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The Extended Family

Descendants of Nobility in Post-Communist Poland

ABSTRACT After World War II, Polish nobility was commonly considered an obsolete social group because of the post-1945 confiscation of their properties and the decline of their legal and political privileges. From a formal point of view, the Polish nobility had ceased to exist. However, this group did not simply vanish. For this reason, we should not speak of the disintegration of the former noble milieu but rather its reorganization. To expand deliberation on these "reorganization strategies" with the use of appropriate sociological tools, this article analyzes major social actors in contemporary Poland who use their noble legacies in their collective identity-building practices.
KEYWORDS Polish nobility, post-communism, social reproduction, social capital, moral community

INTRODUCTION

It is no surprise that despite radical transformations, remnants of nobility in different forms, including kin networks with strong, clannish, historical memory, still appear to be socially active in Europe, Asia, and the Americas. During the last three decades, more scholarly literature has appeared, pointing to the persistent reproduction of families of noble origin relying in their collective identity-building practices on symbolic resources (i.e., kin heritage), but also on material resources (e.g., inherited estates dating back as far as the Middle Ages). Well-known cases of such families can be found in Western European countries that retained the status of constitutional monarchies, where the special status of nobility is legally guaranteed, and the public visibility of royal families often reinforces the naturalization of feudal privilege. The best-documented case is probably the United Kingdom (Mandler, 2004; Cannadine, 1990). Other cases include Belgium (Janssens, 2015), Finland (Astrom, 2015), and Sweden (Norrby, 2015), but also non-European countries, such as Mexico (Nutini, 2005) and Japan (Lebra, 1995). One of the best-studied and most paradoxical cases is the Kingdom of the Netherlands, which is usually seen as a modern bourgeoisie-type society. However, as Jaap Dronkers, Huibert Schijf, and their collaborators (Dronkers, 2003; Dronkers & Schijf, 2004; Schijf et al., 2004) have proved, nobility in the Netherlands retains continuous social relevance. Noble pedigree appeared to contribute to statistically significant high social achievement among members of this milieu in terms of occupying elite positions. To explain this

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phenomenon, Dutch scholars emphasized an efficient use of social capital (a strongly integrated social network of kin members) and cultural capital (e.g., elite education and early socialization in a high culture environment). There are competing explanations for the longevity of this milieu pointing to the role of economic capital. For instance, Yme Kuiper (2009) argued that after 1945, the Dutch nobility disappeared as a visible elite, first from parliament, and eventually from the public life, and became a sort of "secret society." However, it retained substantial material assets that have been gradually transformed from land estates to financial capital. Such a process was described by Korom and Dronkers (2009) in the case of Austrian nobility and occurred with varying levels of magnitude all over Western Europe between the outbreak of World War I and the end of World War II.

In the case of European countries in which the communist system was imposed after 1945, not only did the social relevance of nobility abruptly end but the material resources of the old feudal elites were also confiscated. Moreover, Eastern European nobility was declared by the communist authorities as a nonexistent class, which resulted in its disappearance in the public discourse, including in sociological research. In some Eastern European countries, particularly in Russia, most nobles were not only dispossessed but also killed or forced to live in exile (de Saint-Martin, Tchouikina, 2008). In this context, Poland, as a former communist country, seems to be a special case, where a well-integrated group of several prominent noble families has preserved a surprising degree of coherence and vibrancy, even though their role changed substantially during the communist period. The only comparable case in former communist Europe can probably be found in Hungary, which is also characterized by the similarly significant role of nobility in its social history up to the early 20th century (Karady, 2008). However, the contemporary Hungarian aristocratic milieu seems to be less integrated compared to the Polish one (Sztárayné Kézdy, 2009).

This article gives a qualitative account of the contemporary Polish nobility's reproduction capabilities, focusing mainly on its practices of accumulating social capital resources. Our study should be understood as a proxy that maps the field of noble descendants in Poland. Unlike several paradigmatic studies carried out in the Netherlands, where authors used an official register of national nobility that provided them with resources for reliable statistical computations, in the case of Poland, the possibility of implementing a sound network analysis covering, for instance, the precise scale of homogamy, might be spurious. Dronkers (2003) famously admitted that the very possibility of studying nobility in contemporary Europe has its limits, namely: "the importance of noble origins declines only if social relationships change so rapidly (e.g., due to a revolution, defeat in a war, or a serious economic recession) that the old social and cultural family capital is no longer usable or ceases to apply under the new circumstances" (p. 83). The communist revolution in Eastern Europe not only wiped out the material bases required for the immutable reproduction of noble networks but also initiated long-lasting social processes (1945–90) that disrupted the clear-cut rules of belonging to the noble milieu. We are referring here mainly to the post-1945 hybridization processes of noble identity in Poland evoked by the extensive social interplay of the noble community with

the intelligentsia, which redefined and eventually changed some of the former crucial features. Most importantly, noble family members started to intermarry with intelligentsia members, and eventually, their strict reproduction barriers, underpinned by homogamy, were gradually eased. Even though some segments of the analyzed milieu have been using various post-feudal expressive rituals (e.g., social distance strategies) or have managed to practice, to a certain extent, homogamy, it is impossible to define them as an autonomous class. They should be understood as a subgroup of the intelligentsia.[1]

