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FOOD, HOUSING, WORK, RETIREMENT: RESOURCEFULNESS IN EVERYDAY LIFE AS AN ELEMENT OF THE FUNCTIONING OF SOCIETY AND THE ECONOMY IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF POLAND (SELECTED ASPECTS)

Abstract: The article attempts to determine the usefulness of the concept of resourcefulness for research in the field of social history of the People's Republic of Poland. On the basis of examples concerning problems with provisions, housing, professional work and retirement benefits, an analysis of specific issues was made, where this resourcefulness manifested itself particularly intensively. The research shows that in many cases it was pathological. It meant a strategy of behavior consisting in achieving the assumed goals by individuals or various groups of people using means that are in conflict with the norms, rules, procedures accepted as appropriate in a given political and socio-economic order.

Keywords: Poland after II WW, social history, shortages, pathology, everyday life

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INTRODUCTION

In the achievements of the social history of Poland in the years 1945–1989, social resourcefulness as an independent research topic basically does not exist. From time to time there were opinions about how resourceful and enterprising individual Poles in People's Poland were, how they were able to play “games” with the institutions of this state and what significant (not necessarily positive) significance it had for the course of the systemic transformation after 1989 (Kochanowski, 2010: 342–343). Even contributing sketches that would be directly devoted to this issue are rare (Skierska, 2019).

Meanwhile, this resourcefulness may become a fascinating subject of analysis – considering, for example, the fact how relatively large was the tendency of Poles (especially in the 1980s) to create social institutions alternative to state ones, what was their ability (resourcefulness, entrepreneurship) to achieve lives through activities that were not always legal.

This absence of research on resourcefulness was partly due to the lack (until recently) of in-depth theoretical studies of what it is. This category as an object of analysis appeared in Polish sociology at the end of the 1980s. It was in 1990 that a volume of studies was published with resourcefulness in the title, containing scientific studies mainly devoted to various organizations and social initiatives. The concept of social resourcefulness appears in the introduction to this work and is defined as encompassing

both the sphere of various pro-social activities, commonly assessed as highly functional in relation to the social system (although not always accepted and supported by state institutions), and a set of highly controversial behaviors (“dirty communities”, corruption, participation in the second legal or economic circuit, etc.) forming a system of [...] social control of the third degree, operating alongside or instead of informal and formalized control of behavior in collective life (*Zaradność społeczna*, 1990).

An in-depth reflection on resourcefulness – both individual and social – appeared in Polish sociology in 2016–2019. It was then that the volumes of studies were published, which contained not only theoretical studies, but also findings based on research on specific institutions, organizations, groups and social strata (Kotlarska-Michalska and Nosal, 2016; 2019).

Anna Kotlarska-Michalska, one of the theoreticians of this issue, claims that “individual, group or institutional resourcefulness is generally presented as a certain skill useful in making rational choices and achieving specific and anticipated benefits or such effects of one’s actions that ensure satisfaction with this choices (Kotlarska-Michalska and Nosal, 2016: 21).

The author treats resourcefulness in many aspects, as: 1) a life strategy; 2) style of social functioning; 3) type of self-coping technique; 4) social capital; 5) pragmatic attitude; 6) type of adaptation; 7) type of identity; 8) resilience (understood as “elasticity, flexibility, pliancy”); 9) rationalization of activities; 10) self-improvement. The first five categories were defined by her as social resourcefulness, the others as individual resourcefulness

(Kotlarska-Michalska, 2019: 21). In addition, she claims that the manifestations of social resourcefulness can also be treated as: a style of social functioning; resistance strategy; innovative approach to reality; the ability of inter-institutional and organizational cooperation; the group's ability to act constructively; the ability to fight for group, class and community rights; the ability to self-organize in the interest of the group; the ability to build a strategy that allows you to play the role of a beneficiary of the system, e.g. social assistance (Kotlarska-Michalska, 2019: 21). As can be seen, resourcefulness appears in these works as a very ambiguous phenomenon, and the proposed typology with a division into social and individual resourcefulness may raise discussions.

The initial theoretical "taming" of this issue indicates that it has a great potential for interdisciplinarity. It also raises fundamental questions (which can only be partially answered at the current stage of research): to what extent can the issue of resourcefulness become the subject of reflection for a historian? Which of the ways of understanding resourcefulness used by sociologists can be more or less applied in historical studies? Where, when and in what conditions (contexts) was this resourcefulness manifested particularly often and strongly? What distinguished resourcefulness in the People's Republic of Poland as a certain systemic order from resourcefulness in a system based on liberal democracy and free market economy?

It seems that the already quoted Kotlarska-Michalska is right, who claims that life strategies "seem to be the most adequate of the sought-after terms reflecting the essence of resourcefulness, because these are actions aimed at the present and future based on anticipated benefits". The author also maintains that social resourcefulness is a strategy based on long-term action to bring the expected results (Kotlarska-Michalska, 2016: 33). I think this last statement still needs to be clarified. I can imagine actions (which I will write about later) that testify to resourcefulness in specific issues important for social groups, which were not of a long-term nature, but were commonly used in specific, equally defined life situations. Resourcefulness in the systemic order of the People's Republic of Poland did not abolish the universality of the strategy of adaptation to real socialism. On the contrary, it could favor their use. This adaptation was active: resourceful individuals or social groups, characterized by a certain tendency to pragmatism, more efficiently and effectively than others used the knowledge of systemic realities and used (and often even abused) it to achieve their own life goals.

