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## RELATIONS OF NON-ECONOMIC OWNERSHIP AS A BASIS OF IDENTIFICATION OF SOCIAL ESTATES

*Just as the theory of economic ownership is a prime tool for identification of social classes as units of social differentiation in the economic structure, so per analogiam it can be said that the theory of non-economic ownership can play such a role in relation to non-economic spheres of society, thus allowing for discernment of a number of status groups. These non-economic ownership relations are manifested in monopolisation by particular status groups of various material and immaterial goods and privileges. So far, as many as 18 such non-economic ownership relationships have been identified. The aim of the research is to describe and analyse social diversity of contemporary residents of Poznań. In our article we focus on the empirically identified status groups.*

**Keywords:** non-economic ownership, status groups, social privileges, social diversity.

In Polish literature on the subject there are many works by such authors as, to name a few, S. Kozyr-Kowalski, J. Ładosz, J. Tittenbrun and others, who have considered the differences between legal property and economic property in depth, indicating the latter one as a foundation of existence of social classes. If these considerations refer to the economic structure, then the question of social differentiation in the non-economic sphere of social life remains open.

From among the proposals which exist on this subject, O. Lange's conception adopted by S. Kozyr-Kowalski is worth attention. It encompasses groups which exist in this sphere by the name of social strata the basis of whose distinction would be different kinds of non-productive work.

## THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL ASSUMPTIONS

This proposal, however, has a weakness which is shared, on the other hand, by other theories under the label of stratification, consisting in the lack of distinct indication of particular criteria which are taken into consideration during identification of groups, the result of which is arbitrariness in this respect. Does a policeman perform the same non-productive work as a prosecutor? Are a university professor and a secondary school teacher, who is also called a professor by his students, members of the same or of different strata? Questions could be multiplied.

The conception of non-economic property relations seems to avoid the above weaknesses. It is a foundation for distinguishing groups which are segments of social differentiation in the non-economic domain of global society. Under contemporary conditions the non-economic domain overlaps roughly with the commonly understood budget sector — employees who work receive their remuneration from the budget (to make it simpler, we leave out of consideration the differences between the state budget and the local budgets) being from the socio-economic theory of property — a fiscal pool<sup>1</sup> or to put it differently, a pecuniary *common property*. A similar source of maintenance indicates the community of socio-economic status of persons, who live on benefits, old age pensions or other transfer payments. If the basic conceptual and theoretical instrument serving the identification of social differentiation of individuals in the economic domain, i.e. social classes, is the theory of economic property then analogously a similar role in reference to non-economic structures of social life may be performed by the *theory of non-economic property*. To put it differently, we can say that like social classes are differentiated from one another with respect to economic property relations, social estates are differentiated between one another with respect to the non-economic property relations, which for brevity and to avoid confusing them with economic property can be called *appropriation*. We think that these ideas can be derived from the theoretical practice of Karl Marx although this does not naturally decide about its justness. Marx in his main work uses the term “ideological estates” (*die ideologischen Stände*) to describe the government,

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<sup>1</sup> We think this definition to be more adequate than the term “non-corporate property” used by S. Kozyr-Kowalski due to too wide and ambiguous and so confusing meaning — the term “non-sensual” property is after all suitable for many objects, first of all for the so called intellectual property.

the clergy, the lawyers, the military and the like,<sup>2</sup> i.e. different groups of workers who are non-productive in Marx's understanding. The same notion appeared earlier in *The German Ideology* and in his *Theories of Surplus-Value* in which he uses the term "higher estates"<sup>3</sup> (*höhere Stände*) in a similar meaning. And in the draft Marx prepared for the *Capital*, he introduces the notion of "non-productive" classes connected with the organization of the bourgeois society in the form of a state. In another version of the plan of his work Marx points to the similar character of income of groups of workers whom he considered as non-productive, defining tax as a basis of existence of non-productive classes.<sup>4</sup> If classes in the proper sense, or to use Marx's term of the economic base, are distinguished with respect to economic property relations then "non-productive classes," which is assumed by Marx's terminological convention, are distinguished based on "non-productive" or non-economic property relations. This does not mean that estate relations do not occur among classes (also members of non-economic structures may enter into class relations) although they do not define the place of a class in social structure as this is determined by the economic property relations. We can draw attention to some similar points between the conception expounded here and an extensive meaning of property adopted in the theory of property rights.