Today, the very definition of a collective identity of individuals who either self-report that they are of the noble origin or are perceived by the public as nobility is far from being precise, and it cannot be used for unbiased computations. The current rules of belonging to the informal noble community do not comply with the traditional Polish definition of legitimate nobility, which was historically patrilineal. The contemporary milieu includes matrilineal lineage-based members and, to a lesser extent, even individuals of non-noble origin. To "be in milieu," a member needs to be perceived by other members as linked with them by either constant socialization or family ties. Eventually, the possibility of employing a rigorous network analysis faces a myriad of methodological issues, given the growing intertwining of the nobility with the intelligentsia (and, to a lesser extent, with other classes). Even though, as we mentioned, our study should be understood as a proxy that maps a field of noble descendants, the interview data may support (modestly) the ongoing social relevance of this group, which reproduces itself mainly by upholding kinship-based socialization practices among its members. These findings, albeit qualitative, remain consistent with quantitative findings demonstrated earlier, for example, by Dronkers in the Western European context.

METHODOLOGY

Given the ambiguities discussed above, we follow a model proposed by de Saint-Martin (1993), who studied a noble milieu in France. France, like Poland, became a republican state a long time ago. Thus, the nobility has no formal status and functions only as an informal milieu. In line with de Saint-Martin, we attempted to reconstruct the social space populated by individuals who draw on their families' feudal legacy and kin-based social resources in their collective identity-building practices. We call this space a field, following Bourdieu's terminology. The analyzed social space does not constitute a full-fledged field because the Polish nobility's field is not a fully autonomous area of social

1. The intelligentsia is a specific social stratum of Central and Eastern Europe (Gella, 1971, 1976). It largely emerged from the impoverished petty gentry migrating to towns in the 19th and early 20th centuries, although also Jewry and some representatives of the peasantry have gradually joined its ranks. Despite common roots in the Polish nobility, both genealogical and symbolic, there was a clear cleavage between the intelligentsia and rich landowners, with its peak at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when their contest for political domination became most intense (Zarycki et al., 2017). This antagonistic difference can be theorized following the model originally proposed by Eyal et al. (1998) as an opposition between the elite of cultural capital (the intelligentsia) and the old elite of economic and feudal social capital based on extensive kinship networks (the aristocracy and landowners). The founding of the newly independent Second Republic of Poland in 1918 could be seen as a turning point in this context, namely, the moment when the intelligentsia took the lead over the landowners.

activity: instead, it is a social space at the intersection of several other fields where actors represent different classes and status positions with varying degrees of institutionalization. Therefore, we are not able to systematically describe the structure of this field, as this would require a broader scope of research allowing for a determination of the agency and the relationship between individual actors in the overlapping fields. Mapping elite and professional positions of nobility in contemporary Polish society also exceeds the scope of this article. Instead, this study, which was carried out from 2013 to 2015 in Warszawa, Kraków, Gdańsk, Poznań, and Wrocław, is an exploratory description of the persistence of groups that draw on noble heritage in a post-communist country. In pursuing this aim, we apply, among other approaches, Durkheimian moral community insights, emphasizing the significance of performing repeated social rituals to maintain social cohesion (Shilling & Mellor, 1998). Social rituals that charge an analyzed community with "moral forces" are designated here as a set of relatively invariant sequences of performances and utterances that create a "group convention," laying the foundation for its reproduction (Leach, 1954; Rappaport, 1999). The rituals of the noble groups may seem trivial (e.g., family reunion ceremonies), but they cannot be reduced merely to physical performances. Once affectively invested, they are a source of Durkheimian "social energies," which are the actual condition of a group's integrative potential.

We should also mention that we follow Bourdieu (2007), who argued that any unambiguous definition of nobility or aristocracy is a fundamental methodological error because the very "game of nobility and aristocracy" is a continuous game of defining them, defining the limits of the field of nobility and its hierarchy. The critical process constantly taking place in this field is the struggle to gain the status of a "true" noble elite, the role of a dominant faction over participants in the game, whose status, according to the given definition of the hierarchy of the noble field, would be worse or even "false." In such a context, the researcher should not even tentatively adopt any definition of nobility or aristocracy but rather devote him/herself to reconstructing the above-mentioned classification disputes.

The sample for our research includes 72 respondents (10 women), aged 20 to 75 years, which was divided into four organizational categories: members of the informal milieu (36 respondents), members of the Polish Nobility Association (17), members of the Polish Association of Landowners (9), and non-associated individuals (10).[2] Respondents were recruited through their informal personal networks or institutional networks, and the sampling was done by combining purposeful and snowballing techniques (Creswell, 2012). Interviews were conducted face-to-face and lasted 45 minutes to three hours. Interviews were semi-structured and revolved around issues of the perceived collective noble identity in today's Poland and the mechanisms of its reproduction. The interview data were condensed, coded, and analyzed following Straus and Corbin (1994), with special attention to discourses connected to self-reported criteria of belonging to the

2. These 10 respondents declared themselves to be of noble origin but were not associated with major analyzed groups.

noble community, relations between informal and institutional groups, family rituals, and intimate relations upheld inside these groups. Respondents were also asked about the internal hierarchies existing in their communities and the strategies of perpetuating the consistency of Polish nobility during the communist and post-communist periods.