This stream of considerations about the resourcefulness of the communist society had its precursor in the person of the outstanding sociologist Winicjusz Narojek. In his opinion, such “coping” often took the form of an attitude called “small individualism”, which consisted in “maximum use by an individual of the possibilities of maneuver provided by a system based on collectivist principles” (Narojek, 1991: 50). When decisions are made by the centers of command, he argued, there is always a certain margin of freedom on which there is room for the expansion of particular interests. This is where both particular “small individualists” and various types of lobbies fight. This is where “own people” are sought, constituting a specific structure for the integration of interests within the deficit of goods. He also claimed that the real meaning of the totalitarianization of society

is not to shape, by means of propaganda and repression, personalities willing to blindly obey official authorities – which turned out to be futile, especially in Poland – but to impose the rules of the organizational game in the structures of state. It is about the negative sense, which, although not conducive to the creation of “moral and political unity” of the state-society, provides state structures with pragmatic legitimacy by means of common social behavior of people (Narojek, 1986: 86).

The question about “small individualism” is therefore primarily a question about the type, range and nature of strategies for adapting to the system, everyday “coping” with it (Jarosz, 2013).

Concretization and clarification of the general remarks on the communist way of dealing with the systemic reality will be made on the example of several basic issues of everyday life in the People’s Republic of Poland, as this area of history seems to be particularly susceptible to the use of resourcefulness as a social strategy, and it is there that one should first of all seek evidence of its occurrence. Let us therefore consider what deposits of resourcefulness understood in this way triggered problems related to provisioning, housing situation and ensuring material living conditions through professional work and pension and pension benefits. It is therefore about examining the satisfaction of basic, and in the case of food and housing – even physiological (using the theory of Abraham Maslow) human needs, which were of a mass and universal nature.

RESOURCEFULNESS AND PROVISIONING: FROM LIVESTOCK TO SAUSAGE

Provision problems, as I have already written elsewhere (Jarosz and Pasztor, 2005: 231) accompanied the People's Republic of Poland from its beginnings in 1944. Systemic shortages of provisions, including, of course, meat and meat products were "daily bread" of the governed and governing Poland after 1945. Even during the "golden" decade of the 1970s, certain supply shortages were felt, although of course not as much as in Stalinism (AAN, KC PZPR, mikr. 2929: 29).

In the first half of the 1950s, during the period of strictly enforced mandatory supplies of slaughter animals for state purchase (at lower prices), one of the peasants' strategies for circumventing these rigors was illegal slaughter and free market sale, which was subject to severe legal sanctions, but extremely profitable. Relevant prohibitions were circumvented, most often by bribing local (rural) decision makers with bribes. It was no coincidence that a kind of "meat basins" were created in the vicinity of large cities, where the illegal purchase of livestock took place on a large scale, and often native "speculators" participated in it. They were the ones who appeared at round-ups and collection points, from where they bought some of the livestock delivered by the peasants (Jarosz, 1998: 210-214).

Stalinism was a period in which social strategies for dealing with commodity shortages included both peasants and representatives of other socio-professional groups. This was the case with miners, for example. Archival sources contain information that farmers appeared in front of warehouses where miners collected their allowance of coal and offered agricultural products in exchange for this raw material (Jarosz, 1998: 212). An increasingly common strategy was delivering meat by farmers (especially rural women) to specific apartments in the city (Kochanowski, 2010: 192-198).

Life strategies based on resourcefulness to the detriment of animal welfare were often found at collection points. Their inspections carried out in the second half of the 1950s and in the 1960s confirmed the occurrence of various combinations aimed at increasing the weight of livestock and reducing the so-called cavities. For this purpose, the so-called feeding (causing artificially overweight) animals intended for purchase. Purchasing committees tended to lower the quality (and thus the price) of

the supplied animals (AAN, NIK II, sign. 46/130: 115). Before they were transported to meat plants, they were transported under the care of escorts. And they were interested (materially) in delivering animals of relatively highest weight and the smallest transport losses. The success in achieving this effect was on adding salt and water to the feed that the animals were fed. As a result, after slaughter, in a number of cases, the stomachs of pigs with an average weight of approx. 1.00 kg weighed 4.5 kg or even 8 kg, and were filled with water, bran, sawdust and often with sand (AAN, NIK II, sign. 33/286, e.g.; AAN, CZPM, 2/43, e.g.).