According to theorists of this school, expressions such as "my house" or "his car" are not precise enough. Actually the object of property are the rights to use resources. Therefore, property rights may be defined as "the behavioural relations between men that arise from the existence of scarce goods and pertain to their use."<sup>5</sup>

Property rights understood in this way have a very wide meaning as the term "good" is used here for anything that "yields utility or satisfaction to a person."<sup>6</sup> It means that the concept discussed here refers not only to rights to use material things but — in the most extensive meaning — applies to "all rights of an individual *vis-a-vis* other

<sup>2</sup> Marx Karl, Engels Fryderyk, *Dzieła* [Works], vol. 23, KiW, Warszawa 1968, p. 530.

<sup>3</sup> Marx Karl, *Teorie wartości dodatkowej* [Theories of Surplus Value], Part 1, KiW, Warszawa 1959, p. 160.

<sup>4</sup> Marx Karl, *Teorie wartości dodatkowej* [Theories of Surplus Value], Part 3, KiW, Warszawa 1966, p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> Pejovich Svetozar, *Karl Marx, Property Rights School and the Process of Social Change* Kyklos, vol. 35/1982, p. 391.

<sup>6</sup> Furubotn Erik G., Pejovich Svetozar (Eds.), *The Economics of Property Rights*, Ballinger Publishing Company, Cambridge 1974, p. 3.

people.”<sup>7</sup> Not going that far in the direction of the “proprietary” imperialism which threatens with obliteration of boundaries of the concept of depriving it identifiable subjective reference, we can propose its enumerative definition. Property relations in the non-economic domain of social life are manifested in the definite aspects of the social condition of the estate of clergy, the estate of the military officers, the estate of teachers, the estate of academics, the estate of physicians, and so on. Namely, they are expressed in monopolization by these particular groups of some specific goods and material and non-material profits. The relations and differences between estates and in relation to classes are thus manifested — although we take examples from the contemporary Poland — still by its very assumption this theory is of universal reference. However, it is only natural that it needs historical concretisation as:

1. monopolisation of a definite type of position (hereditary or not) in the social division of labour and the profits arising from it, among other things, through basing professional practice on — “secret” knowledge (owners of some definite certificates or diplomas, i.e. the ones which are socially recognized and allowing to offer one’s working skills), control of access to a profession and performing this profession including the permanence of employment;

2. the possibility of entering into private property relations especially short-term or casual (clerks, health service workers and the like);

3. preferences in access to different kinds of consumer goods and services (rebates and servicing without waiting in a queue provided, among other people, to politicians by car dealers and insurance companies, free mobile phones and special services such as Internet connections for politicians and journalists);

4. the right to privileged, free and/or exclusive participation in some cultural and sports events;

5. the right to use company apartments;

6. the privilege to use special holiday homes;

7. the privilege to use special medical services;

8. the possibility of shorter expenditure of one’s work force by receiving early retirement benefits and longer leaves;

9. the right to take advantage of various kinds of price and fee reductions, e.g. in public transport;

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<sup>7</sup> Pejovich Svetozar, *The Economics of Property Rights: Towards a Theory of Comparative Systems*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht 1990, p. 27.

10. the right to wear special clothes (military and police uniforms, clergy's garments);
11. the right to use specific titles;
12. the possibility of using physical force or psychic exercise of power, control of the behaviour of other people;<sup>8</sup>
13. not to have to observe some rules which other people have to observe, which means limitation of responsibility before the law of a given person due to the function he performs;
14. special legal protection;
15. the monopoly to take advantage of some forms of social respect (military honours, the way pupils address their teachers, of clerks to their superiors, of defendants to a judge, and the like);
16. a privileged access to some important information;
17. using special professional language, which makes it easier to possess exclusively certain kinds of knowledge and information;
18. possession of useful social relations which ensure different profits.<sup>9</sup>

Each of the social estates is characterized by a specific combination of appropriation relations which defines their place on the map of social differentiation. The list of the relations is by no means complete as it serves in the form presented, first of all, to reveal some new research problems as well as draw attention to certain aspects of social reality which have not been sufficiently researched so far or have been but by means of other conceptual categories and from different theoretical angles.

However, the concept of estate may be used without any reservation only in relation to these individuals who live out of non-substantial work, i.e. they do not enter economic structures of the society. A lawyer who has a private practice as an attorney at law as the owner of his working conditions and agent of substantial work is a member of a social class.

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. Talcott Parsons' definition of the concept of *authority* as "an institutionally recognized right to influence actions of others, regardless of their immediate personal attitudes to the direction of influence. It is exercised by the incumbent of an office (...)" ; see: Parsons Talcott, *Essays in Sociological Theory. Revised Edition*, The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois 1954, p. 76.