The remaining part of this article consists of three main sections: first, we explain the major actors who draw on a noble legacy in Poland today; second, we describe the major collective noble actor, which we call the "extended family" and its reproduction practices; third, we present our findings on formal noble organizations and discuss their differences with informal communities. We close with the conclusion.

MAJOR ACTORS IN THE FIELD

Actors who draw on a noble legacy in Poland can be divided into two major categories: informal and institutionalized. In the public space, we can list several organizations created after 1989, the most notable of which are the Polish Nobility Association (ZSzP), the Polish Association of Landowners (PTZ), and the Association of Descendants of the Great Parliament (SPSW). We call these organizations "clubs of nobility," but each has its specificity. The oldest of these organizations is PTZ, which was reestablished in 1990. Its members must be former (pre-1945) landowners or their direct descendants. ZSzP membership is defined by a confirmed noble title, while SPSW is a smaller organization that gathers descendants of the 18th century parliament members of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth. The members of these institutionalized groups are usually located outside the core of the informal field, which is dominated by historically wealthy and powerful noble families. The biographic interviews with ZSzP and SPSW representatives suggest that their predecessors ceased to pursue the gentry lifestyle, often before the advent of the Second Republic of Poland (1918–39), and they very rarely had any land estates. Ancestors of PTZ representatives, in most cases, had insignificant properties in terms of material value. They also did not maintain social relationships with the richer landowners during or after the Second Republic. Today, the integrative potential of membership of individuals from the "clubs of nobility" is relatively weak.

Our research, as the most effective group referring to noble legacy, identified an informal milieu consisting mainly of dozens of old, wealthy, and powerful noble families whose members have been upholding historically close kinship relations.[3] This informal milieu was identified as a key structure of what we call the noble field, and the sample was deliberately constructed to include members of this group. Contrary to "clubs of nobility," the integrative potential of this informal group's membership is strong.

The informal milieu does not identify itself by any name that would explicitly refer to nobility. Although external observers may call this group, among other things, "aristocracy" or "nobility," none of these terms is accepted explicitly among its members. Instead, most of them simply call themselves a "family." The overwhelming number of individuals currently associated with this group, which in this article are called the

3. The specific hybrid identity of this group is explained in more detail in the introductory section.

"extended family," should be perceived as descendants of wealthy noble families of the First Republic of Poland (1454–1795) and the Second Republic of Poland (1918–39), whose members had established kinship relations among themselves over the last few centuries (Smoczynski & Zarycki, 2017). Membership in the analyzed group is not determined by the abstract genealogical criteria but rather by an actual, physical presence during family ceremonies (e.g., weddings, baptisms, funerals, religious holidays, leisure time, parenting activities), when participants must be recognized as legitimate by other members. One of the indicators of belonging to this milieu includes the offspring's primordial socialization within the kin context (see also Bourdieu, 2007; Dronkers, 2003). We argue that within the analyzed Polish noble field, this group alone has a sufficient social density (measured by the number of relatives maintaining a systematic and intimate family socializing) to maintain effective matrimonial, social, and ideological practices.[4]

The difference between the formal "clubs" and the informal milieu gains a certain analytical visibility within the perspective of neo-Durkheimian studies demonstrating how moral communities protect their members from anomie by enhancing mutual trust and facilitating the exercise of informal community norms (Ellison et al., 1997; Finke & Adamczyk, 2008; Ford & Kadushin, 2002; Lincoln et al., 2003; Maton, 1989). If we look at the extended family as a moral community whose members share similar beliefs, practice intimate and emotional face-to-face socialization, cherish kin memories, and employ social distance strategies toward different categories of "non-milieu" people, we can grasp why this group has been able to build a protective barrier that has reduced the risk of its disintegration over a long period. This community's strong integrative potential is contrasted here with formal "clubs of nobility," whose members lack the structural embeddedness into the clubs' everyday life, unlike how extended family members gravitate around their moral community through repeated face-to-face activities. "Club"

4. A good case in point is the Radziwiłł family, which is at the center of the contemporary extended family in Poland. It is probably the best-known aristocratic family of Poland, although no formal rankings of noble family status exist. The historical heritage of the Radziwiłł family is impressive, but its presence in the contemporary political and economic life of Poland is also notable. The family has produced many notable individuals in Lithuanian, Polish, Belarusian, German, and general European history and culture. Such international connections were and remain one of the crucial assets of all Polish high noble families. The Radziwiłł family received the title of Reichsfürst (prince) from the Holy Roman Emperor. Several members of the Radziwiłł family have held high civil and military posts. Even if their largest estates were located in Russian Poland, the close relationship with the Royal House of Prussia caused the family to live at the Berlin court instead of in Warsaw or St. Petersburg, given their experience with the Czar's confiscation of most of the family's possessions in 1813. Although in Poland, the family was fully dispossessed by the communists in 1945, and many of its members, like other high nobility in Poland, were repressed, Krzysztof Mikołaj Radziwiłł (1898–1986), known as the "Red Prince," collaborated with the communist government of Poland. In particular, he served as head of the diplomatic protocol and a deputy in the parliament, which was probably because, as an inmate of the German concentration camps during the war, he got to know the future prime minister of Poland, Cyrankiewicz. However, this was an exception rather than the rule. That being said, the fall of communism brought a much larger wave of Radziwiłł family members serving in public posts. Anna Radziwiłł (1939–2009) served as deputy minister of education in the first non-communist government of Poland (1989–92) and as a member of the senate. Konstanty Radziwiłł (b. 1958) was minister of health (2015–18) and currently serves as the governor of the Masovian Voivodeship. Dominik Radziwiłł (b. 1964) was deputy minister of finance (2009–12), while Artur Radziwiłł (b. 1973) held the same post between 2014 and 2015. All the above-mentioned individuals are close cousins.