Strategies for dealing with food shortages, somewhat reminiscent of those from the Stalinist years, appeared in Poland in the 1980s. This is testified by the inspection reports of the Central Commission for Combating Speculation. At that time, social resourcefulness took the form of pathological practices aimed at circumventing meat rationing regulations. It was attended by the management of workplaces, especially meat plants. The Commission's auditors found, among other things, that in 1984, in the Meat Processing Plant in Dębica, between April 1 and July 31, 1984, 7,113 kg of "meat mass" more than the applicable limits were spent on allowances for employees. In the factory shop, cases of selling goods to agreed recipients were found, omitting the unit to which cash and delivery documents were transferred. Meat was also resold, upon management approval, to "various entities" outside the applicable distribution system, in exchange for services rendered to plant employees. Among others 593 kg of offal meats and offal were "issued" for the Busko Zdrój health resort in exchange for referrals to a sanatorium for some employees of the controlled plants (Jarosz and Pasztor, 2007: 174–175). In another case, in 1981, "the brewery in Brzesko received 1,500 chickens for systematic deliveries of beer to specific villages, and Krakow Plant Armatura exchanged radiators with farmers for 53 sheep" (Kochanowski, 2010: 197).

Combinations related to supply cards (popular food cards) should be considered as a symptom of using resourcefulness as a type of adaptation. It happened, although it is not known how often, that people responsible for their distribution in workplaces had many of them illegally, by entering "dead souls". The practice was of a mass nature: as reported in 1983, one of the employees was accused of obtaining over 3,000 cards in this way! (Fuszara, 2004: 187; Dudek, 2003: 345 and 759).

An important element of resourcefulness as a type of adaptation to supply difficulties in the 1980s was the intensification of vegetable and fruit cultivation in employee allotments and home breeding. Their share

in satisfying nutritional needs in 1984 was 13% in retirement households, and 6% in workers' households (Milic-Czerniak, 1989: 150).

Meat shortages meant that various strategies in the field of social resourcefulness were used not only by consumers looking for meat, but also by those who distributed and sold it. What they consisted of is known thanks to research on e.g. so-called the Warsaw Meat Affair in the mid-1960s. It showed that both the officials of companies named The Municipal Meat Trade (MHM) as well as the managers of butchers committed massive abuses. In the case of the former, they consisted primarily in accepting bribes for sending the appropriate quality and quantity of "meat mass" to stores whose managers were profitable – because even in real socialism, the profits "earned" by the staff of the store located in the center of Warsaw, selling the best quality beef or pork were much higher than in a horse meat shop in distant district of Warsaw – Praga.

The source of these profits were also the cutting of meat, which then went to stores in carcasses, half-carcasses or quarters. Resourcefulness in this case consisted in selling cheaper cuts of meat at a higher price than the current one. One of the witnesses in this case explained this:

Half-carcasses, carcasses and quarters are counted according to one price for a given half-carcass, carcass or quarter. When cutting, however, various elements are formed, such as pork loin, pork fat, bacon and others. at different prices. So if someone who is dishonest when cutting pork fat from a half-carcass adds a layer of bacon, he already has an additional profit because bacon costs PLN 26/kg and bacon costs PLN 33/kg. It can be similar when cutting pork loin and shoulder, where you can add a layer of fat, which is cheaper than pork and shoulder (Jarosz and Pasztor, 2004: 19).

Abuse also consisted in manipulating the norms of natural losses (resulting from the fact that meat dried up during transport and in the store) and cutting margins (Jarosz and Pasztor, 2004: 18–19).

The indicated cases (I have limited myself to those that have already been researched and analyzed in the literature on the subject) show how great was the social inventiveness in dealing with the hostile reality. By "taming" the economy of shortage, the participants of this specific "game" with the authorities exposed its weaknesses, showed the ineffectiveness of administrative regulation and the strength of spontaneous economic and social processes and social resourcefulness even in the conditions of the state-owned economy of the People's Republic of Poland.

RESOURCEFULNESS AND THE "HOUSING ISSUE"

In People's Poland, satisfying the need to have a roof over one's head was carried out using a set of measures determined by the ideological rules of the power system and current political goals.

Characterizing the communist housing policy in the most general terms, it can be said that housing became the subject of detailed rationing, determining its legal status, distribution, construction and reconstruction methods. These principles were implemented by through changes to the current housing law. As a result, the apartment took on the character of a social benefit, which could be partly paid.

Already in 1944, the concept of the allocation of a flat was introduced into the legal system, which was to be decided by committees appointed at local administration offices (Paczyńska, 1994: 48). It was developed in the Decree of December 21, 1945 on public management of premises and rental control, which provided for various forms of interference by the authorities in housing relations. In a stricter version, flats and rooms for sub-tenants could be occupied only by persons who had the right to obtain the allocation of these rooms and received it, i.e. those whose profession, job or position required residing in the city. The national councils gained the right to introduce housing occupancy standards and determine the minimum number of people that should be in one room and the minimum usable space per one tenant (Paczyńska, 1994: 67).

The systemic principles of housing management were liberalized after 1956 by excluding certain types of residential premises from public management. Moreover, the state withdrew from fully covering the costs of housing construction and furnishing, forcing new tenants to partially participate in them.

From the end of the 1950s, housing cooperatives began to play an increasingly important role in the implementation of the housing policy, and over time they became the most important way of meeting the housing needs of Poles. This belief in the dominant role of these cooperatives resulted in 1976 in the complete abandonment of the construction of the so-called for the poorest, which was restored in 1981.

The post-war housing policy not only diluted the ownership right to flats. The state and the state-owned cooperatives decided both who and when would get an apartment, and what kind of apartment it would be; periodically set construction standards defined how large a flat "belongs"

to a family of a certain size and what (in terms of equipment condition) it can count on. The norms of acceptable living space also applied to private single-family houses.