<sup>9</sup> Tittenbrun Jacek, *Klasy i stany społeczne* [Social Classes and Social Estates], *Problemy Humanistyki*, Nr 15/2009, Wyd. WSNHiD, Poznań; Tittenbrun Jacek, *Teoria zróżnicowania społecznego* [The Theory of Social Differentiation], [in:] Tittenbrun Jacek (Ed.), *Struktura klasowo-stanowa społeczności Poznania* [The Class-Estate Structure of Poznań], Nakom, Poznań 2010.

The class and estate relations are not divided by a wall; this mutual intermingling or crossing of both kinds of relations is also manifested in the existence of groups which we define as class-estates or estate-classes.

We distinguish both these types depending on which kind of relations is a more important source of income to a given individual. For instance, if for a doctor employed at the so called state hospital, a more important source of income is his private practice, he is a member of a class-estate (in this case an autocephalic or small bourgeois owners of means of services); if an academic lives mainly of his work at a public school of higher education and not of a polling firm, which he owns, he belongs to the estate-class.

Let's come back to estates themselves. It should be mentioned, among other things, that there is a necessity of distinguishing within the clergy of two estates: that of priests and that of monks. The fact of the analytical character of this distinction does not put to doubt its justification, i.e. monks can also be ordained<sup>10</sup> and thus receive the right to enter the main non-economic relation which differentiates both estates: the right to hear confessions and, in this connection, the right to impose expiation, fasting, praying and the like.

## THE CLERGY

The qualitative analysis below is based on information obtained during interviews conducted in Poznań among the unrepresentative sample of clergy (priests and monks). We were interested in how the position among the clergy influences a definite configuration of features determined by the state.

According to the data contained in the 2002 Catholic Information Agency (KAI)<sup>11</sup> report Polish priests receive mass stipends as their basic income. In a large city parish it is the sum of 900–1000 zloty, while in the

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<sup>10</sup> "Everybody can enter/join a [holy] order and then he is an ordinary friar. And if he graduates from a seminary he is an order priest. And an ordinary priest can also join an order and then he becomes a monk-priest," see: <http://pytamy.pl/question/czy-ksiazdzoze-przekwalifikowac-sie-na-zakonnika-albo-zakonnik-na-ksiedza/1> (date of access: 11.08.2010).

<sup>11</sup> Kunysz Agnieszka, *Ile zarabiają księża?* How much do priests earn? [http://www.wynagrodzenia.pl/artukul.php/typ.1/kategoria\\_glowna.223/wpis.714](http://www.wynagrodzenia.pl/artukul.php/typ.1/kategoria_glowna.223/wpis.714) (date of access: 11.08.2010).

country 400–600 zloty. An additional income is the so called *iura stolae* (sacramental offer), which can be treated as a kind of bonus. Also part of the money collected during the “kolęda”<sup>12</sup> (ca. 20–25%) may be treated as the pastoral “13th salary.”<sup>13</sup> Obviously, the priests’ income is registered — making reports on income is the duty of rectors. Calculations are made based on the honesty and conscientiousness of priests and on their gift for mathematics. The clergy boast that thanks to this the Church can save on clerks and that it limits bureaucracy.

Table 1. An estimate of a vicar’s monthly earnings — 10,000 in a parish in a city (in PLN)

| Source of income                       | Before taxes |
|--|--------------|
| Salary of a catechet at school         | 700          |
| Mass stipends                          | 700          |
| <i>Iura stolae</i>                     | 1500         |
| <i>Kolęda</i> (divided into 12 months) | 150          |
| Other                                  | 100          |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>3150</b>  |

Source: Kunysz Agnieszka, *Ile zarabiają księża?* [How Much do Priests Earn?], <[http://www.wynagrodzenia.pl/artukul.php/typ.1/kategoria\\_glowna.223/wpis.714](http://www.wynagrodzenia.pl/artukul.php/typ.1/kategoria_glowna.223/wpis.714)> (date of access: 11.08.2010)

We should remember that the statistics come from the year 2002 since we could not obtain any recent sources.<sup>14</sup> Even if we assume that there are fewer and fewer people attending masses in churches and that — as priests claim — there are considerably fewer sacraments dispensed, these data seem to be much too low than the actual ones. This is so particularly in case of *iura stolae* and the so called “kolęda.” A provost’s monthly salary in a city parish is almost 1,000 zloty higher than that of a vicar.

<sup>12</sup> Priest’s Christmas visit at his parishoners’ homes.

<sup>13</sup> A bonus paid to employees at the beginning of each year and called “the 13th salary.”