members are poorly integrated: they meet with each other rarely, and the membership of some is driven by instrumental reasons (e.g., looking for legal advice to reclaim family properties that had been taken from them). Additionally, public prestige associated with nobility is not linked with these "clubs" since descendants of recognizable noble families appear almost exclusively in the extended family.

Paraphrasing Stark (1996), we can state that the degree of social integration proves its durability not when some individuals form a corporate organization whose members self-report as being noble but when nobility has been consistently ratified by a kin community over a multigenerational span. Bearing these insights in mind, we see that only the extended family constitutes an example of a moral community that accumulated enough social bonding capital to facilitate their reproduction in the modern Polish noble field. This milieu builds an adequate equivalent of the traditional "noble neighborhood," which historically constituted a network of estates, the owners of which knew each other and kept intimate social relations, often leading to matrimonial exchanges among families in a given area (Zajączkowski, 1961).

THE EXTENDED FAMILY AS A SUBFIELD OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA AND ITS REPRODUCTION PRACTICES

The heritage of the Polish noble milieu has been studied systematically by historians, and this scholarship includes the history of the Polish landowners (Roszkowski, 1991), the role of the aristocracy in Polish history (Getka-Kenig, 2009), and the legacy of the Polish nobility in various historical periods (Beauvois, 1991; Tazbir, 1986, 2013; Zajączkowski, 1961). There is also a rich record of publications written by the members of the extended family, although these are usually non-academic (e.g., memoirs, genealogical studies, armorials). Among the very few academic studies on the contemporary Polish nobility, one could mention the sociological study of Stanisław Siekierski (2003) and Longina Jakubowska's (2012, 2013) anthropological research. None of these studies, however, has questioned the social relevance of a noble milieu in a broader context of contemporary Polish society. Jakubowska focused mostly on memory reproduction practices of selected former landowner families, not on the social structure reproduction through other resources than what Bourdieu (1986) would call "embodied and objectified cultural capital." The same author also ignored questions of relations between former landowners and the intelligentsia, conflating these two groups or suggesting that the intelligentsia "is a cultural niche of Polish gentry" (Jakubowska, 2012, p. 11), even though there has been a constant tension concerning political, moral, and cultural leadership among members of these two groups since the mid-19th century (see Zarycki et al., 2017). With the loss of economic assets after World War II, "embodied" cultural capital and social capital accumulated within a noble milieu functioned as the only remaining resources, and intelligentsia-oriented professions became the most accessible positions for previous land proprietors. Nonetheless, there are still noticeable distinctions between these groups.

A relatively long interplay of these two elite communities explains why, in today's Poland, a relic noble group remains visible in the public sphere, and the noble legacy still

resonates with the collective Polish sensitivity. Recently, there has been a comprehensive quantitative study ($N = 3{,}022$) inquiring whether the noble descendants are still perceived in the public space (Jerzyński et al., 2016), which demonstrated their ongoing visibility. One of the symptoms of this ongoing social relevance should be attributed to the mass media, which frequently, usually in an apologetic manner, covers stories on the prominent members of the extended family, their weddings, ceremonial gatherings, and so on (Chrzczonowicz, 2013). There is also substantial scholarship demonstrating how, from the early 20th century onward, the intelligentsia had inherited several noble cultural traits (e.g., citizenship patterns informed by feudal "moral superiority" imageries) and managed to universalize them so that they are perceived today as a part of Polish Doxa (Jedlicki, 2008; Gella, 1976; Zarycki, 2009). This process was especially successful in the Second Republic of Poland when a symbolic act of ennoblement of all citizens took place. As a result, the Poles, regardless of their class position, started to address themselves as Sir (Pan). Estreicher (1931), Świętochowski (1935), and more recently Krasnodębski (2004) have stated that a noble heritage has been unconsciously incorporated into the mainstream of Polish culture as a post-noble exclusivist and hierarchical framework of civic responsibility informed by a division between good (lord) and bad (boor) citizens (Tazbir, 2013).[5] Even though the intelligentsia's ideals have been shaped by 19th-century democratic revolutions, the feudal imagery of a good citizen (lord) who takes responsibility for the civic sphere while discrediting an irresponsible citizen (boor) has shaped the Polish citizenship model until the present day (Gressgard & Smoczynski, 2020). The prevalence of post-feudal themes informing national interpretative frameworks of reality has arguably contributed to the creation of certain dispositions toward perceiving contemporary noble descendants as idealized embodiments of "lordliness."[6]

This perceived sense of fascination with the milieu appearing among the public has been naturally acknowledged by respondents: "There are people, very curious of our life, they want to approach our meetings or balls, be part of it" [9]; "It happens when I introduce myself, people ask me are you from the X family?" [31]; "You cannot get into our community. You must be born into it or marry somebody inside. . . . And some non-noble guys are looking for a wife and husband in our community" [54]; "This is pathetic, but sometimes imposters pretend to be my family members, they call themselves X" [44].