Under these conditions, obtaining a flat became not so much a financial problem (and certainly not only) but also (often primarily) the subject of various procedures (including administrative and bureaucratic ones). The issue was all the more important because the state housing policy was not able to meet the needs in this regard: in 1988, there were 111.7 households per 100 dwellings, of which 111.7 in cities and 111.6 in rural areas; in 1960 the respective ratios were: 117.5 (122.3 and 112.5), in 1978 - 117.3 (118.1 and 115.8) (Gorczyca, 1992: 55). Thus, we can talk about a moderate improvement in terms of independence in using housing, greater in cities than in rural areas, but throughout the post-war period, several percent of households did not have their own housing, and the standard of those that existed improved slowly. Awareness of this situation meant that in studies from the 1980s, Poles considered meeting their housing needs as the most important "issue to be dealt with" (Jarosz, 2010: 117).

The lack of housing as an important element of the socialist shortage economy activated the layers of human resourcefulness, which took the form of behaviors with varying degrees of legality.

The "normal", routine way of obtaining a flat assumed waiting for the allocation after meeting the conditions provided for by legal regulations. Pursuant to the applicable regulations, applicants for this scarce good submitted relevant documents confirming employment, income, previous housing conditions, and in the case of cooperative housing - collection of the appropriate part of the housing contribution.

What was social resourcefulness in this case? About the allocation of flats, the so-called local administration offices decided, which should be guided by the established principles of the housing law. Among them, the changing in terms of importance circumstances such as difficult housing conditions, poor financial situation and the suitability of the person applying for the assignment "to carry out the planned economic tasks of socialized workplaces or the functioning of state authorities" (Ochendowski, 1980: 64) were decisive among them.

And in this case, the practices resulting from pathological social resourcefulness, consisting primarily in stating untruths in documents constituting the basis for applying for housing. The relevant communal (accommodation) authorities often did not verify applications for housing, did not check the accuracy of the data contained in them and did

not update them. This concerned primarily: applicants' housing conditions, current employment and earnings, property status, including possession of own flats, houses or plots with a building permit, and special entitlements resulting from health or occupation. The consequence of this were allocations, as formulated in the 1980s by the Workers' and Peasants' Inspection, "contrary to the law and the principles of social justice" (*Najwyższa...*, 1985: 6).

As the possibilities of obtaining an apartment via municipal authorities became more and more difficult, the way to own a flat was more and more common through housing cooperatives. In this case, the use of strategies containing an element of social resourcefulness was most likely more and more frequent due to the lengthening queue for a cooperative apartment. Suffice it to say that in 1984, 226.9 thousand people waited for a cooperative apartment for over 10 years: members (32.2%) and 22.8 thousand so-called candidates (2.0%), 6–10 years old – 179.3 thousand (25.4%) and 596.2 thousand (52.2%), and up to 5 years – 297.4 thousand (42.3%) and 523.6 thousand (45.8%) (AAN, KC PZPR, sign. LXIX/315: 112–114).

In such a situation, it is hardly surprising that the archives record the proliferation of various manifestations of resourcefulness of people seeking their own premises with varying degrees of legality.

It was this resourcefulness that dictated taking up work in a housing cooperative only because the boards of cooperatives accepted their employees as members in an accelerated procedure and then allocated premises to them. This was often done without taking into account such criteria as length of service, membership period and current housing conditions (AZNIK, sign.1629/48: 70).

For the same reasons, those applying for cooperative housing took up employment in the company that participated in their construction. In the conditions of a permanent shortage of building materials and labor in the construction industry, cooperatives more and more often secured the possibility of commissioning new blocks in this way. "Bundled deals" (apartments for employees of construction companies in exchange for the completion and furnishing of blocks by them) have been increasingly common since at least the 1970s (AZNIK, sign. 1619/11: 46–48) and were not effectively suppressed in the 1980s. For example, in the Zabrze Housing Cooperative, which was inspected in 1985, under contracts with construction companies, over 70% of flats from new construction were intended for their employees. In the cooperative in Ruda Śląska, 59 flats were handed over to "Pokój" Steelworks and Coal Mine "Zabrze" under "coopera-

tion agreements" for finishing works. This accounted for over 50% of the total number of premises in the buildings where these works were carried out (*Najwyższa...*, 1985: 42; AZNIK, sign. 115/24: 101).

Attempts to eliminate this pathological practice were made by the Council of the Central Union of Housing Cooperatives (CZSBM). On October 29, 1986, it adopted Resolution No. 9 limiting the freedom of decisions on accelerating the allocation of flats and introducing the unification of their criteria. Within the so-called acceleration list (which from now on could not exceed 30% of flats to be allocated in a given year) the applications of members – employees of construction companies implementing cooperative investments and employees of cooperatives, provided that they belonged to one of these categories worked continuously and impeccably in the same establishment at least five years and had a five-year waiting period for a flat. The number of premises for them could not exceed in total 5% of the number of dwellings allocated for acceleration in a given year. Applications of persons (cooperative members) particularly necessary for the needs of a given city or region could also be taken into account in this mode, provided that such necessity was confirmed by the voivode; the number of flats for these purposes could not exceed 2% of the flats to be allocated in a given year. The CZSBM Council recommended to cooperatives that inclusion on the acceleration list should be preceded by an inspection by the visiting team of the member's current family and housing conditions.¹ It is not known how effective these measures were.