<sup>14</sup> The sum of 4,100 zloty, which a provost earns of a parish church of 10,000 believers (as estimated by KAI) is subject to both internal (by the Church) and the state’s taxation. Taxes paid are as follows: 25–30% of the donation the parish sends to higher ranks of Church hierarchy — this is a kind of “internal tax.” Churchmen also pay taxes to the state as a lump sum. When estimating the amount of taxes and fees paid by a parish priest of a 10,000 strong congregation in the city he pays ca. 352 zloty of tax to the state. Cf. Tittenbrun Jacek, *Zróźnicowanie stanowe społecznosci Poznania* [Estate Differentiation of Poznań], [in:] Tittenbrun Jacek (Ed.), *Struktura klasowo-stanowa społecznosci Poznania*, Nakom, Poznań 2010, pp. 173–174.

Clergy are certainly one of the estates who have the right to wear special garments (the habit, the soutane, the clerical collar).<sup>15</sup> Both in the Church and holy order hierarchy there is the right of using special titles.<sup>16</sup>

The character of “work contract” is one of the criteria which show differences within the clergy. Priests perform their profession based on nomination (a bishop’s nomination for a provost, by decree for a vicar) and these are contracts for an indefinite period of time. Moreover, the priests take positions of religion teachers at schools. On the other hand, monks do not have a work contract which would affiliate them with a definite cloister, they are bound with it through enrolment or application at a particular cloister.

Let’s add that the differences between priests and brothers in a monastery, which result from the formal character of work go hand in hand with the kind of work performed. The priests declare unanimously that in their work, contacts with people are prevalent. These contacts are the essence of their work. The monks declared something just the opposite — most of their time is spent on relations which are devoid of interpersonal contacts and it is they which are most important in their work.

Among the clergy, and here there is no division into categories, there are no contracts for workers as there are among lay workers. The result is that there are no trade unions in the Church.

When analysing accommodation of the clergy, we can see quite a legible picture of the living standards of this estate. The clergy do not receive property rights for the flats in which they live as they are only occupiers of those living quarters — a situation similar to company apartments.<sup>17</sup> In case of priests it is the provost who administers the buildings in which there are priests’ flats. There are considerable differences in the size of flats. Brothers in monasteries, who live in the so called cells, occupy from 6 to 12 m<sup>2</sup> while priests reside in 60 to 100m<sup>2</sup> flats (smaller flats were occupied by vicars and larger ones by provosts). The clergy interviewed — both priests and monks — claim that they have no knowledge of the free market value of their living quarters.

The consequence of performing paid work is, in our opinion, the possibility of a partial or total giving up of household work. Those interviewed were asked to tell how many hours they spend weekly on

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<sup>15</sup> In the further part of this paper we shall verify the criteria of identification of social estates to which we referred in the first theoretical part; references will be marked in the following way: see #10.

<sup>16</sup> see #11.

<sup>17</sup> see #5.



preparation of meals, washing, ironing and mending clothes as well as cleaning, and repairs of household equipment.

As far as the time spent on the so called housework chores there is a big difference between the monks and brothers and the priests. The monks or brothers usually do all the housework themselves. Meal preparation takes them from 1 to 2 hours, cleaning from 1 to 6 hours, ironing from half an hour to two hours and the least time is taken by mending clothes and house equipment repairs (from 10 minutes to one and a half hours). In a cloister a cook, a washerwoman and some other workers are employed. The priests, on the other hand, can abstain from any such work as these duties are performed by a person employed by the parish and called a maid. The monthly cost of such a "domestic" is at least 1,500 zloty.

When analysing the level of education as an estate-genic feature, two categories of the level of education can be distinguished within the clergy. Priests declared that they had higher education (the vicar, who was interviewed also declared that he completed doctoral studies) and most of the brothers said that they had secondary education.

Among the clergy the dominant form of improving education and receive higher qualifications was completing driving licence course and foreign language certificates. Another kind of category to improve one's education is taking up B.A. studies in the Church. There is also information that some of the clergy take up studies, also Ph.D. courses.

The affluence, measured by the possession of durable goods is an estate-conditioned feature, which most distinctly shows a dichotomy in the structure of the clergy. Basically, priests own each of the mentioned goods (a car, a garage, an automatic washer, a microwave cooker, a computer, colour TV set, satellite television and a DVD) while monks have none of these things. Even their clothes do not belong to them but are owned by their cloister. This is the result of their oath of poverty, which they make when admitted to an order.

The priests asked declare that they possess cars (the provost has an Opel Corsa while a vicar an Audi), but only the vicar has a garage. The provost has an automatic washer while a vicar has a microwave cooker. They have no dishwasher, but this is because they have a maid. The priests own computers, colour TV sets, satellite TV and DVDs.