Although the interplay between the intelligentsia and nobility has endured, the recognizability of the latter group in Poland has not erased distinct structural features of this milieu that do not typically appear in the average intelligentsia family. For example, we can note a different formation of respective family bonds and the impact of kin in the process of primordial socialization. The intelligentsia is a professional and casual milieu

5. Interestingly, the communist authorities have also not been able to eradicate a myriad of mythical imageries informed by a post-noble legacy from the public space (e.g., noble culture frequently recurred in feature films and literature produced at that time).

6. Nobility has remained as a semi-sacred group in the fantasies of the "common people," which, interestingly, was also noted by Tönnies ([1887] 1957, p. 57).

that is not governed by kin social logic (Czepulis-Rastenis, 1985). A decline of noble, kin-based networks, which gave way to new family structures that the intelligentsia has embraced, must be seen in the context of 19th- and 20th-century socioeconomic change. The latter constituted the scene of the rapid transformation of production relations in Europe when new, effective forms of economic organizations emerged with a clear shift toward the urban core and the marginalization of agrarian areas. In 1864, the Russian Tsarist authorities introduced the abolition of serfdom in their Polish-controlled territories, relocating masses of people from rural areas to towns. Finally, with the growing prominence of democratic ideologies, Eastern Europe witnessed a transformation of social legitimacy discourses: feudal categories referring to the importance of kinship seniority and a genealogical competence in classifying the kin vicissitudes gradually began to lose their ideological importance. Acquired individual merit, not inherited skills with specialized education applicable in differentiated social systems, became the modern resource of social hierarchy legitimization. These changes also transformed the pattern of family relationships. Because of mass migration to urban areas, the consistency of extended multigenerational families, which was important for cementing the "noble neighborhood" underpinned by homogamy, was weakened. The network based on noble identity was eventually replaced by small units of nuclear families, remaining in a loose, usually genealogically unrelated relationship with each other, except for a narrow subgroup of several "ancient families" that have managed to maintain its social cohesion until 1945 and then formed a milieu of hybridized identity.

These traces of hybridization were identified while analyzing the mixed marriages of the extended family respondents. Their husband/wife or parent of intelligentsia origin was usually brought up in a non-kin-based family, which had fewer relatives than the family of the respondents' spouse or parent of the noble origin. In the case of a family's "noble faction," respondents claimed that this contains a greater number of relatives who maintain ongoing contacts: "My mother's family has many relatives; they keep contact in Poland and abroad" [33]; "My X grandmother had seven siblings all of them marry then Y and Z. Generations passed, and they have been sticking together. We are a big family" [40]; "We as members of the X family have founded an X association. There are 300 members" [56].[7] These declarations contrast with descriptions of the intelligentsia segment of the family: "While my father's family is a big clan, my mother has only a few close relatives" [35]; "All relatives make up around 130 people, my wife has only two cousins" [57] (see Smoczynski & Zarycki, 2017).

Typically, the extended family respondents memorized kin vicissitudes and listed names of their ancestors dating many generations back, something that does not appear among the intelligentsia, whose members are not usually socialized in such a diachronic

7. Kin-based gatherings usually require hiring spacious facilities like hotels or, very occasionally, manors or palaces, which were historically owned by family members. We must remember that post-1989, Polish authorities never issued re-privatization legislation; thus, most land properties either were devastated during the communist period or were never claimed back. Very few rural properties that were successfully re-privatized by members of the analyzed community serve as homes since, as was mentioned earlier, they are urban-based subgroups of the intelligentsia. Thus, these venues were either turned into commercial ventures or sold.

historical perspective, nor do they have ancestors who are part of a feudal category of social legitimacy, which constitutes a significant stake in this milieu. In contrast, the extended family members claim: "We count typically cousins five generations back; in earlier times it took even nine generations back. All these lineages create our milieu" [27]; "I was taught from early childhood not only how to eat, how to address elderly, but also about numerous ancestors" [32]; "I am an ancient family descendant and I do not want to break this chain of generations" [54]. There were respondents from the extended family who did not pay attention to kin genealogies. Nonetheless, they emphasized a sort of Levi-Straussian symbolic efficacy of this knowledge for group integrity: "Much of these stories are sort of fairy tales. Notwithstanding, many cousins believe in this mythology and as long one follows suit this links one with milieu" [43].