Deposits of social resourcefulness were also activated in order to obtain more than one apartment, usually for the immediate family. It has been confirmed that members of a cooperative used a divorce decree to obtain two flats, sell flats and move to a new spouse (AAN, CZSBM, sign. 5352: 303–305). Resourcefulness combined with at least abuse of the applicable law sometimes led to a situation where one family could have more than one cooperative apartment and additionally a single-family house (AZNIK, sign. 1619/11: 35–38). Certainly, in many cooperatives, their authorities juggled lists of members who were to receive a flat in the normal mode, accelerated, etc.

¹ Resolution No. 9 amended Resolution No. 3 of the CZSBM Council of March 3, 1983, which did not contain a percentage specification of the maximum number of flats to be allocated under acceleration, including those granted to employees of housing cooperative units and construction companies implementing cooperative investments (CZSBM 1986, No 12, item 45).

Many Poles applied for premises through their workplace, which could have the so-called company apartments, create company (and inter-enterprise) housing cooperatives or “buy out” some of the premises built by general cooperatives and support the efforts of their employees to obtain a lodging apartment. The allocation of premises via the workplace appears in various archival materials as particularly unclear and discretionary.

The files of the Supreme Audit Office (NIK) regarding company apartments confirm that the applicable regulations were not observed in their allocations. Enterprises did not comply with the relevant resolutions of the Council of Ministers and continued to designate “their” premises for the so-called improving the existing housing conditions of employees, and less often to meet their most urgent needs or to supplement the professional staff.

The inspection of housing disposal in nine voivodships, completed in April 1980 by the Supreme Audit Office, showed that the premises intended for visitors, which were supposed to supplement the staff in workplaces and for people necessary in a given locality, were in fact allocated mainly to local notables under the so-called accelerated improvement of housing conditions. Premises outside the queue were also given to athletes (AZNIK, sign. 1619/11: 35–38). The apartment was an extremely attractive deficit “good”, facilitating the settlement of extremely diverse transactions, by no means only between private persons (which I will write about below).

The applied policy of favoring employees of enterprises regarded as key to the economy in the allocation of flats did not ensure the desired stabilization of their crews. A relatively large part of the “resourceful” employees took up employment in factories important for the economy in order to get an independent flat faster or to change a smaller flat into a larger one, but then, having achieved this goal, they left the plant from which they received the desired flat. The loss for such an establishment was double: it lost not only useful employees, but also apartments, and in order to attract others with similar qualifications, it reported the need for additional premises (AZNIK, sign. 1619/11: 119–125).

In this way, the declared universal right to housing was violated by subordinating it to employment policy, which, through the preferential distribution of housing, had a motivating effect on specific occupational groups, workplaces, institutions and positions (Kulesza, 1984).

As evidenced by the indicated practices, resourcefulness in obtaining premises was demonstrated not only by the interested parties themselves,

but also by the managements of workplaces, which treated the apartment as a commodity in specific transactions between themselves. For example, the Dolna Odra Power Plant Complex in Nowe Czarnowo in 1978–1979 “lent” 40 cooperative apartments to other workplaces, including 25 for Szczecin Technical Construction Company No. 2, which in turn “transferred” 11 of them to other companies. The “return” of these premises to “Dolna Odra” was to take place upon receipt of the appropriate housing pool by the “renting” establishments (AZNIK, sign.1619/11: 35–38).

Among the forms of satisfying housing needs, single-family housing, which was the rule in the countryside, but also more and more frequent in the city, occupied an increasingly important place. Despite the friendlier atmosphere for building houses in cities, it encountered many barriers. How were they overcome?

According to experts on the subject, in the People’s Republic of Poland it was virtually impossible to build a house without the use of stolen materials, if the construction was not to last for years. Therefore, building was not only an extremely costly undertaking, but also exposed those undertaking it to moving on the border, and often beyond the borders of the applicable law. Resourcefulness, pathological in these conditions, could (and probably did) involve bribery to those on whom the construction progress depended – already at the stage of obtaining the appropriate permits, and in conditions of increased control by the financial authorities (Malicka, 1969: 53).

An illegal form of single-family housing was arbitrary – building without the necessary permits. A manifestation of pathological resourcefulness in this case was the deliberate building of shanty houses that threatened to collapse, because thanks to this, it was possible to force the city authorities to allocate a good-standard apartment (Cegielski, 1963: 86). Combating illegal construction was not effective (AAN, KBUiA, sign. 3/9: e.g.).

The method of “reaching an apartment”, in which bureaucratic and administrative procedures were of dominant importance, tended to break or bend the law. The consequences of doing so were far-reaching. This meant repealing – due to the priority of satisfying an important need – the validity of certain important universal moral norms in such activities. People applying for a flat often did not hesitate to give bribes, to lie in the relevant documents, created for the purposes of the apartment allocation procedure – just to increase their chances in the competition for this scarce good. For the same purpose, the spouses fictitiously divorced, and the families clearly “swelled” when applying for a flat (thanks to which it

was possible to obtain a larger area) and “thin” a few months after obtaining it (Podgórecki and Kojder, 1972: 25–30).