Both priests and monks and brothers have an access to the Internet at home (the monks and friars have access to the Internet at their monastery).

Social differentiation can also be seen at the level of estate-conditioned features, among other things, in the possibilities of being treated

at health service facilities.<sup>18</sup> The clergy declare that they have no privileges as far as treatment is concerned. All those interviewed declared that they used health service facilities through NFZ [National Health Fund]. However, there was also a group of clergy who paid for their health care services out of their own pocket.

Monks and brothers used facilities which were refunded by the NFZ. Two monks said that they used health care facilities and paid out of their own pocket, while one admitted that he used health care services which were financed by his employee within a health care scheme to which he was subscribed. There were two kinds of using health care services by the clergy — they either used the NFZ facilities or paid for themselves out of their own money.

The estate-conditioned feature is also political activity and membership in social organizations, which were taken into consideration when analysing representatives of the clergy. All those interviewed declared that they had taken part in the last parliamentary election. The priests were in agreement as far as the voting was concerned — they were in favour of PiS [Law and Justice] while the monks and brothers divided their votes between PiS and PO [Civic Platform]. As far as political activities are concerned none of the representatives of the clergy claimed to be a member of a political party. As far as membership of a social or non-governmental organisation is concerned only one vicar said that he belonged to *Polski Związek Łowiecki* [Polish Hunting Association].

The size and structure of book collections owned are the estate-conditioned features. As in the case of possession of durable goods, there is also a dichotomy within this estate as far as the number of books in private libraries is concerned. The priests own rich book collections (more than five hundred books) while monks and brothers declare that they own much smaller book collections (26 to 50 volumes). Only one monk said he owned more books.

The structure of book collections of priests and monks and friars did not differ much. The priests' libraries contained mainly literature which was connected with their profession. Monks and brothers claimed that ca. 90% (or even 99%) of their book collections is "professional" literature. And priests say that this literature constitutes from 80 to 85% of the books in their private libraries.

Another feature which is determined by belonging to the estate is participation in culture. This participation may be divided into two types

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<sup>18</sup> see #9.

of culture: the popular and high culture. It can be said that representatives of the clergy take an active part in cultural events both elitist and popular. However, they have no privileges to participate in specific cultural or sports events.<sup>19</sup> Participation of priests and monks and brothers results from their preferences and interests. There is no distinct division within the clergy as far as the choice of cultural events is concerned. Each of the interviewed representatives of the clergy goes to theatres and philharmonic concerts. The difference is in the frequency. Priests who perform the duties of vicars say that they visit these institutions once a year. Provosts visit these institutions of culture more than once a year. Monks and friars attend concerts of sacral and classical music in their monasteries. These meetings take place in a church by the monastery and are available to everyone. Also in the timetable of monks and brothers there is one day devoted to participation in cultural life outside the monastery. On such days they go to the cinema, swimming pool or ice rink. All of them enjoy such an active form of spending leisure time.

When reading papers and journals is considered, the clergy are rather not very keen readers. Three kinds of press were distinguished for this study: the dailies, social and political journals and professional press (let's say, Catholic journals). The majority of the representatives of the clergy who took part in the study do not read daily papers. However, it should be noted that here differences exist as far as the estate is concerned. The priests said that they read the dailies, while brothers, who were a relatively young generation of 22–27 year-olds, said that they rarely reach for the daily papers. More frequent readings than the daily press are among the clergy the Catholic socio-political journals. *Newsweek* appeared to be the only lay journal which enjoyed the interest of the provost. On the basis of interviews we made up a list of the most popular titles of the Catholic press. *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Universal Weekly], *Gość Niedzielny* [Sunday Visitor] and *Przewodnik Katolicki* [Catholic Guide] appeared to be the most popular ones.

The reading of professional journals also reflects the internal differentiation that exists between the clergy. Monks and priests quote the titles of *Głos Karmelu* [The Voice of Carmel] or *Gość Niedzielny* as a professional press of religious character while the priests choose monthlies such as *Biblioteka Kaznodziejska* [Preachers' Library] and *Katecheza* [Catechesis]. An interesting case appeared to be the vicar we interviewed who was not interested in the professional press and instead subscribed the monthly

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<sup>19</sup> see #4.

of the Polski Związek Łowiecki [Polish Hunting Association] *Łowiec Polski* [Polish Hunter].

## HEALTH CARE WORKERS

Another estate among whose representatives qualitative studies were performed were physicians and other health service workers and the uniformed servicemen — policemen. A free interview was conducted with the subjects based on a list of information sought. We also used observations and our own experience.

