respects from the Weberian ideal type model. Making management rational and efficient (which is according to Weber the primary task and function of modern bureaucracy) demands the meticulous observation of particular institutional and behavioural norms, such as conformity of the level of skill ascribed to a given position with the actual skill possessed by the individual appointed to this position, and conformity of the prestige with which the person is actually bestowed with the amount of prestige ascribed to the bureaucratic function this person performs. When other criteria of prestige distribution compete with this functional criterion - the only one permissible and acceptable in an ideal bureaucracy - the model of perfect management is distorted, the performance of bureaucratic tasks is in danger, the rôle of bureaucracy as the tool of a rational management cannot be played successfully. Thus the distance between the actual prestige distribution and the ideal one may be considered as a valuable index when the level of maturity of particular societal institutions of the industrial type of development are measured (also, what is in fact the inversion of the same issue, when the degree of pre-industrial traditionality of societal institutions is the object of measurement). Discrepancy between the ideal type and the actual bureaucratic framework should be treated as one of the most important obstacles which have to be overcome on the way to an industrial pattern of society. Looking from this angle on the previously presented research data we can conclude that the changes in the relative force of values being the basis of stratification should be understood as manifestations of the growing adaptation of Polish society to the requirements functional to the industrial pattern.

The analysis of the changes in the composition of power élite in Poland leads to similar conclusions.

Some dimensions of change in the composition of the power élite

A comprehensive study of the Polish power élite still awaits its author. The detailed data on its composition, internal stratification, prevailing type of career, sources and levels of recruitment, behavioural patterns, degree of inner cohesion and uniformity of attitudes etc. are not available because of lack of reliable investigations. The accessible data on the top level of the power élite are particularly meagre; somewhat better known are certain problems of the middle level of power - élite of local communities and of the managerial (according to Parsons' conceptualization) level of the social system. Thus we are not yet able to sketch a complete picture of the power élite dynamics; still some conclusions important to our subject can be made, as the élite of the middle level more readily reflects in its composition and behavioural patterns the general social change than the top level of power which is for natural reasons much more conservative.

Let us look first at the changes which took place in the élite at the managerial level. The Sociological Research Bureau of the Higher School of Social Sciences in Warsaw investigated the composition of the party "activ" and party executives in all great industrial enterprises in Poland. This investigation showed a very remarkable trend: the composition of both party activ and executive changes consistently and continuously, the main characteristics of the change being (a) considerable increase in the number of people with

relatively higher educational achievements, (b) considerable increase in the number of people with relatively greater vocational skill, particularly engineers and technicians, graduates of technical colleges.

We need here to explain why we consider the members of the party executive as representative for the managerial level of the power élite. A party organization is an institution unknown to the industrial sociologists in the West. The power relations system of a typical western factory comprises no political party units; if a political party does act among the factory staff - it is placed still outside the formal structure of the factory as a social system. On the contrary, the power relations in a Polish factory cannot be analysed relevantly without having taken into account the rôle of the party organization and of those people who derive their political power from the official posts held in the party structure. The party executive is an important element of the factory management; party "activ" is an influential link in the chain of the power control over the working personnel and over the administrative management itself. No major decision concerning factory problems is thinkable without participation and perhaps support of the party organization. We cannot go here too deeply into this very intricate problem, but what was said is probably enough to justify our looking upon the party "activ" as a crucial part of the power élite at the managerial level.

Coming back to the trend we have pointed out before, we would like to support it by some statistical proofs. According to the research results we have obtained the percentage of party members among factory staff with higher education is thrice as much as among those with primary education only. This superiority is still increasing due to even greater prevalence of the highly educated people, among recently recruited newcomers. "People with higher education" mean here first of all technical experts and managers. Engineers and technicians formed 6.82 per cent of the investigated factory staffs, but 13.24 per cent of the party members among the staffs. The relative number of engineers and technicians among party "activists" is even higher and amounts to roughly 24 per cent. It means that among all employed engineers and technicians one in each fifteen belongs to the party "activ", the corresponding index among the manual workers being much lower - one in seventy five for skilled workers and one in one hundred and ninety eight for unskilled. On the level of the party executive the proportions are shifted still more towards increasing participation of engineers, managers and experts.