Probably the most specific feature of a noble milieu in Poland or abroad is homogamy. For instance, the Dutch nobility's homogamy plays a significant role in cementing their community, and this practice has established a certain barrier that has retained an identity distinction between them and the bourgeoisie (Dronkers, 2003). Our respondents also referred to homogamy as a crucial factor that historically upheld their group integrity. This matrimonial practice has not been typically associated with the intelligentsia, whose social field has not been governed by kin family relationships. This is not to say that since the extended family mingled with the intelligentsia, homogamy has been gradually disappearing as a unique trace of this milieu, particularly after World War II. Among the 36 extended family respondents, 15 individuals had mixed marriages with non-noble partners, 13 self-reported homogamy, 6 were unmarried, and 2 were divorcees at the time of the research. Even though homogamy has been declining, almost half of the analyzed group's respondents indicated homogamy in their marriages. Respondents also referred to certain "expectations" or "pressure" appearing among kin members to endure milieu inbreeding. This pressure included, among different persuasive techniques employed by the "family," intimidation of the potential non-noble fiancées who were perceived as "not sharing a similar cultural code with the milieu," which could lead to potential family disruptions: "My wife is of a petty bourgeoisie origin, my family was not happy about this marriage" [44]; "My first wife was from the working class, we did not have the same standards, this marriage ended up in divorce. I re-married with X, she is from our community" [30]; "Once you marry someone from our community you are not confronted with cultural shocks, the marriage is stable" [54]; "My son split with the daughter of a taxi-driver and eventually married with the girl of noble origin" [57].

Homogamy might be considered a specific form of social distance strategy. This strategy is employed toward non-milieu individuals to protect the family's private sphere, where crucial social rituals preserving the milieu's integrity take place: marriages, religious ceremonies, and socialization of the offspring among kin members, which was reported by several respondents: "I spent most of the time with kin members, my children attend a school run by family members. . . . I do not have much time for other people" [44]; "My life is divided into two spheres, one is a family world where I socialize with kin. The other one is professional. I do not mix these two" [53]; "Besides keeping with the family I socialize also with non-noble people, but my father's or grandfather's generation was

different. These were big families and they spent time solely with each other" [40]. The employment of social distance strategies by this milieu also explains how the extended family stayed together under communism. Post-1945 confiscations unintentionally strengthened their identity since they rallied around a common experience of being prosecuted, as evidenced by several respondents: "This post-gentry solidarity was particularly strong during the communist period. People used to stick together, today the situation got much more relaxed in terms of social contacts" [27]; "Our closure at that time was clear, people were afraid of being affected by common-day boorishness" [23]; "During communist times here in Kraków there was very little socializing with the outside world. Perhaps a little with the old intelligentsia, but not with the new intelligentsia" [38]. This closure also facilitated, to some extent, the upholding of the milieu's homogamy, as evidenced by one respondent: "We were brought up in Kraków within the closed confines of noble milieu, our marriage came out quite natural" [53].

This is not to deny that the nobility, both in Poland and in other settings, typically expresses its sense of moral superiority, which, besides social distancing from non-kin members, may include narrative self-idealizations understood as community values: "We are descendants of the elite of the old Poland and we have to live up to this ideal" [56]. This statement was monotonously repeated by several respondents. However, a physical and ritualized participation in the community's ceremonies seems to be more important for sticking together. During these activities, various informal rules are followed that affect the milieu's members bodily behavior (e.g., code of dress, certain ways of dining, ways of expressing oneself, or addressing cousins and strangers) that marks their separation from the non-kin sphere and protects thresholds of their "moral community": "I grew up during communism on the state-run farm. I was not deliberately isolated from the village children, but parents always told me how I am supposed to dress, to express myself, how to eat" [8]; "Our community was impoverished during communism. My mother worked as a tailor to make ends meet. What distinguished us from others was high etiquette, we were taught constantly how to properly eat, how to speak, how to dress. . . . I pay attention now to raise children similarly" [9]. The high level of bonding social capital has made this milieu, like other moral communities, capable of exercising normative rules that have sustained the separation between their intimate sphere and the non-community sphere (Grasmick, Bursik, 1990; Petee et al., 1994; Regnerus, 2003). This was particularly relevant during communism, which was perceived by milieu members as a quintessential plebeian phenomenon, when a social distance attitude, additionally informed by the "boor" vs. "lord" imagery, was enhanced. This long-lasting closure has also brought some unintended, adverse consequences, like trivial snobbism, isolationism, and a lack of entrepreneurial skills, which today plague some segments of the extended family: "Kraków community is closed and snobbish, some shiftless people are among them, they don't have neither money nor education" [43]; "I have cousins who wrongly think it is important to have a noble name, not achievements. These people are often demobilized, not interesting, not creative" [56]; "Some members of our community are driven by nostalgia and pride. This attitude is counterproductive, it does not help in a modern world; at worst it will lead us to a sort of Amish people niche" [35].