The first problem which was undertaken during the interview was their evaluation of intensity of “corporate” professional practices among the medical profession. Those interviewed admitted that such cases take place. However, they think that it is less intensive than among lawyers (according to their subjective opinion). Nevertheless, they admit that medical students today, those “with well-known names” more often get to study more lucrative and more prestigious specialisations and as a result have better chances to get better positions when they complete their studies. The interviewees do not deny that access just to these specialisations depends to a great extent on a network of contacts which a doctor’s family has.<sup>20</sup>

The other aspect touched upon in the interview was the possibility of representatives of the doctors’ estate to enter the private property relations.<sup>21</sup> The doctors emphasise that there has been some change in this kind of practices during a couple of recent years. Previously it consisted in using state-owned medical equipment those “just after work” for the private practice while at present this equipment is used for private purposes also during work paid for by the state. Also doctors are not obliged to have special fiscal checkouts although their services are from the economic point of view not much different from other services such as transport of people. However, taxi drivers are obliged to have such checkouts.

As far as preferences in access to various consumer goods and services are concerned, doctors can always count on privileges.<sup>22</sup> For instance, in some banks they may expect (due to their high and steady income)

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<sup>20</sup> See #11 and 18.

<sup>21</sup> see #2.

<sup>22</sup> see #3.

credits on favourable terms and also privileges from insurance companies. Nowadays exclusive (in the sociological meaning of the word) communities and housing estates for doctors only are being built (such an initiative has already been started at Rokietnica near Poznań).

Another issue was the right to a privileged participation in cultural events.<sup>23</sup> The medical estate also in this case can count on privileges. Pharmaceutical and medical equipment companies organise "events" either as conferences or "get-together" parties. Actually these are exclusive holidays. The firms which organise them cover the cost of such a trip, which is worth, say, 10,000 zloty and make a bill in the name of a concrete person (a medical doctor) who covers only the VAT (less than 2,000). As a compensation, the doctor becomes an unofficial "ambassador" of the sponsor's trade mark. The sponsor produces medicines which are promoted in the doctor's surgery by placing posters, leaflets, booklets and the so called "writing pads" with the logo of the producer or with the trade marked name of its product as well as samples of products and even clothes bearing the sponsor's logo.

When we take into consideration the right to live in a company flat, nowadays doctors can count on such privileges in some social conditions.<sup>24</sup> This pertains mainly to district hospitals and health care centres in rural areas which are plagued by problems with obtaining medical staff of particular specialisation.

One more aspect about which representatives of the medical estate were enquired was the possibility of working less by receiving their retirement benefits earlier than most working people and of taking advantage of longer paid leave.<sup>25</sup> The doctors cannot retire earlier and they have no more days of paid leave.

When analysing the right to use different kinds of discounts and relief among the medical estate, those interviewed said that they have not encountered such things or that these "rights" are only a margin.<sup>26</sup>

The question of the right to wear special clothes is totally different.<sup>27</sup> This right is restricted to some extent. Special clothes are worn only at workplace and are a sign of the hierarchy on which the functioning of health care facilities is based. This division is not only in case of the staff (who wear doctor's coats) *versus* patients but there are also differences

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<sup>23</sup> see #4.

<sup>24</sup> see #5.

<sup>25</sup> see #8.

<sup>26</sup> see #9.

<sup>27</sup> see #10.

among the staff itself. The above symbolic dimension of differentiation is connected with the right to use definite titles.<sup>28</sup> Both in hospitals and in other health care facilities this right is observed. The situation is similar to that in secondary schools. In secondary schools each teacher is addressed as professor (even though he or she is actually an M.A. or M.Sc.) while in case of hospitals each person who puts on a white doctor's coat with a badge pinned to it seems to be liable to be called a doctor of medicine. Even medical students during their internship wish that this dreamed of title should be used by people when they address them. It is worth quoting one of our interviewees: "...there is a fashion to use titles, there are normal doctors who are just OK, but they are more and more rare. A young physician whom we didn't call "Doctor" looked rather unhappy."

The doctors' estate is characterised not so much by the possibility of applying physical or psychic force, but rather the control of the behaviour of other people and has the possibility of influencing the behaviour of other people, e.g. the patient.<sup>29</sup> This can be particularly seen when the patient's prospects as far as his profession is concerned depend on the positive opinion of the doctor. Another example of the influence of doctors on the behaviour of other people may be participation of doctors' committees when benefits such as disability benefits are granted.

In the Weberian sense, the form of power about which we are talking here is to a great extent a power that is based on monopolisation of some special exclusively distributed power.