RESOURCEFULNESS IN THE WORKPLACE

Already in the previous remarks, I pointed out certain features of the functioning of a socialist workplace, analyzing the pathologies in the meat industry in the Gomułka period. What was the manifestation of social resourcefulness in the so-called socialist enterprise? The answer to this question requires, first of all, determining what the specificity of such a workplace consisted in, what were the rules of its operation.

Jędrzej Chumiński, referring to the findings of Janos Kornai, a theoretician and critic of the socialist economy, claims that its genetic code was the Marxist-Leninist party and its official ideology, which determined the pursuit of the liquidation of private property and the market. These elements launched and guided the process of shaping the basic characteristics of the socialist economy, such as: the dominance of bureaucratic coordination and the interests and motivations of economic and political actors (Chumiński, 2010b: 20). These premises were to determine the typical and permanent features of the economy, most often called centrally directed, prescriptive or scarce (Tymiński, 2001: 31–32).² Enterprises were deprived of independence and subordinated to the state administration. They were governed by orders and various types of indicators and distributions established by ministries and associations. “Orders issued by the economic apparatus were very detailed and often contradictory” (Tymiński, 2001: 34–35).

What was the resourcefulness of enterprises operating in this type of economy? First of all, it is worth noting that the answer to this question requires taking into account their internal dynamics. In my remarks, I disregard the period from 1982, unusual from the point of view of the economy of real socialism, when a self-government enterprise was created, largely freed from central planning and management (Bałtowski, 2009: 383).

Under the real socialist economy, the enterprise was subject to various political and bureaucratic tenders. It participated in “a repetitive, multi-

² Janusz Dąbrowski distinguishes between strongly centralized (until 1970) and relatively decentralized versions of the traditional system in the Polish economy in the years 1945–1989 (Dąbrowski, 1989).

stage game (tender) with the economic center, often called the adjustment mechanism" (Dąbrowski, 1989: 603). The strength of the company in the bargaining game depended on many, often difficult to grasp, factors such as, for example, "the industry affiliation of the company, its size and strategic importance, the degree of market monopoly, the support of political and economic authorities or even private connections of the management" (Dąbrowski, 1989: 604).

One of the types of these adjustments was the implementation tender, known in the literature on the subject (thanks to Czesław Bobrowski) as a mechanism of the so-called planning shuttle. Its operation was described by Maciej Bałtowski as follows:

the planning office prepared the so-called program of the plan, i.e. a set of tasks, measures and standards compiled at a high level of aggregation, which in this form was sent to lower levels and written down in ministries, voivodships and associations, and then reached the enterprise level, where, based on the received guidelines and using own data took on a specific (although not final) shape in the area of activity of a given enterprise. Then the return journey began: enterprises sent their proposed plans to unions, which aggregated and unified them, and then sent them to ministries or voivodeship offices. Also at the level of ministries and voivodeships, data was aggregated, and finally, on this basis, the planning office developed the master plan, which, after approval by the council of ministers and adoption of a relevant resolution by the Sejm, became the applicable law. And in this form it was again transmitted from the center "down" (Bałtowski, 2009: 409–410).

As a result of various actions taken by the management of enterprises, their social resourcefulness, the plans imposed on them were lowered, because it was then easier to implement them, and this translated into benefits (also financial) for both management and regular employees. Excessive implementation of the plan threatened "disclosure of existing production reserves, which is connected with the possibility of receiving production tasks at a relatively high level in the future. This means [...] deterioration of the production conditions, and therefore an undesirable situation from the point of view of the company" (Dąbrowski, 1989: 611). Ewa Balcerowicz is right when she claims that "lower levels are able – thanks to their information advantage in relation to higher levels – to push through their own goals during the tender for the plan, which [...] are dysfunctional from the point of view of the criterion of economic efficiency and balance" (Balcerowicz, 1990: 412) and carried out under conditions of increased production pressure and high cost tolerance. In general, it can be said that the goals of the center and the enterprises were at least differ-

ent (not to say contradictory): while the former was interested in setting a high production task for the enterprise with possibly low inputs, the latter sought to negotiate the lowest possible size of this task with the highest inputs and, as a consequence, a low level of production (Dąbrowski, 1989: 609).

It seems that also in this case we are dealing with resourcefulness (not only of the management, but also of broadly understood crews) preserving the pathological and internally contradictory economic mechanism. The specific manifestations of such behavior are evidenced by, for example, the analysis of letters sent to the Warsaw power center and written by employees in the first half of the 1970s, analyzed by Grzegorz Miernik (2019).³

Arguments in the field of distribution tenders were also used by various types of lobbies of individual industries in order to determine favorable wages for them. As a result of the state policy in this area, remuneration for the same work performed in the same amount, but in different industries, was different, which was conducive to the phenomenon called employment fluctuation (Bałtowski, 2009: 415).