BROKEN TIES WITH THE EXTENDED FAMILY AND THE INSTITUTIONAL NOBLE ORGANIZATIONS

The group analyzed here has required social rituals to take place on a regular basis to retain its integrity during communism. It is these rituals, not an abstract knowledge of noble pedigree (besides upholding intimate family relations), that reproduce the habits and interpretative frameworks of reality among milieu members today. These activities contribute to a balanced distribution of a common lifestyle that alleviates potential antagonisms, even among individuals who know each other only slightly. Here, the early socialization of children is of crucial importance when diverse forms of "good manners," including sophisticated politeness norms and language competencies, are embodied so that later, they are perceived as "natural" and "genuine." These skills, which are hard to acquire during adolescence, reinforce social capital among group members, as they allow them to recognize each other easily and spot outsiders and imposters. This practice reminds us of Rappaport's (1999) insights on ritual practice and the fundamental difference between the congregation and the audience. The former may consist of members who know or do not know each other, but all of them can make certain assumptions of each other because they are familiar with and knowledgeable about a certain ritualized order, which gives them the confidence of being performers within a shared symbolic space. The latter, conversely, are not attached to embodied rituals; they perceive these rituals merely as more or less abstract phenomena that are not "doing something about the state of their world" (Rappaport, 1999, p. 47). This difference gains a certain relevance when comparing the extended family with the poorly integrated members of institutionalized organizations, such as the Polish Nobility Association.

As mentioned earlier, "clubs of nobility" are not mobilized according to the logic of active kinship networking but according to the historical reenactment logic carried out by people whose ancestors left the "noble neighborhood" several generations earlier. This rupture took place at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries, when respondents' ancestors had already experienced downward mobility and had to make a living, most notably as clerks, military staff, and academics: "My grandfather was a military serviceman back in the 19th-century Russian Empire" [25]; "My grandfather did not have any estate nor manor. He was employed as a surveyor" [1]; "Already my great-grandfather worked as a medical doctor, my family have not owned any land properties for many generations" [41]. Once they had lost ties with the "noble neighborhood," homogamy typically disappeared among the respondents' ancestors: "My grandfather married a peasant woman, my mother is also of non-noble origin" [12]; "My grandfather was a soldier, he married a peasant woman" [1]; "My grandfather had little land property at East Borderlands, but his wife was of peasant origin" [58]. Lack of homogamy may also explain why respondents' ancestors had lost social proximity with the landowner milieu. Failure to follow the rules of homogamy, especially at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries when the wealthy nobility observed this principle rigorously, highlights the reasons why today, members of "clubs of nobility" do not inherit any connections with the extended family: "After the war, our family did not have any contacts with noble families" [7]; "Former

landowners here in Kraków do not want to have contacts with members of our organization" [37]; "I have not had any contacts with Kraków milieu because I do not have good pedigree" [12]; "Polish nobles were never equal, neither in the First Republic of Poland nor today, there have been huge status differences among them and they did not stick together. . . . There is no common social life among our group and this milieu" [39].

Moreover, after World War II, members of the institutionalized organizations were not embedded or socialized in any kinship-oriented networks that would constitute an alternative noble milieu vis-à-vis the extended family. Respondents did not offer any accounts of family rituals that would draw on noble legacy: "It was a normal family, we did not have many cousins" [42]; "At home, we did not talk about our family's noble origin" [19]; "My social life revolved around colleagues from school and work" [58]; "Sometimes when the family members meet, and it does not happen more frequently than once every five years, we do not talk about all these noble issues. Everybody has one's problems" [72]. None of the respondents declared that they practiced homogamy: "I married a man who had nothing to do with nobility. I did not think about these issues at that time" [14]; "My wife is of non-noble origin" [15]; "Everybody in my family married non-noble descendants, including myself and my children" [25]; "My wife is of non-noble origin and she does not like my noble-oriented interests, she thinks it is a waste of time" [1].

In line with James Coleman's (1993) categories, it can be assumed that extended family members represent the primordial social structure, characterized by intimate kinship relations and possession of similar "embodied" cultural capital resources: lifestyle, family memories, expressive social rituals passed over generations, and informal socialization practices shared within a kin milieu. The institutionalized organization members represent a corporate social structure based on formal membership and a diversified "embodied" cultural capital, which have been formed in heterogeneous environments. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the respondents from institutionalized organizations do not feel intimate social relations with their organization colleagues, as the interview data suggest they are poorly integrated: "I am contacting these people from the association mainly via the internet. These are very old people, and to be honest, I am not seeking contacts with them, I do not like chats about the coat of arms over a cup of tea" [12]; "On average we are a quite old, 70-years-old plus, young people are not interested in our activities including my children" [25]; "This community ages out, soon it will be gone" [28]; "Of course our association will never replace the real family bond of the Warszawa milieu" [19]. Several respondents admitted that they joined clubs purely for instrumental reasons without having any noble re-unification "romantic visions": "I joined the association since I hoped to facilitate claiming back my family's manor" [42]; "I do not have any special relation to people in our association. I came here just to improve my knowledge how to bring back my family old properties" [63]; "The reason I am a member of this association is simple: they have some genealogists and I wanted to improve my expertise to study the history of my family" [12].