Another aspect which distinguishes doctors from other social estates is the possibility to avoid observing rules and regulations, which other people have to stick to.<sup>30</sup> This makes it that their responsibility before law due to the function performed is limited. An example of such a situation is a possibility to avoid paying a fine when violating road code regulations (an excuse that one was rushing to visit a patient). Another example is parking one's car with impunity in places where it is prohibited. It is connected with the duties performed. Doctors have special signs: "doctor on duty", which excuses them for parking in places where it is forbidden. Those interviewed remark that this is a relic of the post-Polish People's Republic customs. To "arrange getting away without a fine with

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<sup>28</sup> see #11.

<sup>29</sup> see #12.

<sup>30</sup> see #13.

policemen" is difficult now as young policemen are educated according to new standards.

Another important element which ensures full legal protection, as a bonus, is (at least partial) granting to the doctors' estate of the status of the public functionary.<sup>31</sup> In case of attack on the part of persons whom doctors give medical help such an incident is officially prosecuted and the doctor does not have to start the civil proceedings against the attacker.

Pondering the aspect of possession of information and the privileged access to it,<sup>32</sup> events that took place several years ago at the emergency services in Łódź<sup>33</sup> show distinctly that health service employees have at their disposal "valuable" information which can be a commodity for sale.

Also a peculiar jargon (medicalese), which is used by representatives of different social categories including doctors, is an estate-conditioned feature.<sup>34</sup> Produced by the doctors' estate, their professional language is a mixture of Latin and specialist medical terms. Until recently understood only by the medical personnel and pharmacists, this "phatic code" lost some of its enigma since it has been "deciphered" in mass media and professional literature is more and more available. In addition, now prescriptions have to have Polish names of medicines written on them.

The last issue discussed in the interview concerned useful social relations.<sup>35</sup> Due to the character of their profession, doctors have contacts with different people as patients have no influence on the diseases from which they suffer. That is why the doctors' estate has a possibility of having contacts with representatives of practically every position in the social division of labour.

The Wielkopolska Izba Lekarska [The Greater Poland Chamber of Medicine] inserted the following point in the catalogue of 27 rights of doctors: "After medical treatment has been completed, a patient may express his gratitude and offer a gift the value and form of which are by custom permitted and the doctor may accept it."

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<sup>31</sup> see #14.

<sup>32</sup> see #16.

<sup>33</sup> Here a scandal revealed in 2002 by investigative journalists of *Gazeta Wyborcza* of the so called "skin hunters", i.e. a practice of purposeful putting to death patients and selling information on their deaths to undertakers by employees of the emergency service in Łódź.

<sup>34</sup> see #17.

<sup>35</sup> see #18.

## UNIFORMED SERVICES EMPLOYEES (POLICEMEN)

The last category of estate analysed in this article are policemen. Like in the case of doctors' estate a free interview was used with a list of information searched and non-standardised observations. The study's character was strictly qualitative while the choice of interviewees was based on "judgement sampling." Two families of middle-aged (35–45) couples with two school children each took part in the study. Both policemen's wives were office clerks.

At the beginning the interviewee was asked about his general opinion on work in uniformed services. According to the interviewed policeman, the best life now is that of the military and "the white hats."<sup>36</sup> He was not satisfied with his own work and if he were to choose again, he would have chosen another career. The main reason of his dissatisfaction were low salary, the exorbitant and ever higher demands, high stress level, and also bad atmosphere at workplace and difficulties with drafting schedules. The interviewee stressed that there are differences between the job of a policeman in a large city and the one who works in small towns since the latter are much more peaceful and the social relations are closer. On the other hand, a big city gives anonymity of which policemen living and working in small places are deprived.

When asked about the possibility of monopoly of a certain type of positions in the social division of labour,<sup>37</sup> a representative of the estate of uniformed clerks said that in his profession such practice does not exist.

Another question which was taken up during the interview was that of the possibility of policemen to enter private property relations.<sup>38</sup> According to the interviewees this question concerned mostly "traffic police," whose functionaries blatantly instructed drivers even some years ago how and how much money to put within the covers of the driving licence. In this respect the situation has changed diametrically thanks to video registration which has significantly curbed this practice. As far as the private property relations are concerned such as starting "private eye practice," i.e. gathering information as officers paid by the state and selling it privately was described by them as fantasies of TV programmes like *Detektyw* [Private Eye]. It should be added that any policeman who

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<sup>36</sup> Common name for "traffic police."

<sup>37</sup> see #1.

<sup>38</sup> see #2.



wants to take up any legal work even if it is not a full-time or part-time job has to have his superior's permission.