The resourcefulness of plant management was also expressed in the tendency to accumulate as much stock of inputs as possible, which could create a productive or unproductive surplus as part of short-term adjustment. As Kornai puts it, the more severe “the scarcity of a certain material becomes, the more diligently that material will be hoarded and the less

³ Miernik writes, among other things: “In the correspondence, absurd consequences resulting from planning that did not take into account common sense premises were repeatedly pointed out. In an anonymous letter, an engineer from the Bierut Ironworks in Częstochowa informed that production plans were defined in tons. Wages and bonuses also depended on the mass of manufactured structures. The paradox was that if the structure was more modern, complicated, it was usually also lighter, but it took much more time to make it. The effect in tons, however, was worse. So, instead of saving materials and making light, durable and aesthetic constructions, it was best to produce simple but heavy products. The postulate of the correspondent, who demanded that labor intensity should be the basic measure of production, is not surprising. [...] Failure to implement the production plan resulted in various consequences. For employees, it resulted in a reduction in bonuses, which constituted a significant part of wages. There were also problems with the management of the factories. Therefore, various methods have been developed and used to hide the non-performance of production plans. One of the employees wrote about such treatments at Metal Plant ‘Polar’ in Miłków. There, in order to hide the non-performance of the production plan in December, it was decided to cover the shortage of ‘300 units from January’, and the ones produced in February were included in January. The author of the letters wrote that it was like this every month” (Miernik, 2019: 200).

certain its supply becomes – the pursuit of quantity will be the fastest in the production of these very goods. The pursuit of quantity, the tendency to hoard, and the scarcity of materials are thus linked in a mutually reinforcing, self-sustaining process” (Kornai, 1985: 146–147). This creates one of the most important vicious circles of scarcity.

Kornai noticed the connection between the indicated tendency to accumulate and the so-called “unemployment in the workplace”:

Even if this or that worker is not needed at a given moment for a given type of work, the manager will not get rid of him anyway. He prefers to “save it” out of sheer prudence [for the purposes of this text, prudence can be treated as a synonym for resourcefulness – D.J.]. Sooner or later it may come in handy. The tendency to hoard increases labor shortages and, at the same time, unemployment in the workplace. It is a vicious circle, because any increase in the intensity of deficiency in turn intensifies the tendency to accumulate (Kornai, 1985: 347).

This generalization concerning “saving workers” is confirmed, among others, by archival documentation describing the functioning of enterprises in the economy of the People’s Republic of Poland. This is evidenced by, for example, archival materials concerning workplaces in the construction industry. Plant management tolerated a situation in which many workers “didn’t overwork” at work for most of the year. However, they were an important asset when it was time to “catch up with the plan”. And that it was necessary – evidenced by the data on the finishing of residential rooms as early as the 1950s. The ratio of rooms commissioned by the Workers’ Housing Estates Department (ZOR) in the fourth quarter of each year was as follows: in 1951 – 42%, in 1952 – 30%, 1953 – 36%, 1954 – 40%, 1955 – 44% (AAN, ZOR, sign. 1/11: 128). In the atmosphere of “catching up with the plan”, the ordered reduction of financial plans with the obligation not to violate the ratios of the number of rooms commissioned for use, social and service facilities and the quality of the finishing of the premises were usually the victims of this saving policy. It became a permanent element of housing construction in the People’s Republic of Poland.

The non-rhythmic deliveries of components by subcontractors, poor work organization and the resulting forced idleness were complained of, among others, by in 1972, workers of one of the departments of the Gdańsk Renovation Shipyard “Radunia” writing to the center of power: “Since mid-October we have been out of work and about 100 people come to work every day, wander around the department, play cards, and then,

at the command of the management, disperse home” (Miernik, 2019: 210). It was not an isolated case.

How pathological this way of farming was on a macro scale is evidenced by the data on the so-called hidden unemployment. According to data compiled by Jędrzej Chumiński, in 1980 its rate in the Polish economy was 26.7%, in industry 29.7%, in 1989 – 20.9% and 29.1%, respectively. In 1989, its scale was estimated at 37% in the coal industry, 37% in the fuel industry, and 38% in the energy industry. Hidden unemployment was fully revealed after the change of the economic system in 1989. It turned out that about 4.5 million jobs did not exist in the free market economy (Chumiński, 2010b: 112-113).

An important issue, although difficult to examine, is the resourcefulness of the management of socialist enterprises of a political nature (Frąckowiak, 1992: 42-43). Interventions in the center of power and obtaining reliefs, exemptions and subsidies addressed to a specific entity took place using corruption strategies and the so-called acquaintances (the “uncle from Warsaw” phenomenon).

The constitutive elements of the so-called of a socialist enterprise prove that many of its features were shaped in such a way that what, according to its logic, could be treated as resourcefulness (of management or crew), in fact was behavior that strengthens the pathology of functioning. This resulted in the consolidation of attitudes and behaviors that can be treated as an expression of reluctance to work (Chumiński, 2010b: 136-137).

RESOURCEFULNESS OF RETIREES AND PENSIONERS

While the functioning of the socialist workplaces, including the strategies used by employees and their management, have been thoroughly studied, the ways of coping with the problems of the communist era by pensioners and pensioners are little known. This initial stage of research makes it impossible to show the full spectrum of their behaviors falling within the concept of social resourcefulness. But that doesn't mean nothing is known about it.