Rappaport's (1999) remarks on the difference between the congregation and the audience gain visibility when looking at extended family members who lost living ties

with their milieu. A useful example is the evolution of the postwar generations of three notable families (X, Y, and Z), whose members historically were located in the very core of the extended family, but, after 1945, several individuals from these families settled in the Polish western border territories, where they lived in relative isolation, which constrained their participation in the family meetings throughout the communist period (1945–89). They note that socializing with the extended family was rare and usually related to exceptional situations, which led to a permanent deterioration of their intimate embeddedness with the family core from Kraków and Warszawa. As a result of two generations of separate socialization carried out beyond the kin confines, homogamy in the Wrocław-based X and Y families ceased to exist. They relaxed their social distance barriers and were, to a large extent, ingrained in a non-kin environment: "We did not have close relatives here. . . . My wife is from a non-noble milieu, the same goes with my mother" [46].

A sense of weak ties with the extended family was especially noticeable among respondents' children since they "did not like hanging around" with the kin milieu and never socialized on a regular basis with its members since "for them, these people from Warszawa were just names" [46]. A certain intensification of family life occurred among the analyzed individuals from the western borderlands after the fall of communism in 1989, but reconstructing the emotional proximity with kin after having had poor social ties with them for several decades turned out to be futile. Respondents from the X, Y, and Z families reported "boredom," the "superficiality" of the reunification meetings, a "lack of common interests," "no real friendship," and "no common hobbies," which they otherwise share with non-kin colleagues.

Obviously, "ritualized" family activities require a milieu's comprehensive population density, especially when referring to the conditions of pursuing homogamy. In areas where there are just a few milieu members, the distinction between kin milieu and the non-kin environment has been blurred, and with the growing numbers of mixed marriages, new generations of former nobility have gradually left the "family boundaries," as pointed out by the Z family respondent:

> In this town, it was hard to keep contacts with family; just during a holiday we had a few days together. . . . I have already had a mixed marriage. . . . My daughter does not like bachelors from Warszawa or Kraków, she has a non-noble boyfriend. To be honest I am not surprised; these people from our milieu quite often besides having a good name are not remarkably interesting" [56].

CONCLUSION

Polish nobility, in its current form, is very distant from its counterparts in modern European monarchies like the Netherlands and remains closer to "spaces of nobility" (de Saint Martin, 1993) existing in republican countries (e.g., France). Of course, the loss of almost all material assets by 1945 was a major blow to the Polish noble milieu, which eventually set it apart from its Western European republican counterparts. To discuss the peculiarity of the Polish case, this article has provided insights into mechanisms that

facilitated the reproduction processes of the group, which we call the "extended family," to survive the communist period and emerge after its fall as a relatively well-integrated collective actor.

Among the main factors of its persistence, we emphasized the significance of bonding social capital reinforced by affectively invested family ceremonies taking place on a regular basis in a kin niche. However, one of the crucial findings in this respect is the paradoxical relationship of the noble milieu to the intelligentsia. Namely, we noticed considerable resources of what could be called an intelligentsia-oriented cultural capital and embodied forms of cultural capital (e.g., a general erudition, knowledge of foreign languages, and, importantly, sophisticated manners for which nobility remains a point of reference for those aspiring to the elite status). This intelligentsia-oriented form of cultural capital has helped this milieu to function as a relatively autonomous subfield of the wider intelligentsia field, and this status created the possibility to survive the communist period by substituting the lost economic capital and legal privileges with cultural and social capitals. The affiliation of the old elite of noble families with the intelligentsia field today allows them to enjoy many privileges along with this dominant elite of Poland. The extended family is a highly autonomous sector of the intelligentsia field and plays the symbolic role of a point of reference for it, as well as for the broader Polish cultural imagination. By unveiling these mechanisms, this article contributes to the sociology of intelligentsias of Central and Eastern Europe and the effects of communism on the transformation of traditional social structures, as it illuminates contemporary Polish society with its unique combination of modern and traditional social structures.

While the intelligentsia is the main competitor and, at the same time, a peer of the extended family within the Polish elite field, we pointed to the fact that the former landowning milieu must compete with another collective actor in a noble field, namely, institutionalized noble organizations ("clubs"). In this game, the social recognition of the status of descendants of Polish nobility is the main stake. The disadvantage of the formal groups is obvious: the extended family, which has among its ranks the most famous historical noble lineages, enjoys wider public recognition, in particular, by the dominant intelligentsia elite and can reproduce itself effectively, in contrast to its challengers. However, analysis of this difference is telling. The lead of the extended family in this contest proves that references alone, even if based on strong genealogical competencies and historical heritage, are far from sufficient for a social group to be effectively recognized as a legitimate heir of a historical elite. Although most institutionalized group members can prove genealogical records of their noble ancestors, identify their lost estates, and present family memoirs and material traces of their family's past glory, their efforts to gain wider social recognition as members of the Polish historical elite or to form a coherent social network that would establish closer relations with extended family members are usually in vain. This means that historical identity and relations of kinship based on or reflected in genealogical records serve as an additional legitimization of the privileged status of the extended family rather than as its primary foundation. The latter seems to be secured by uninterrupted transgenerational ritualized reproduction. In other words, the extended family's perceived high symbolic status thrives on other resources

than a pure historical memory: members of this milieu draw on living social capital bonds, turning them into a Durkheimian "moral community." These resources include specific, elite forms of "embodied" cultural competence (e.g., sophisticated manners), which strengthen kinship relations. ■

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