Important changes were found also in the institutional and behavioural standards prevailing in the factory party organizations; we can reasonably ascribe these changes to the trends just presented. By this I mean first of all a remarkable shift from predominantly ideological to mainly technical and managerial preoccupations; the party meetings become gradually something like technical consultative assemblies; the content of individual and collective tasks confided to the people in their capacity of party members is in much greater proportion than before connected directly with the purely industrial life of the factory. Meetings and everyday activity of party members and especially the party executives become more and more expert-like, speeches and conversations are full of technical terms. Political merits and ideological virtues are no more a sufficient base to perform party functions; one ought to possess vocational education and professional skill to deal with technical and administrative problems

at one table with specialists of the highest rank. In this respect the metamorphose now taking place in the party function of the managerial power élite is nothing more than a somewhat belated reflection of a similar change which already took place in the managerial staff itself; directors and experts advanced rapidly from the ranks due to their political merits only - a phenomenon very often met in the early period of the socialist revolution in Poland - either became themselves graduates of various colleges or gave way to the younger generation of duly educated engineers and technicians.

In our investigation of the power élite in the local communities, carried on in ten small towns in Poland, we have come to identical conclusions. We have found two different types of the local élite, one of them being replaced gradually by the other, this succession being connected directly with the economic growth in general, and industrial development in particular. The élite of the first type holds power so long as the community remains outside the general economic development of the country and does not experience economic expansion itself. A decision to locate the construction of an industrial or mining object in a given community means in general the end of this élite; at the same time it means the beginning of a new type of rule, which demands also a new type of people. New men come to the commanding posts in the local hierarchy of power; very often they arrive from outside the community and look upon their present position as an episode in their career; the relevant frame of reference is to them the general hierarchy of power in the country as a whole.

The two types of the local élite consist of two different types of personalities. The first one is composed predominantly of persons who made their progress in politics due to their propagandist skill and ideological virtues. They were members of the communist organizations from the clandestine period onward, warriors of partisan (guerilla) units during the German occupation, pioneers of reconstruction in the times immediately following the war. Most of them never attended secondary schools and were not trained in handling administrative and organizational problems. What they do know, they owe to their own predispositions and to hard life experience. Placed in the position of considerable power and influence, some of them became bureaucrats in the behavioural meaning of the word; still they prefer however ideological values when defined and estimate situations which demand decisions containing a choice and use candidly broad humanitarian principles in describing and justifying their behaviour. During our interview we asked members of the local élite what would they do if there was one still unoccupied dwelling only and two families asking to be accommodated in it: a poor widow with two small children and a young engineer who will not want to stay and work in the town if the chance to bring his wife to town is not guaranteed in due time. Most of the older type of élite members decided in favour of the widow, while representatives of the new échelons voted for the engineer (several of them commented: "the engineer will build a house for the widow"). Having gradually adapted themselves to the requirements of their power function, members of the old élite achieved a certain level of organizational and administrative skill, quite sufficient in the conditions of a stable and traditional, non-expansive local community; this amount of skill appeared however much too small when adaptation to the conditions of a rapidly expanding industrial community became the immediate necessity for all who wished to keep or acquire power positions. The members of the old élite awakened one day as people "morally worn"; replaced by relatively young men, used to command, feeling their vitality being by no means exhausted - they felt themselves suddenly pushed away from the mainstream of life, "out of job",

a job they loved and were used to, the only job they were still able to be occupied with. That is why many of them behaved in the new situations according to the typically frustrational standards, often plotted against newcomers, manifested strongly unco-operative attitudes toward new style of executive power, grudgingly opposed the imminent change, tried to organize "old inhabitants" or "old, local active" against the newcomers and the politics they symbolized. Thus conflict was inevitable. In some instances it was actually open and manifest, in other cases it took rather a latent form and withered away by itself, no sharp measures having been applied.

The type of personality predominant in the new échelons of the local power élite may be described by the sheer conversion of the former characteristics. Members of the new local élite have in general no picturesque political past; they are highly educated men with formal diplomas and rather high expert skill in technics and economics, trained systematically, often at special courses, in the art of administration and management. They think rationally in terms of expediency and utility, seek eagerly means reliable to prescribed goals, are ready to submit all their activity to the tasks they are entrusted to fulfil. They are expedient, efficient, industrious, full of initiative, and rather ruthless in pushing forward of what is to be done. They are able to guarantee conditions indispensable to organizing rapid economic growth; they appear in the local community, not incidentally, when command to start economic growth was given.

Thus both our investigations lead to similar conclusions. There is a clear trend in the dynamics of the middle level élite composition, a tendency from politically-minded, traditional and past-oriented people to managerial-like, rational and achievement-oriented men. Surely the second kind of élite suits much better the conditions of economic growth. The first type was indispensable to set society moving, to construct the necessary political and ideological basis for the future immense industrial revolution; this important task being fulfilled - it had to be replaced by the second type, as the administrative and managerial issues took the place of the propagandist tasks. The change in the composition of the local power élite is another important index of the growing adaptation of the country to the conditions of economic growth.