Taking into account the preferences in the access to some consumer goods as a feature that is conditioned by belonging to a specific estate, the interviewed policeman denied that such a situation took place.<sup>39</sup> According to the representative of uniformed servicemen there occurred as he expressed it himself, "an 180° turn when compared to the previous political system." Numerous privileges, which the uniformed servicemen enjoyed at the time of Polish People's Republic have been reduced. Their special vacation resorts or the hospital of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Administration are the places which, according to the interviewee, are not even worth mentioning.<sup>40</sup> The issue of the right to live in the police-owned flats concerns only those serving in the small towns and villages and the cities can only offer accommodation in hostels for workers.<sup>41</sup> The subsidy to supplement the cost of renting a flat, if any, is worth almost nothing.

The difference between policemen and previously discussed estates is that the latter may receive retirement benefits earlier than the former groups and have longer paid leaves. They can retire after serving 15 years and they receive 40% of the salary they received when working.<sup>42</sup> According to the interviewee, not very many policemen take advantage of this privilege as the retirement benefits are low because of such short service. Policemen, apart from the 26-day leave, get extra free days for extra hours of duty and for work in difficult conditions.

When analysing the right to take advantage of various kinds of discounts<sup>43</sup> as a feature which is determined by particular estate, the interviewee mentioned reduced rates for city transport, but he was not sure whether it was only for commuting during performing official functions.

Policemen are another estate privileged with the right of wearing special uniforms.<sup>44</sup> In the interviewee's opinion, however, uniforms do not bring policemen such respect as do uniforms of other estates. This policeman thinks that police uniforms are "defiled" with "insulting" words at every step and wearing them is not a privilege at all now, but rather an

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<sup>39</sup> see #3.

<sup>40</sup> see #6.

<sup>41</sup> see #5.

<sup>42</sup> see #8.

<sup>43</sup> see #9.

<sup>44</sup> see #10.

inconvenience. It is similar with the monopoly of taking advantage of some definite forms of social respect.<sup>45</sup> Policemen, admitted that they have met a whole gamut of negative behaviours rather addressed to the police functionaries.

The interviewee, when asked about his right to use the title and what follows this mania, which is similar to that used in the circles of medical doctors, was not able to say if such a phenomenon occurs.<sup>46</sup>

Police as an institution, is in the interviewee's opinion, particularly inclined to the use of coercion — especially psychic pressure.<sup>47</sup> The reason is the character of policemen's work, who almost always work in dangerous circumstances and have become resistant to the use of force when having to do with those committing crimes, and as if instrumentalising it. This instrumentalisation of coercion is also transferred into the relations within the same profession. According to one interviewee nowadays in police forces a phenomenon occurs which is given the name of mobbing. Psychic terror in the place of work is also conditioned by the wish to oust of office people whose opinions differ from those of the bosses. This is how the interviewee explains the constant instability in the staff within police forces — frequent changes of the staff of precincts.

When asked about exclusion from subordination to some definite regulations and which other persons must observe, which also means limitation of legal responsibility of a given person due to the definite function<sup>48</sup> this person performed, categorically stated that policemen do not have such privileges except for one case. Taking into consideration this aspect of the particular legal protection,<sup>49</sup> policemen are by law guaranteed the status of state functionaries and are protected against transgressions of their personal dignity when on service. As "public officials" physicians are also granted a similar privilege.

The question of the privileged access to information<sup>50</sup> is that the subject which the functionary asked did not want to talk about. A similarly taboo subject was the possession of useful social relations.<sup>51</sup> The inter-

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<sup>45</sup> see #15.

<sup>46</sup> see #11.

<sup>47</sup> see #12.

<sup>48</sup> see #13.

<sup>49</sup> see #14.

<sup>50</sup> see #16.

<sup>51</sup> see #18.

viewee said that they are the domain of the province where “a web” of relations, characteristic of local communities, still functions.

## CONCLUSION

As can be seen, in spite of certain methodological constraints, connected with the numerical force of the sample (trouble with access to certain exclusive and closed professional milieus), the studies conducted (a part of a larger research project) made it possible to positively evaluate the theoretical perspective proposed here.<sup>52</sup> It enabled us to interpret the phenomena of social differentiation in a more comprehensive way than merely the class one. This is possible just thanks to the modern theory of social estates, inspired by classics such as Marx and Weber. These groups, or estates, in the society find the *raison d'être* in the non-economic structures due to the relations of the so called “non-economic property.”

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<sup>52</sup> See: Tittenbrun Jacek (Ed.), *Struktura klasowo-stanowa społeczności Poznania*, Nakom, Poznań 2010.

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