The basic problem of Polish pensioners in the People's Republic of Poland (and not only) was usually very low benefits, which resulted in a radical reduction in the standard of living after the end of professional work. Their height in the 1940s and the first half of the 1950s was

mostly symbolic. In 1966, Andrzej Tymowski estimated that as many as 70% of pensioners did not receive benefits covering the needs of the subsistence minimum calculated for that year (Tymowski, 1973: 97). The situation in this respect gradually improved. The share of retired households with income at the subsistence level in the years 1975–1986 fluctuated and amounted to 55% in 1975, 39% in 1980, 58% in 1983 and 37% in 1986 (Kulesza, 1989: 99).

Such a situation created a temptation (or even an existential necessity) to look for ways to improve one's own financial situation. And in this case, social resourcefulness was often manifested in a way that abused (and sometimes even broke) the applicable legal norms.

This was the case at the beginning of the 1980s, when the circles of the center of power began to notice and criticize the so-called retirement chimneys. The principle according to which the income obtained during the last twelve months of work was taken into account for the calculation of the retirement benefit amount meant that workplaces on a massive scale "pull up" fictitious earnings in the last period before reaching retirement age, when everyone worked for the benefit of a specific person concerned. The increase in benefits was also influenced by the situation in which income from other employment undertaken shortly before retirement was included in the calculation basis (Jarosz, 2022: 106).

This mechanism took various forms. As I wrote elsewhere:

In many offices, as well as in schools, employees and their bosses agreed that in the last year before retirement their earnings were increased by reclassification to a higher position. The practice used (among others among teachers) was to reward such a person in particular. Thanks to this, she could formally obtain a higher pension, and share the prize raised for this purpose informally (today we would say "under the table") with colleagues who participated in this operation – and knew that it could be used in future in their case (Jarosz, 2022: 113).

Pathological resourcefulness led to the use of false documents (employment certificates), including buying them at the Różycki bazaar in Warsaw. When looking for certificates of "missing years" to obtain the right to an old-age or disability pension, the Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) submitted in fact false witness statements or a statement that during this period the person applying for the benefit worked on his parents' farm (so-called in the jargon of ZUS officials "grasshopper") (Jarosz, 2022: 114).

Some farmers had their own ways of obtaining benefits, and from the 1970s they increasingly collected them in exchange for passing the farm to

their successors. Among them were those who did not want to part with the farm, but at the same time wanted to receive these benefits. As evidenced by the letters written to the Central Committee of the Polish United Workers' Party in 1986, the then regulations allowed fictitious transfer of land to successors employed in other industries, never involved in agriculture,

which in practice boils down to the fact that this farmer - "retired" continues to work normally on his farm and the state grants him a pension and other benefits (e.g. food stamps); recently, the almost reprehensible practice of transferring farms to 18-year-old sons, under any pretext, has begun to spread, in order to advertise them from the obligation to perform military service (AAN, KC PZPR, sign. 1979 mikr. 3148, e.g.).

These and many other examples omitted for lack of space show how diverse were the layers of pathological resourcefulness aimed at obtaining and increasing pension benefits. The scale of these practices is unknown, but they were certainly not isolated.

It seems, however, that they were not limited to the abuse of provisions regulating the granting and amount of benefits. Retirees and pensioners coped in a difficult reality by renting out as so-called queues for everyday goods (especially in the 1980s). As I mentioned earlier, they intensified the production of their own allotment gardens (in 1974-1982 their yields increased nine times in retirement households and five times in employees' households (Gliński, 1988: 286). Even these few examples show that the forms of coping with difficult reality by them were varied and concerned many areas of everyday life in the People's Republic of Poland.

CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary analysis of some elements of everyday life in People's Poland from the point of view of social resourcefulness shows that this is one of the most interesting ways of perceiving the post-war reality. It seems that a significant part of social behavior, which sociologists treat as resourcefulness, appeared in historiography in the context of research on adaptation strategies to the political system.

What may become the subject of further research, and what the above findings indicate, is the relationship between various forms of social re-

sourcefulness and the pathology component present in them. The sociologists quoted in the introduction to this study were aware of the existence of this problem and mentioned it as early as 1990. Thus, it seems that the notion of pathological social resourcefulness is worth deep consideration. It would mean a strategy consisting in achieving the assumed goals by individuals or various groups of people using means that are in conflict with the norms, rules, procedures accepted as appropriate in a given political and socio-economic order. Such resourcefulness was not always inconsistent with applicable legal norms. It often only abused them, taking advantage of the lack of appropriate regulations, in accordance with the motto: what is not forbidden is allowed. The matter seems even more complicated, because the processes pathologizing elements of the Polish post-war reality occurred within institutions whose functioning generated pathological phenomena. In other words, using the specifics resulting from the above comments, it is worth asking: how to interpret the elements of social resourcefulness, adapted to the pathological logic of the functioning of the so-called socialist enterprises? How to evaluate their managers, whose resourcefulness meant consent to actions of dubious rationality from the point of view of the principles of "healthy economy" (accumulation of excessive stocks, unemployment in the workplace), but could work in the systemic environment of the so-called socialist enterprise? How, then, can one judge the resourcefulness of pathologizing something that is already pathological in nature? These are just a few of the many questions, or rather exciting research problems, that are worth at least trying to tackle.

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